



Township of North Huron | December 6, 2021
**Parks, Recreation & Culture
Master Plan**



Township of North Huron

Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

December 6, 2021



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Executive Summary

Overview

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan (the “Master Plan”) is a direct initiative of Council’s Strategic Plan that identifies strategies to meet the needs of residents over the next ten years. During this period, North Huron’s population is expected to grow by approximately 600 residents, reaching a population of 5,600 by 2031. Changes in North Huron’s socio-demographic profile, together with evolving interests and participation preferences, provided the impetus to prepare this Master Plan to align parks, recreation and culture facilities, programs and services with current and future needs.

Parks, recreation and culture opportunities are vital contributors to the quality of life in the community. Research has demonstrated that there are benefits associated with the provision of parks, recreation and culture activities, which includes improving personal mental and physical wellbeing, enhancing social wellbeing that encourages engagement and inclusion, helping build strong families and communities, connecting people with nature, assisting people develop critical and creative thinking skills, and stimulating economic benefits. Parks, recreation and cultural opportunities are considered to be a public good, rather than a source of income as many aspects such as facilities do not tend to generate profit, thus it is important that there are inclusive opportunities for all residents to enjoy. As a community service they are typically subsidized to achieve the many benefits noted above.

Community Consultation

The Master Plan involved research, consultation and needs assessments. Prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic, digital engagement tactics were utilized including virtual public information centres, online community survey, focus groups, workshops and interviews. The consultation process engaged 484 households, representing over 1,100 residents, 27 community stakeholders, Township staff and members of Council. The following is a summary of key themes heard from the consultation sessions:

- There is a strong demand for unstructured activities for residents of all ages.
- There is a strong feeling of pride in terms of the wide variety of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities that are available in the Township such as the community centres, arenas, indoor pool, parks, trails and special events.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the way people participate.
- Inclusion and accessibility are top of mind priorities to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate, regardless of ability, background, orientation and income.
- An emphasis should be placed on improving the use of existing facilities by creating community hubs and gathering spaces.
- Community groups and volunteers are viewed as a strength in the community; however, concerns were raised regarding the ability to retain and attract new volunteers, particularly among the younger demographic.

- Improve awareness and participation through communication and marketing.
- The Township should continue to support established community organizations to ensure that they are successful.

Strategic Framework

The community input, together with the foundational inputs (e.g., demographics, trends, best practices, background documents, etc.), helped inform the development of vision and mission statements to set a path forward for the Township. The vision depicts how the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron will be viewed in the future and the mission statement identifies how the Township, Council and the community will work together to achieve this goal.

Vision Statement

To become a leader in the provision of activities, facilities, programs and services that support healthy and active lifestyle in the Township of North Huron through inclusive, accessible and high-quality parks, recreation and cultural services.

Mission Statement

The Recreation & Community Services Department works in collaboration with the other Township departments, community organizations and volunteers to provide high quality parks, recreation and culture services to respond to the needs of the community.

Guiding Principles were also established to achieve the vision and advance the role of parks, recreation and culture through the implementation of recommendations contained in this Master Plan. In no particular order, the guiding principles are:

1. Active, Healthy and Connected Lifestyles
2. Inclusion and Access
3. Fiscal Sustainability
4. Commitment to Service Excellence
5. Invest in Infrastructure
6. Strong Partnerships Build Strong Communities
7. Coordinated Approach to Service Delivery

Key Recommendations

Recommendations contained in the Master Plan guide the Township in addressing current and future needs. Strategies have been identified to optimize the use of Township facilities; establish new parks, facilities and services to address gap areas; strengthen operational effectiveness to improve service delivery; and more. Opportunities have been identified to make efficient use of municipal resources such as strategically adjusting levels of service, where appropriate, and identifying opportunities for re-allocating or re-purposing underutilized facilities, programs and services to address other identified needs. The following summarizes some of the recommendations contained in the Master Plan. A full listing of recommendations, together with the implementation plan, can be found in **Section 8.0**.

- a. The Township should continue to implement its **blended service delivery model** by providing facilities, programs and services that are complementary to opportunities that are currently provided by community organizations; **service duplication should be avoided**. Where appropriate, recommendations contained in the Master Plan should be implemented in partnership with community organizations to share roles, responsibilities, expertise and resources.
- b. As the Municipal Service Delivery Review continues to be implemented, monitor the transition of the realignment of services and responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department. Should the Township experience challenges associated with the realignment, the **service delivery model** should be re-evaluated in the short-term to consider alternatives to address ongoing concerns.
- c. Public spaces should be viewed as **community hubs** where residents can gather, socialize, and participate in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. The following strategies are recommended to further enhance key spaces to embody the community hub spirit by undertaking strategic improvements to better support activities, programs and services that take place within these spaces:
 - i. Investigate the feasibility of converting underutilized concession space at the **North Westcast Community Complex** to another use such as program and office space, gathering space with seating or other uses; monitor the use of the indoor sport courts and consider re-purposing opportunities should utilization remain low; engaging Huron County to investigate the feasibility of establishing library space (prior to undertaking major capital investments at the current location); and undertaking facility improvements as identified in Building Conditions Assessments. To improve operational efficiencies and achieve cost savings, align the start of the ice season with the Blyth & District Community Centre to begin in October.

- ii. Guided by public consultation, park-specific concepts and other inputs, undertake parkland redevelopment at the **Blyth & District Community Centre**. This redevelopment is an excellent opportunity for the Township to re-purpose one surplus ball diamond in order to accommodate priority needs for an enhanced skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. Should the Township decide to maintain a surplus of ball diamonds and not re-purpose one diamond, a location(s) will need to be determined for other recommended priority outdoor recreation facilities.

Extending the enhanced 25 camp site pilot project for one additional year is also recommended to better position the Township to evaluate demand, costs and benefits prior to making a final decision on the future of the Blyth Campground. During the interim, continue to promote camping opportunities, which includes working with the Blyth BIA, Blyth Festival, Blyth Lions Club and others.

Indoor facility recommendations include evaluating opportunities to re-purpose the underutilized concession space to an alternative use such as a gathering area, program space or other uses, working with Huron County to investigate the feasibility of establishing library space to re-purpose underutilized hall space if the current leased Library Branch is no longer available; and undertaking facility improvements as identified in the Building Conditions Assessment.

- d. Ensure that parks, recreation and cultural opportunities in the Township are inclusive and accessible to all residents, regardless of ability, age, background, income, and orientation. The Master Plan provides direction on investigating the feasibility of creating a **recreation fee subsidy program**; ensuring that facilities, programs and services are **accessible for persons with disabilities** (and allocating appropriate funding to address accessibility retrofits); and maintaining dialogue with the **LGBTQ2+ community** to discuss ways for them to feel more welcomed in the community.
- e. An emphasis should be placed on addressing the needs for youth, older adults and seniors to ensure lifelong opportunities, quality of life and health. The Township should form a **Youth Advisory Council** to identify issues that matter to them and assist with achieving a **Youth Friendly designation**. A **Senior Advisory Committee** should also be established to provide a voice for this age group and assist with the development of an **Age Friendly Strategy** to identified opportunities to make parks, recreation and cultural opportunities more welcoming for older adults and seniors.
- f. Providing the appropriate resources for Township staff, community organizations and volunteers is necessary to deliver high quality parks, recreation and culture services to meet the needs of a growing community. Strategies to achieve this goal include **creating service levels** for providing parks, recreation and culture opportunities with the goal of achieving operational efficiencies and adjusting levels of service, as appropriate; **reviewing and updating policies** to ensure that they reflect current conditions and expectations; **exploring new programs** to optimize the use of Township parks and facilities; continually **invest in training and professional development**; regularly **engaging community organizations** to promote opportunities and improve coordination; establishing a **volunteer recognition event** and **Volunteer of the Year**

Award; and creating a **technology plan** to expand public outreach and ensure that appropriate equipment and infrastructure are available for staff.

- g. In coordination with the public and others including the G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee, Wingham Trail Committee and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, create a **Trails Master Plan** to create a long-term vision for the development of a comprehensive trail network in North Huron. The Trails Master Plan should build upon the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan. Key trail initiatives identified include extending the Wingham Community Trail to create a trail loop; establishing accessible circulation areas within the Township's parks; developing trails within future residential areas; partnering with the G2G Trail Advisory Committee to promote the use of the G2G Trail and the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to encourage the use of the Wawanosh Conservation Area trails; and more. The Trails Master Plan should have regard for accessible design requirements, funding opportunities, and other strategies to encourage the use of trails in North Huron.
- h. Casual use of parks and trails has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing residents with unstructured physical activity opportunities and respite from social isolation. The Township should maintain its commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort within the parks system** through the strategic provision of park amenities such as seating, shade and outdoor fitness equipment, signage, and other features to encourage park and trail use. Replacing aging park amenities should be an on-going initiative.
- i. Initiatives identified in the Master Plan position the Township to be sustainable and align with North Huron's corporate goal of becoming more environmentally friendly include identifying new locations to establish **pollinator gardens**; strategic opportunities for **park naturalization**; establishing **tree canopy targets**; **planting trees and native species**; establishing **community gardens**, creating programs to **raise awareness about the environment**; using **sustainable building materials**; and partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to evaluate opportunities to **re-open the Nature Centre**.

Through the **online community survey**, respondents ranked the parks, recreation and cultural facilities that they felt should be a priority for public investment. While these results have been balanced together with all other public input, data and research, it provides insight into what survey respondents valued. The top ten parks, recreation and culture facility priorities are highlighted on the following page and where applicable, relevant directions that emerged from the Master Plan are identified.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

| Park, Recreation & Culture Priority | Current Level of Service in North Huron | Master Plan Direction |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Nature Trails | A variety of nature trails are found throughout the Township including the G2G Trail and Wingham Community Trail. | A Trails Master Plan should be undertaken to create a long-term vision for trails in North Huron. Consideration should be given to the conceptual trail network in this Master Plan and coordination with key trail groups including the Wingham Trail Committee, G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (see Recommendation #10). |
| 2. Farmers' Markets | The Township supports organizations that hold the Blyth Community Market and Wingham Farmers' Market. | The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted both Markets to some degree. Continuing to support these organizations is recommended to ensure their success over the long-term (see Recommendation #66). |
| 3. Arenas | The Township provides two ice pads – one at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and one at the Blyth Community Centre. A natural ice rink is at the Belgrave Community Centre, which is third-party operated. | With existing capacity at available arenas, the Township should focus on undertaking arena lifecycle replacement and explore strategies to improve ice usage and operational savings. |
| 4. Playgrounds | The Township provides three playgrounds, two in Wingham and one in Belgrave, which is third-party operated. A playground is located at Lion's Park in Blyth, which is owned by the Blyth Lions Club. | The Township should strive to provide playgrounds within 800-metres of all residents within settlement areas, without having to cross major barriers. Playgrounds should be replaced every 20-years or in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. Future playgrounds should have regard for barrier-free components (see Recommendation #32 and #33). |
| 5. Paved Multi-Use Trails | The Township does not currently have any paved multi-use trails. | Developing paved multi-use trails should be considered as a part of the Trails Master Plan (see Recommendation #10). |

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

| Park, Recreation & Culture Priority | Current Level of Service in North Huron | Master Plan Direction |
|--|--|--|
| 6. Splash Pads | The Township provides one splash pad at the Wingham Splash Pad and Playground. | Blyth was identified as a gap where there is no splash pad, though there is an outdoor wading pool at Lion’s Park, which is owned by the Blyth Lions Club. As a best practice, the Township is encouraged to engage the Blyth Lions Club to evaluate the feasibility of converting the outdoor pool to a splash pad to achieve operational and user benefits (see Recommendation #16). |
| 7. Acquisition of Parks and Open Space | The Township provides 21 hectares of active parkland in North Huron, which translates into a healthy supply of 4.2 hectares per 1,000 residents. In addition, residents have access to natural open spaces and outdoor spaces owned by others such as schools and conservation area. | The Township would be required to acquire 2.5 hectares of parkland by 2031 to maintain the current level of service. An emphasis should be placed on providing new parkland in Hutton Heights and the north end and east side of Blyth (see Recommendation #2). |
| 8. Fitness Studios | Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township offered group fitness opportunities at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex, Blyth Community Centre and Belgrave Community Centre. | The Township should continue to provide group fitness programs given that they are popular activities. To accommodate new programs and more participants, re-purposing underutilized public space should be considered (see Recommendation #22). |
| 9. Equipment-Based Fitness Centres | The Township provides fitness centre with equipment at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. | As the Township already has one fitness centre, emphasis should be placed on continuing to offer group fitness opportunities (see Recommendation #22). |
| 10. Community Gardens | The Township works with groups to undertake beautification initiatives throughout North Huron, but does not currently offer a community garden. | Establishing a community garden is one of the many initiatives identified in the Master Plan to be more sustainable from an environmental and community perspective (see Recommendation #6). |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Master Planning for Parks, Recreation & Culture

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan is intended to guide decision-making that responds to community needs and priorities using an evidence-based approach. With a growing emphasis on personal health and wellness, environmental and economic sustainability, and community vibrancy, high-quality parks, recreation and culture opportunities has never been more important. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how important parks, recreation and culture are to mental and physical health, sense of place and social cohesion. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way Canadians participate in their leisure time and the full extent of its impacts continued to be studied.

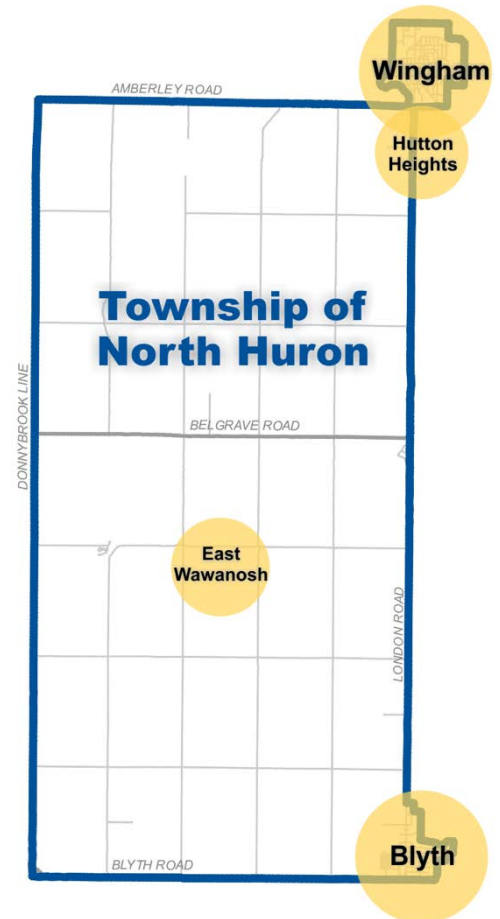
North Huron is a small rural, progressive community that recognizes the benefits that parks, recreation and culture has on making the Township an attractive place to live, work and play. North Huron is home to a range of parks, recreation and culture opportunities including the internationally known Blyth Festival and the birthplace of writer Alice Munro.

The Master Plan demonstrates North Huron’s commitment to enhancing leisure opportunities. It is a key initiative of Council’s Strategic Plan and will establish strategies and initiatives to meet the needs of residents over the next ten years. The Master Plan aligns with other community priorities and initiatives and should be implemented in conjunction with the Township’s Official Plan and related studies. Collaboration with community organizations and others will be required to achieve full implementation of the Master Plan. The scope of the Master Plan includes recreation and cultural facilities, programs, events, parks, open space, trails, and service delivery policies and practices.

A background review of reports, demographics, trends and data was conducted to inform the Master Plan. Consultation with the public, stakeholders, staff and Council was also undertaken to discuss strengths, challenges and opportunities, potential solutions and to generate buy-in for the Master Plan.

As a living document, the Master Plan will need to be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it responds to new opportunities and changing community needs. In doing so, the Master Plan will assist the Township in developing budgets and support the search for external funding and partnerships.

The Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan is a key initiative of Council’s Strategic Plan. It establishes strategies to meet the needs of residents over time and will require the Township to work collaboratively with community organizations and others to achieve full implementation of the Master Plan.



1.2 Planning Approach

The Master Plan was initiated in early 2021 and is comprised of three phases, which are highlighted below. Each phase has been designed to accomplish specific tasks and included internal meetings and reporting.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Phase 1 | <p>Research and Consultation Report</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial Project Team Meeting #1 (Virtual) 2. Background Review 3. Community Profile 4. Trends Analysis 5. Inventory of Parks, Recreation, and Culture Opportunities 6. Communications Strategy 7. Project Team Meeting #2 (Virtual) 8. Virtual Public Open House 9. Online Community Survey 10. Stakeholder Focus Groups (4 Virtual) 11. Council and Key Staff Interviews (10 Virtual) 12. Staff Workshop (1 Virtual) 13. Vision and Mission Statements and Guiding Principles 14. Draft Research and Consultation Report 15. Project Team Meeting #3 (Virtual) |
| Phase 2 | <p>Draft Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Program and Service Delivery Needs Assessment 17. Parks, Open Space, and Trails Needs Assessment 18. Recreation and Cultural Facility Needs Assessment 19. Draft Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan and Executive Summary 20. Council Presentation |
| Phase 3 | <p>Final Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Virtual Public Open House 22. Final Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan and Executive Summary 23. Council Presentation |

1.3 A Vision for Parks, Recreation & Culture

1.3.1 Vision Statement

Parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron are delivered by the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works and Facilities Department. It is imperative that these opportunities are aligned with the Township's corporate vision and to achieve this, these departments must demonstrate strong leadership and work collaboratively with others on a day-to-day basis and in long-term planning.

A vision for the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan tells a story of how parks, recreation and culture in North Huron will be viewed in the future, and in turn what the Township and its partners will strive towards achieving. The genesis of this vision stems from the common themes expressed through the community consultation for this Master Plan.

Vision Statement

To become a leader in the provision of activities, facilities, programs and services that support healthy and active lifestyle in the Township of North Huron through inclusive, accessible and high-quality parks, recreation and cultural services.

1.3.2 Mission Statement

A multi-departmental mission statement has been crafted for the Master Plan, which directs how the Township will specifically deliver parks, recreation and cultural services. In this sense, the Master Plan's mission statement describes what the Township does, who it does it for, and how the Township will go about its work.

The mission statement is an internal statement that guides the day-to-day activities of Township staff through the execution of their various roles and responsibilities associated with providing parks, recreation and culture services. The mission statement can also be used to provide direction to the Township's community-serving partners as they work with the departments to provide their services to North Huron residents.

Mission Statement

The Recreation & Community Services Department works in collaboration with the other Township departments, community organizations and volunteers to provide high quality parks, recreation and culture services to respond to the needs of the community.

1.3.3 Guiding Principles

The Master Plan’s Guiding Principles advance the Township’s role in parks, recreation and culture while supporting the corporate strategic priorities to varying degrees. The Township’s Strategic Plan makes it clear that the parks, recreation, culture system is integral to the corporate vision as there is strong relevance between this system and the priorities of the corporation. As a result, the Township’s strategic priorities are considered through the Master Plan’s Guiding Principles.

The Master Plan’s recommendations align with the Guiding Principles. Ideally, these principles will be considered by the Township’s various Departments as the Master Plan is implemented, as well as Township Council as a part of future decision-making processes relating to the local parks, recreation and culture system. The Guiding Principles are highlighted below (in no particular order).

| | |
|---|---|
| Active, Healthy and Connected Lifestyles | The Township will support activities that promote healthy living, physical activity and basic skill development for all residents. |
| Inclusion and Access | The Township will work with the community to ensure that all residents , regardless of age, ability, income, background or orientation, have access to parks, recreation and culture services. |
| Fiscal Sustainability | The Township will ensure long-term financial sustainability through cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate and reasonable application of user fees and pursuit of external funding opportunities. |
| Commitment to Service Excellence | The Township will strive to continually improve service delivery through appropriate staffing levels, effective policy development, customer service, resource optimization, innovative technologies, and professional development and training. |
| Invest in Infrastructure | The Township will maintain a safe and appropriate supply of parks, recreation and cultural facilities that are responsive to local needs and supported by appropriate staffing levels. |
| Strong Partnerships Build Strong Communities | The Township will facilitate and support partnerships in the delivery of high-quality parks, recreation and culture services to the mutual benefit of North Huron and its residents. |
| Coordinated Approach to Service Delivery | The Township will embrace a hybrid service delivery approach by sharing the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services with community organizations with a view of minimizing service duplication. |

1.4 Benefits of Parks, Recreation & Culture

The strength of parks, recreation and cultural services is crucial to the community's success and wellbeing. They contribute in a significant way to social, economic, and environmental priorities by providing spaces for services and programs that benefit residents and support community building. Universal access to parks, recreation and culture opportunities that address diverse needs and offer affordable, high-quality opportunities is vital to individual and community health and prosperity. The Township recognizes these benefits and will advance them through investment in the Master Plan and its implementation.

The **Framework for Recreation in Canada** reported that parks, recreation and cultural opportunities can:

Enhance mental and physical wellbeing – Research has found that there is a strong link between physical activity and improving mental and physical health. By providing access to physical activity opportunities, residents are more likely to live healthier lifestyles and reduce the strain on health care services and costs.

Enhance social well-being – Participation in parks, recreation and cultural opportunities can create a sense of inclusive belonging for individuals. Participation in activities, team sports, clubs and social organizations supports the healthy development of relationships and fosters overall social well-being.

Help build strong families and communities – Parks, recreation and cultural opportunities plays an important role in strengthening family bonds and community connectedness. Opportunities such as special events, arts and cultural programs, and related activities make neighbourhoods unique, create strong neighbourhoods, and contribute to strong civic pride and make communities attractive places to live.

Help people connect with nature – Studies have shown that exposure to nature can have a positive impact on mental health and personal well-being, including lower blood pressure, reduced stress, cognitive development and more.

Provide economic benefits – Parks, recreation and culture opportunities contributes to local economic development. These opportunities create jobs, fosters tourism and creates unique places for people to visit, work and play.

Source: Framework for Recreation in Canada. 2005.

1.5 Potential Impacts of COVID-19 on Parks, Recreation and Culture

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the demand for, and delivery of, parks, recreation and culture services and that change may be lasting; however, the ultimate scope and scale of change is unknown. As a result, long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the parks, recreation and culture sector plays in personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.

Recognizing that the situation is evolving and new information and guidance is emerging on a regular basis, North Huron must prepare for a wide range of scenarios. The following are some potential impacts the pandemic may have on the sector in the short- to longer-term.

- Continued population growth in less urbanized areas;
- Emphasis on health equity and access to parks and trails;
- Growing interest in unstructured, individual, and small group activities;
- Desire for outdoor recreation (including four seasons use), placing pressure on trails, parks, washrooms, etc.;
- A possible shift in prime-time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteerism and events;
- Substantial changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.), possibly requiring higher levels of service;
- Significant impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – people need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking of some third-party partnerships (schools, YMCAs, etc.); and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.).

2.0 Alignment with Strategic Documents

2.1 National Guiding Document

2.1.1 Framework for Recreation in Canada

The Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC) was developed through significant consultation with Canadians as to their thoughts on the benefits and importance of recreation. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – in collaboration with the senior levels of government and the Provincial Recreation and Parks Associations – developed a framework that rejuvenates the definition of recreation and parks, articulates the economic impacts of recreation and parks, identifies their benefits, and states five evidence-based goals for communities across Canada to strive towards.

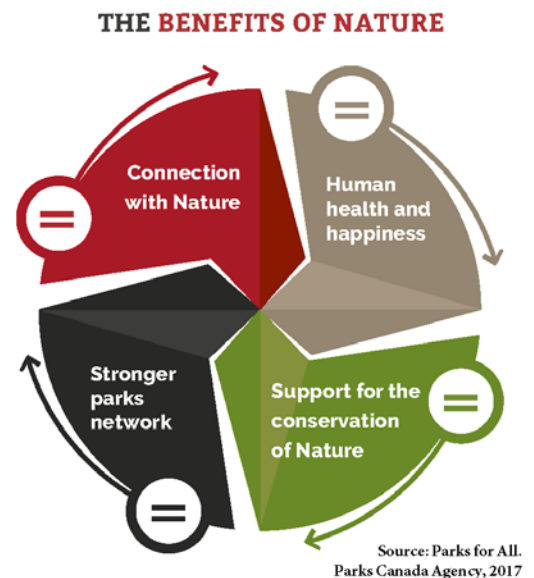
North Huron’s Master Plan presents an opportunity to recognize the framework, integrate elements of the FRC into the vision for the Recreation & Community Services Department, and ensure that the recommendations align with each of the FRC’s goals.



2.1.2 Parks for All

Parks for All is an Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community, published in 2017 through a collaboration between the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. This document aligns with and supports the Framework for Recreation in Canada, particularly the FRC’s third goal of “Connecting People and Nature”.

Parks for All focuses on how all Canadians benefit from healthy parks and natural areas and shares the community’s vision and goals for our parks. Parks for All includes a variety of perspectives that help form a distinct set of responsibilities and practices moving forward. Parks for All is intended to unite the parks community through specific actions, priorities and strategic directions. The plan is guided by four strategic directions: **Collaborate, Connect, Conserve, and Lead**.



2.1.3 Harcourt Report on Cities and Communities

The Government of Canada’s External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities compiled extensive research regarding the role that cities and communities should play in sustaining the prosperity of Canadians. The Committee, also referred to the Harcourt Commission after its Chair, released its landmark document entitled *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for All Canadians* in 2016. The Harcourt Commission report identified culture as being one of four pillars of community sustainability¹ based on observations from across Canada and around the world that demonstrate the multi-faceted benefits that a thriving arts, culture and heritage system can bring.

Although the sector is commonly associated with performing arts centres, museums and galleries, or studios, culture at its core is about the shared experiences between people that connects a community. The availability of arts and culture opportunities is very desirable, fostering vibrant and liveable communities, contributing to local knowledge and supporting the local economy. Arts and culture can include a wide-range of activities including visual and creative arts (e.g. music and dance), festivals and special events and local heritage.

Since the Harcourt Commission’s recognition of culture as a core component of sustainability, more and more municipalities have approached cultural planning in a strategic manner.

2.1.4 The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy

The 2016 Ontario Culture Strategy was built on a foundation of extensive public engagement regarding the value and significance of culture. Considerable effort was expended to investigate key trends affecting the cultural sector, how other jurisdictions in the world are responding to similar trends and striving to support and reconcile relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The document establishes the following vision for culture in Ontario:

“An Ontario where every person has the opportunity for creative expression and cultural participation, and where the diversity of our stories and communities is reflected, valued and celebrated, now and as part of our legacy to future generations.”

Ontario Culture Strategy Principles:

- Creativity and innovation;
- Quality of life and economic development;
- Diversity and inclusion;
- Respect for Indigenous peoples;
- Collaboration and partnerships; and
- Public value and accountability.

The Strategy contains four broad goals centred upon promoting and strengthening culture, economic development, and promoting the value of the arts throughout government. It is a five-year plan containing 9 key strategies that guide the provincial government in providing support for culture.

¹ Government of Canada. 2006. *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for All Canadians*. Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities.

2.1.5 Municipal Cultural Planning: A Toolkit for Ontario Municipalities

In 2011, the Government of Canada published a toolkit for municipal cultural planning, a term that it defines as “A municipal government-led process approved by Council, for identifying and leveraging a community’s cultural resources, strengthening the management of those resources, and integrating those cultural resources across all facets of local government planning and decision-making.”

Municipal cultural planning (MCP) is guided by five core consumptions:

- **Cultural Resources:** MCP embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events, and community cultural organizations.
- **Cultural Mapping:** MCP begins with cultural mapping, a systematic approach to identifying and recording a community’s tangible and intangible cultural resources (often using Geographic Information Systems).
- **Adopting a “cultural lens”:** MCP involves establishing processes to integrate culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making.
- **Cross-Sectoral Strategies:** MCP requires new partnerships or shared governance mechanisms (such as Cultural Roundtables) to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its community and business partners.
- **Networks and Engagement:** MCP involves strengthening networks across the cultural sector and comprehensive and ongoing strategies to support community engagement.

Municipal cultural planning is important because it benefits communities by harnessing their cultural resources and creative potential to achieve social and economic benefits. These benefits open doors to attracting new employment and population growth, increased tourism and trade, and building social capital and overall community well-being.

2.2 Strategic Municipal Documents

2.2.1 North Huron Strategic Plan 2020-2023

The following vision, mission, strategic priorities, goals, and relevant strategies have been set by the current term of Township Council (2020 – 2023).

Vision Statement

The Township of North Huron is a prosperous and engaged municipality that welcomes visitors, families, and residents through strong agriculture, development, culture, and tourism.

Mission Statement

The Township of North Huron strives to offer an affordable and sustainable high-quality of life by delivering excellent and efficient services to our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Table 1: Priorities, Goals and Strategies, North Huron Strategic Plan 2020-2023

| Priority Area and Goal | Relevant Strategies (paraphrased; not a complete list) |
|--|---|
| <p>Economy</p> <p>To build a stronger economy through residential growth; retail, commercial, and industrial development; tourism; and thriving agriculture.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve efficiency and timeliness of the development approval system • Complete and maintain an inventory of properties in the municipality • Collaborate with Huron County to promote business/development opportunities and tourism • Determine future of Wingham Airport • Review funding being allocated to Grants • Establish a visitor information centre at a physical location/kiosk • Facilitate the development of Hutton Heights |
| <p>Community</p> <p>To be a vibrant and welcoming community that is proud of its roots, fosters volunteerism, has a strong arts and cultural presence, and supports community initiatives and special events.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more efficient events approval policy process and market community events • Develop a process/program to recognize volunteers • Investigate opportunities to be recognized as a Youth Friendly Community • Prioritize accessibility in buildings and services • Complete a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan |
| <p>Governance and Modernization</p> <p>To be a fiscally sustainable, transparent, and forward-thinking municipality that works with its residents and stakeholders through communications and community engagement.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support advocacy efforts for the expansion of high-speed internet • Implement AODA requirements and ODA requirements • Support the Association of Municipalities of Ontario’s advocacy efforts for support of rural community needs • Develop a Community Engagement and Communications Strategy • Update digital processes (website, online payment options, etc.) • Implement professional development plans for staff • Evaluate the current size and structure of Council |

| Priority Area and Goal | Relevant Strategies (paraphrased; not a complete list) |
|---|--|
| <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>To be a municipality with well-maintained and thoughtfully planned infrastructure.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the standpipe in Wingham • Develop a fleet replacement schedule • Complete infrastructure mapping • Update an Asset Management Plan • Determine next steps related to surplus municipal infrastructure/assets |
| <p>Services</p> <p>To offer high-quality and well-balanced services that create a sense of belonging, support community well-being, promote safety, and encourage healthy and active lifestyles.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue being involved in physician recruitment efforts • Continue to deliver public education, fire prevention, and fire service programs • Review service agreements with neighbouring municipalities and amend as appropriate • Conduct a service delivery review contingent on external funding • Support local housing initiatives • Explore the feasibility of expanding daycare services in Blyth • Explore feasibility of the relocation of the Blyth Library • Develop a Recreation Master Plan |
| <p>Environment</p> <p>To protect our natural environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support a healthy ecosystem.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Township’s involvement in the Tree Planting Program • Explore educational opportunities for waste reduction and diversion • Explore adding more electric vehicle charging stations • Increase priority of sustainable and/or energy efficient products • Implement energy conservation efforts to reduce the carbon footprint in all Township facilities • Explore a Township Environmental Advisory Committee |

2.2.2 North Huron Official Plan 2014 Consolidation

The Township of North Huron Official Plan provides a framework for the physical development of the community, while taking into consideration important social, economic, and environmental matters. Among other items, the Official Plan directs where new development should be located and the planning of parks, trails, and community facilities. Several new legislative requirements, policy frameworks, and initiatives have come into effect since the Township’s Official Plan was approved – such as changes to the *Planning Act*, 2020 Provincial Policy Statement, and Bill 197 (*COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act*), which may result in revisions to the Township’s Official Plan.

Of relevance to the Master Plan, policies related to recreation uses are contained in Section 7 of the Official Plan. Policies encourage recreational uses in appropriate locations and in a manner that is complementary to surrounding features and land uses. Section 8 of the Official Plan speaks to policies regarding open space and parkland.

2.2.3 Huron County Accessibility Plan (2021)

Adopted in response to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), the County’s Accessibility Plan is a policy document that demonstrates Huron County’s commitment to making the community more accessible and inclusive to persons with disabilities.

Specifically pertaining to the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan, the County’s Accessibility Plan guides the design of public spaces by ensuring compliance with the Design of Public Spaces regulation as it applies to newly constructed or redeveloped township-owned public spaces.

2.2.4 Huron County Cultural Plan (2020)

Huron County’s most recent Cultural Plan was approved in 2020. The Cultural Plan highlights the benefits of culture, past planning efforts, current opportunities that exist, and a strategic framework to achieve five goals over a three-year period – creative placemaking, communication, collaboration, social inclusion and leadership and support.



3.0 Township of North Huron Community Profile

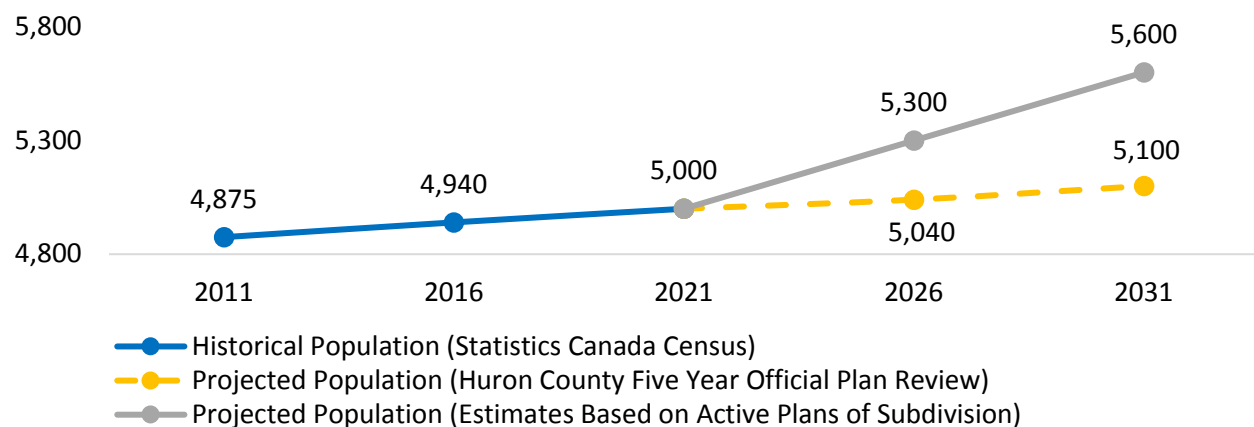
3.1 Historical and Projected Population

North Huron’s population generally remained unchanged between the 2011 and 2016 Census at 4,940 residents. Geographically, North Huron is described as a rural community with urban population centres. Wingham is the Township’s largest community with nearly two-thirds of the Township’s population (2,930 residents). Approximately 1,000 residents reside in Blyth and the remainder of the population live in the Township’s other settlements or the rural area, which is known as East Wawanosh.²

Huron County is currently in the process of undertaking a 5-Year Review of its Official Plan, which contains proposed population projections for North Huron. An extrapolation of these projections suggests that **the Township’s current population is 5,000 residents (rounded) for 2021, which is used as the baseline for the Master Plan.**

The County’s population forecast suggests that North Huron will experience modest population growth over the planning period as the Township is projected to add approximately 100 people by 2031, reaching a population of 5,100 residents.³ This projection may underestimate actual population growth in the Township given that there are currently a number residential subdivision development projects in Wingham, Hutton Heights and Blyth, which are in various stages of the planning process and are anticipated to add approximately 254 new residential units to the Township’s housing supply over the next ten years. Huron County estimates that the current average household size is 2.4 persons, which suggests that there could be approximately 610 additional residents in North Huron by the end of the planning period, representing a total population of 5,600 people (rounded). The Township will need to monitor population growth over the next ten years and consider the impacts on the Master Plan’s recommendations.

Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population, 2011 to 2031



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 and 2016 Census; Huron County 5 Year Official Plan Review; Estimates based on active plans of subdivision (254 units) and persons per household (2.4 persons).

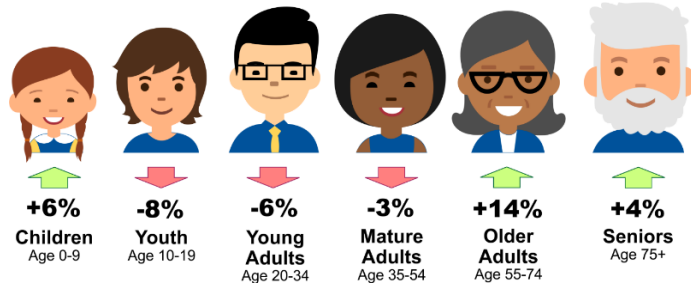
² Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

³ Huron County. Official Plan Amendment No. 5 (5 Year Review). May 5, 2021.

3.2 Population by Age Group

North Huron’s age profile provides insight into the types of parks, recreation and culture opportunities that are, or will be in demand. For example, a large market of children and youth tends to bolster physical activities such as sports, while a larger segment of older adults and seniors tend to drive demand for low impact and cultural activities that centre around social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

Figure 2: Population Growth by Age Group, 2011 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 and 2016 Census

Similar to other communities, North Huron’s population is aging. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, North Huron’s median age increased from 42.3 years to 43.4 years, which is lower than Huron County (median age of 46.3 years), but higher than the Province (41.3 years).

Additional evidence of an aging community is revealed by looking at population growth by age group. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the number of older adults (age 55 to 69) and seniors increased by 14% and 4%, respectively. The population of children (age 0 to 9) also increased by 6%. By contrast, the number of youth (age 10 to 19), young adults (age 20 to 34), and mature adults (age 35 to 54) declined by 3% to 8%. While the Township can be expected to see an increased need for services for older adults, there will be a continued need to ensure that a balanced spectrum of parks, recreation, and culture facilities, and programs and services are provided for all age groups.

3.3 Income and Education

Research has found that income and education levels influence (or are at least an indicator of) participation levels in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Generally speaking, the higher a person’s level of income and education, the more likely they are to participate in leisure activities.

The 2016 Census reported that North Huron’s median income was \$62,432 in 2015, which was lower compared to Huron County (median income of \$65,944), and the Province (\$74,287). Fourteen percent (14%) of residents are considered to be experiencing low-income, which is consistent with Huron County and the Province.

In terms of educational attainment, 46% of North Huron residents have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, which is lower than Huron County (47%) and the Province (55%).

A potential implication of North Huron’s income and education profile is that some residents may face barriers to participation and may be less likely to engage in parks, recreation, and culture activities. Financial barriers to participation may be further experienced in North Huron and surrounding area through the recent introduction of non-resident user fees. Some residents and organizations may also experience financial challenges due to the impact of COVID-19 as a result of lost wages or revenue streams.

4.0 Community Consultation

4.1 Communications Strategy

Consultation with residents, community stakeholders, Council and staff is critical to understanding current issues and future opportunities for enhancing parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron. A communication strategy was developed to promote public dialogue throughout the course of the Master Plan process. The following consultation activities were held:

- Initial and Final Virtual Public Information Centre
- Community Survey
- Stakeholder Focus Groups (4)
- Staff Workshop
- Interviews with Council and Key Staff (10)

The consultation process engaged 484 households, representing over 1,100 people, and 27 community stakeholders. Opportunities to provide input and feedback were promoted through the Township's website, social media, news articles, email distribution and word-of-mouth. A project webpage and email address were maintained for the duration of the planning process.

Note: The information and suggestions presented in this section should not be interpreted as recommendations. Community input has not been altered even in the instances where comments may incorrectly reflect the township's actual policies, practices or service levels.

4.2 Initial Public Information Centre

An Initial Public Information Centre was held at the beginning of the planning process to raise awareness about the Master Plan and how the public can get involved. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Information Centre was held virtually. Information boards were presented on the project webpage that contained details about the Master Plan, key background information and how the public could get involved.

Township of North Huron

Parks, Recreation & Culture MASTER PLAN

The Township of North Huron is developing a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP) to guide and manage the direction of parks, open spaces, recreation, and culture opportunities over the next ten years.

How can you provide input!

Here's how you can get involved to make sure your voice is heard:

- Review the following information to **learn about the project**.
- [Click here](#) to complete the **Community Survey**. The survey will be open until Friday, May 7, 2021.
- Submit **written comments** to the Township or send an e-mail to info@northhuron.ca.



mbpc
Monteith • Brown
planning consultants

4.3 Community Survey

An on-line community survey was prepared and available to complete between mid-April and early May 2021. The survey was available to complete online via the Township’s website or by hardcopy. The survey collected input related to participation rates, usage patterns and community priorities.

A total of 484 responses were received and analyzed. Due to the self-administered format of the survey, results should not be considered statistically significant or representative of the entire population. Being a voluntary self-directed survey, respondents were not required to respond to all questions and thus response rates for each question may vary. Survey highlights are summarized in this section, while a complete summary of the survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

4.3.1 Summary of Respondents

The following is a high-level summary of the demographic profile of responding households:

- The demographic make-up of responding households is highlighted in the following table. For comparison, the distribution of the Township’s population by age group is also summarized.

| Age Group | Size Sample Size of Responding Households | Distribution of Township Population (2016 Census) |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Children (Ages 0 to 9) | 15% | 12% |
| Youth (Ages 10 to 19) | 14% | 12% |
| Young Adults (Ages 20 to 34) | 13% | 22% |
| Mature Adults (Ages 35 to 54) | 24% | 26% |
| Older Adults (Ages 55 to 69) | 21% | 19% |
| Seniors (Ages 70+) | 12% | 7% |

- Over half of respondents (55%) were residents living in Wingham. 12% of respondents were from Blyth and 10% were from rural areas (e.g., East Wawanosh); 18% of respondents were non-residents.
- The median age of respondents was 57 years (2016 Census median age was 43).

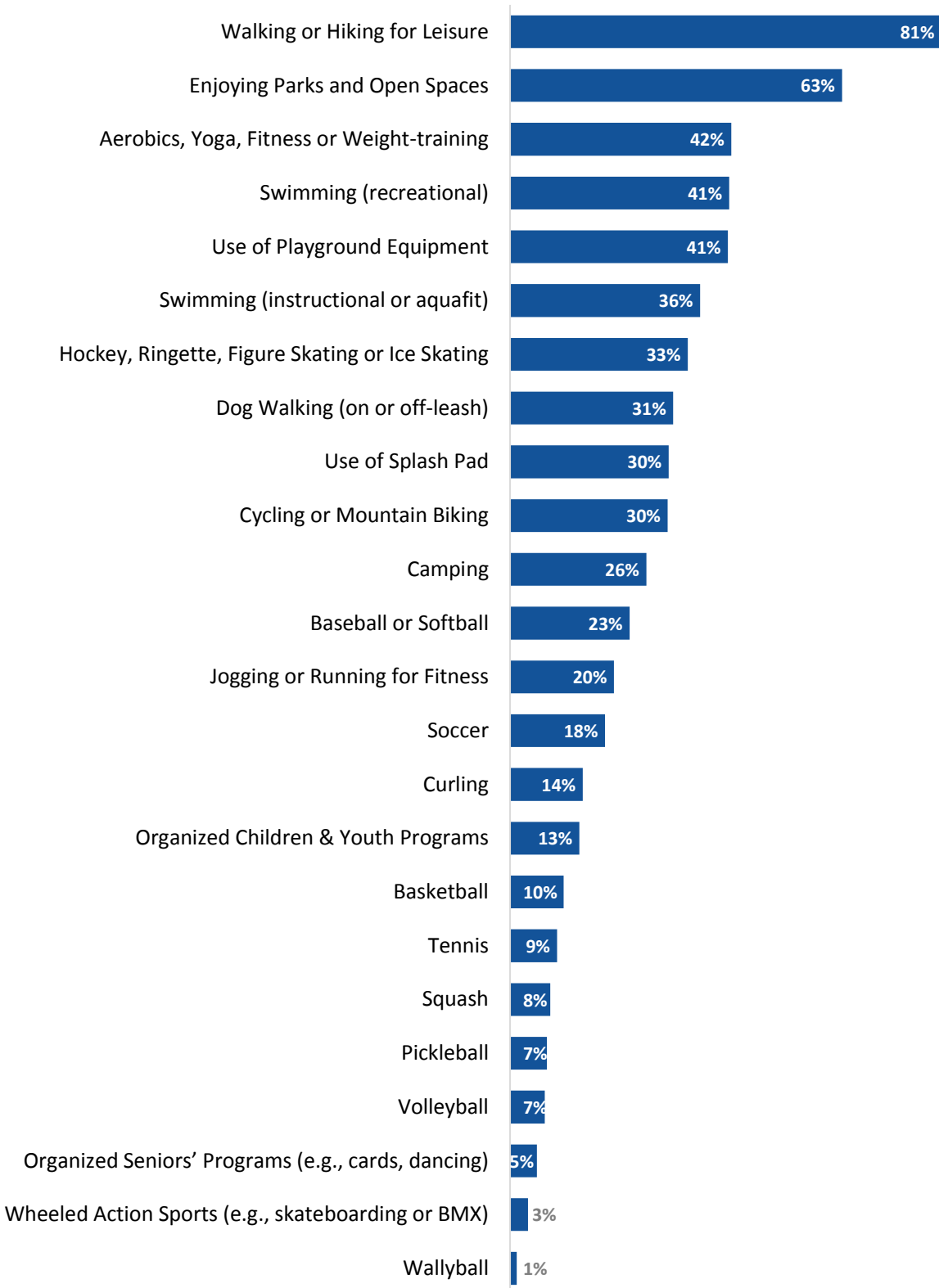
4.3.2 Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

In 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), four-out-of-five (81%) respondents said that they participated in walking or hiking for leisure, which was the most popular activity. This is a common result in surveys as walking and hiking are activities that can be done by all ages. Other popular parks and recreation activities included enjoying parks and open spaces (63%), aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight-training (42%), recreational swimming (41%) and using playground equipment (41%) (Figure 3).

It is notable that the top ten activities are almost all unstructured and self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with broader participation trends. Organized sports such as soccer and baseball tend to rank lower as they are activities that interest a subset of the community.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

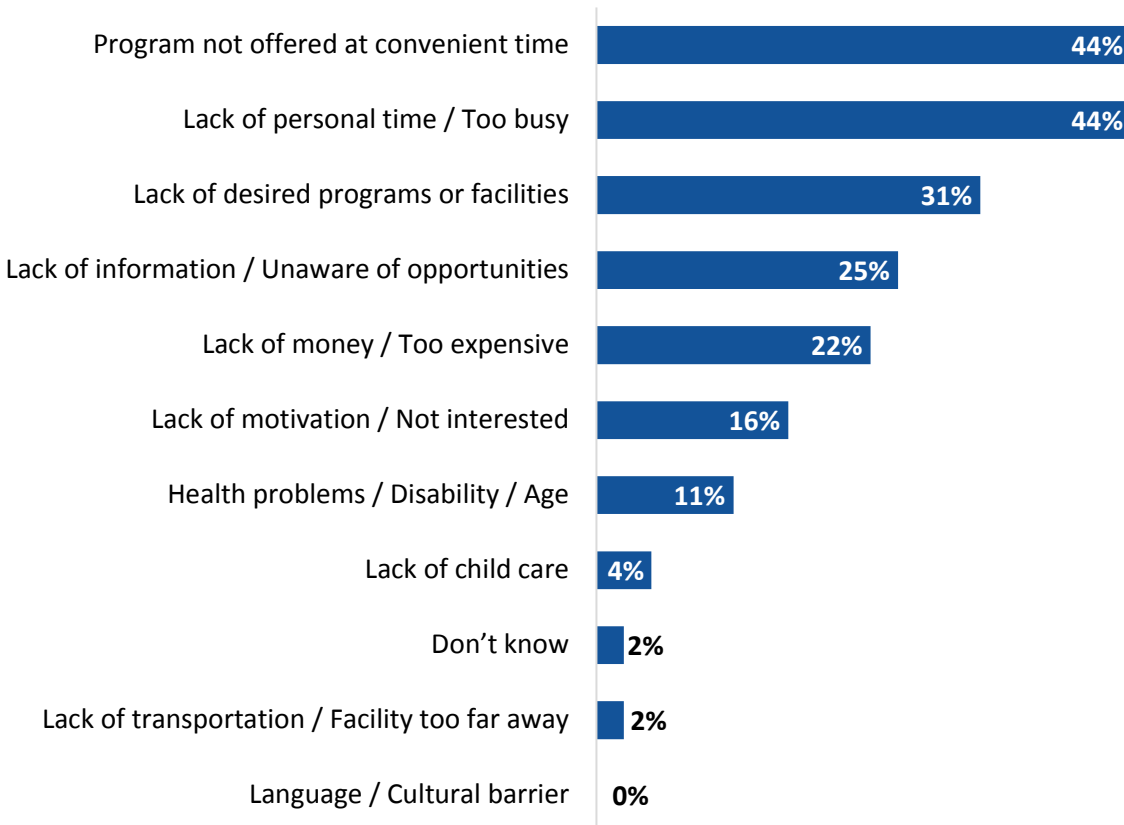
Figure 3: Most Popular Parks and Recreation Activities in 2019 (n=475)



Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly one-in-six (15%) respondents indicated that they were not able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as they would have liked. Among these respondents, the program not being available or the lack of personal time/too busy were the most common barriers (44% each). Other common barriers included a lack of desired programs or facilities (31%) and a lack of information/unaware of opportunities (25%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Participation Barriers to Parks and Recreation Activities, 2019 (n=89)



Respondents identified suggestions for parks and recreation opportunities that they would like to see in North Huron that are not currently available. As illustrated in Table 2, a dog park was the most common request that was made, which was followed by a skateboard/BMX park and walking trails.

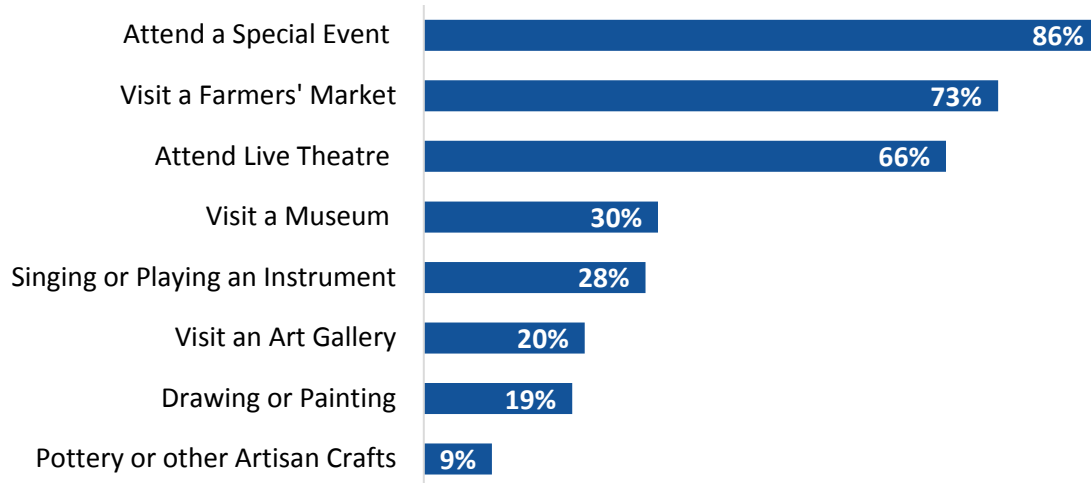
Table 2: Top Ten Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities (n=174)

| Top Ten Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Dog Park | 6. Camping |
| 2. Skateboard / BMX Park | 7. Gymnastics/Dance Classes |
| 3. Walking Trails | 8. Youth Programs |
| 4. Fitness Classes (e.g., Bootcamp, Cross Fit, etc.) | 9. Outdoor Basketball Courts |
| 5. Water Activities (e.g., Howson's Dam) | 10. Splash Pads |

4.3.3 Participation in Arts and Culture

In 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), attending a special event (86%) was the most popular arts and culture activity/event among respondents. Visiting the farmers’ market (73%), attending live theater (66%), and visiting a museum (30%) were also popular activities (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Most Popular Arts and Cultural Activities in 2019 (n=441)



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, one-in-six (17%) respondents indicated that they were not able to participate in arts and cultural activities and events as often as they would like. Among this group, a lack of information or unaware of opportunities was identified as the most common participation barrier (39%). Other barriers included lack of desired programs or facilities (37%), a lack or personal time or too busy (28%), programs not offered at convenient times (21%) and lack of money or too expensive (21%). Figure 6 summarizes the most common participation barriers that were identified. Other barriers that were reported included the museum closing and accessibility.

Figure 6: Participation Barriers to Arts and Culture events and activities, 2019 (n=134)



Table 3 highlights the top ten arts and cultural opportunities that respondents would like to see offered in North Huron that are not currently available. A broad range of suggestions were received including live music in the park, a larger variety of classes (art, music, writing, theatre, cooking, etc.), and a desire for historical exhibits.

Table 3: Top Ten Requested Arts and Cultural Opportunities (n=122)

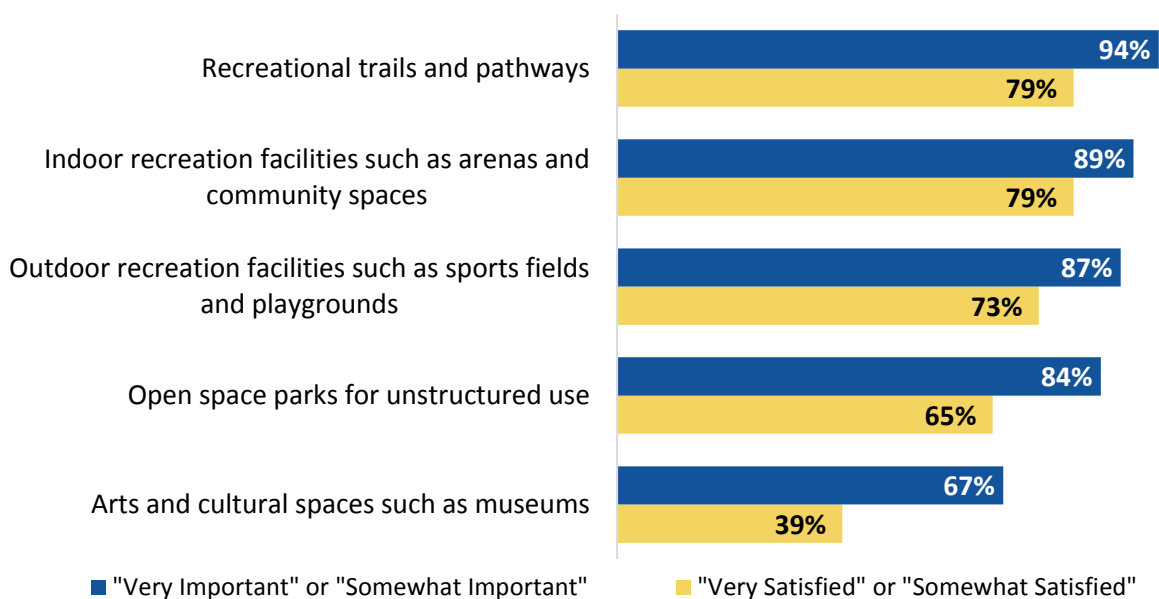
| Top Ten Requested Arts and Cultural Opportunities | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Music in the Park | 6. Music Classes |
| 2. Art Classes | 7. Outdoor Festivals |
| 3. Museum/History Exhibits | 8. Writing Classes |
| 4. Art Exhibitions and Galleries | 9. Theatre Classes |
| 5. Outdoor Movies/Movie Theatres | 10. Cooking Classes |

4.3.4 Importance and Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their level of importance and satisfaction with respect to recreation trails, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, open space, and arts and cultural spaces. Figure 7 summarizes the proportion of respondents who felt that these facilities were “somewhat important” and “very important” and if they were “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the facilities in North Huron. Respondents who felt that they were not important, not satisfied, neutral or were unsure are not shown.

Generally speaking higher levels of importance paired with high levels of satisfaction typically indicates that expectations are being met. With this in mind, expectation levels are not being met in all areas, with the largest discrepancy in arts and cultural spaces. This finding suggests that there is room for improvement in all areas.

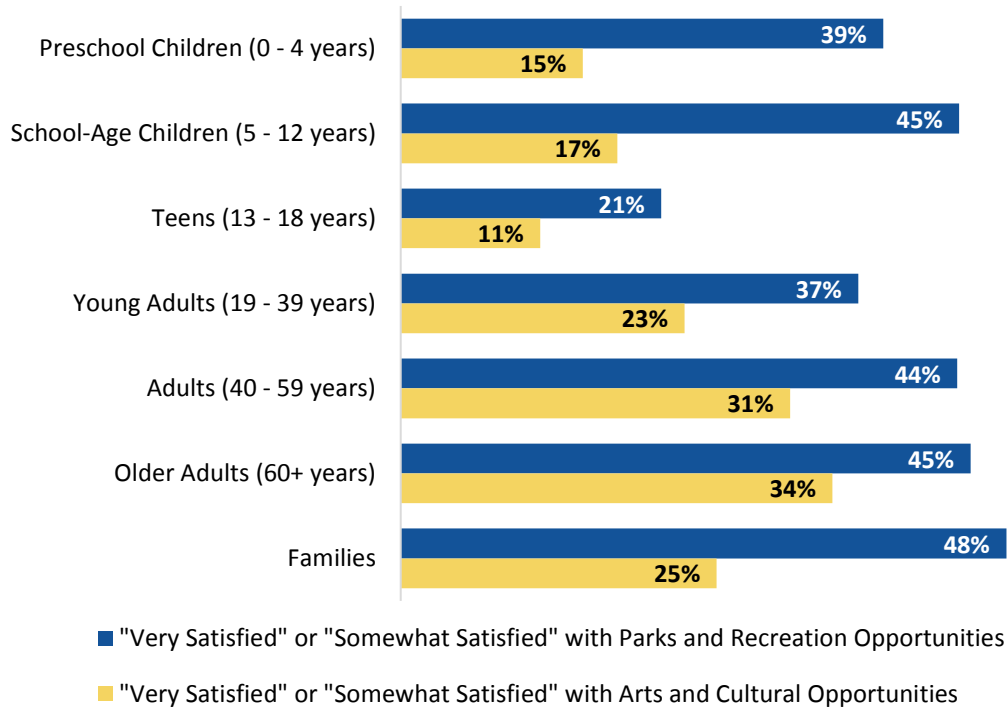
Figure 7: Importance and Satisfaction Levels of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities



Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 8 illustrates the proportion of respondents who were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with parks, recreation, arts and cultural opportunities in North Huron by age group. Generally speaking respondents were least satisfied with parks, recreation, arts and cultural opportunities for teens (ages 13 to 18). This is a common finding in many communities as there is often a perception that there are not enough opportunities for this age cohort. Satisfaction levels for arts and cultural opportunities are generally lower for all age groups compared to parks and recreation opportunities. These findings suggest that there are opportunities to improve satisfaction levels among all age groups

Figure 8: Satisfaction Levels with Parks, Recreation, Arts and Cultural Opportunities

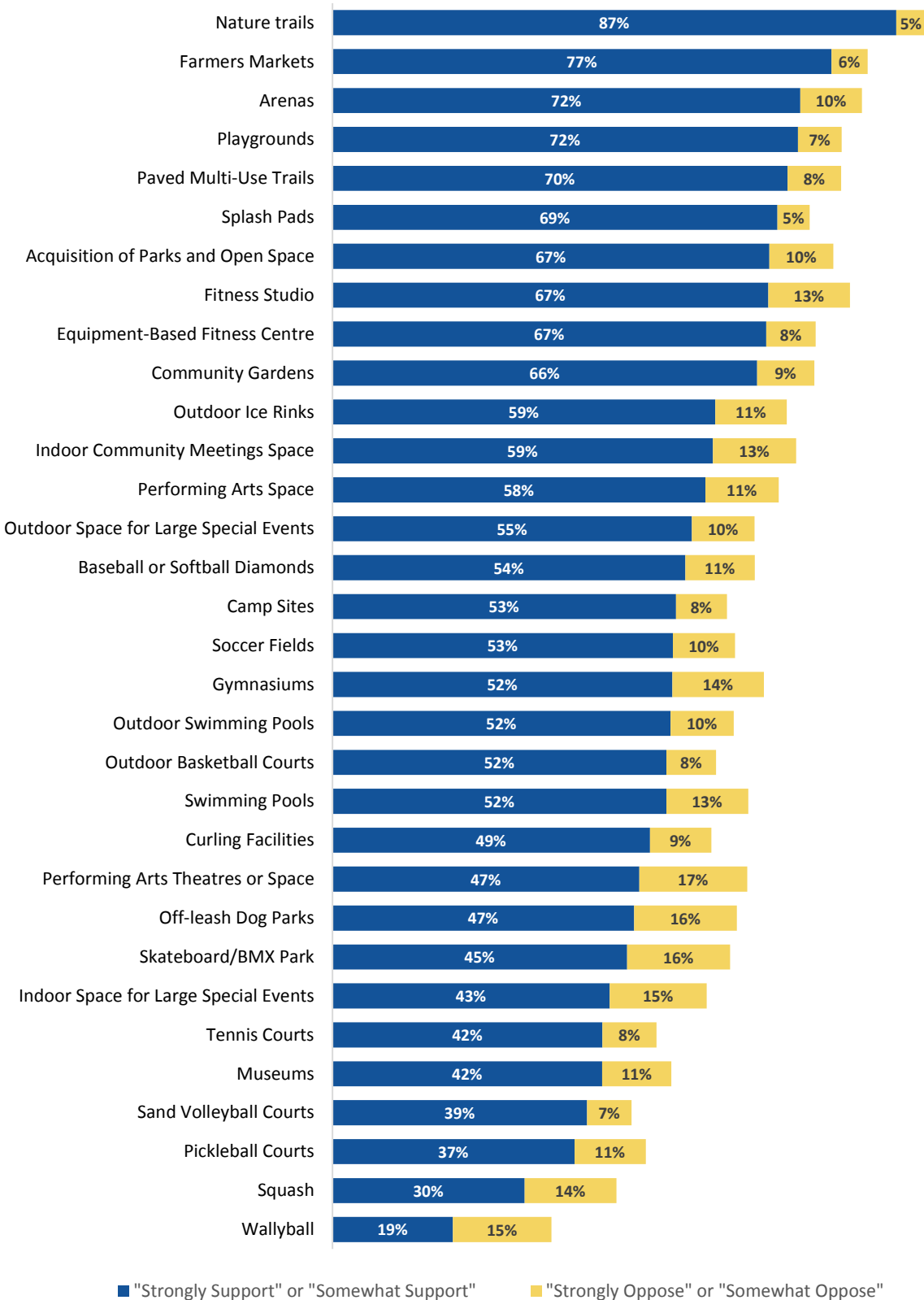


4.3.5 Priorities for Investment

Figure 9 illustrates respondents' level of support for spending additional public funds on improving existing or developing new parks, recreation and culture facilities. Consistent with trends in the sector, facilities or amenities that facilitate unstructured and self-scheduled activities were most commonly supported for additional spending. The top five supported facilities were nature trails (87%), farmers markets (77%), arenas (72%), playgrounds (72%) and paved multi-use trails (70%).

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 9: Support for public spending on new or improved parks, recreation, arts and culture facilities



4.3.6 Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities

Nearly half (45%) of respondents indicated that they have been less physically active since the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents indicated that they have used outdoor parks and trails more frequently due to restrictions and plan to continue using them at a higher rate when restrictions are lifted. Due to restrictions on programming throughout the pandemic, many expressed an eagerness to return to their typical physical activity levels. As the pandemic has been a financial burden for some, there were requests for free or lower cost programs so everyone could get involved. Going forward, respondents expressed that they would feel more comfortable participating in outdoor activities compared to using indoor space.

4.3.7 Additional Survey Responses

Respondents had an opportunity to provide additional input to be considered in the development of the Master Plan. Many comments that were received indicated that the Township should focus on reinvesting in and optimizing the use of existing facilities rather than building new space as some concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on tax rates. There were requests for more programs or activities for youth and teenagers to engage and socialize, such as drop-in activities at the community centres, dances and game nights. It is noted that the Township has attempted to offer activities for youth and teens in the past with limited success due to low interest. Comments supporting the Blyth Campground and Howson Dam were also received as were concerns regarding the impact of non-resident user fees.



4.4 Stakeholder Focus Groups

North Huron is proud to have a variety of dedicated community groups that support the parks, recreation and culture system in the Township. Four stakeholder focus group sessions were held with organizations on May 25 and 26, 2021 to discuss various aspects of North Huron’s parks, recreation and culture system. Stakeholders were grouped based on the type of organization, which were made up of service clubs, sports organizations, and other volunteer groups. Stakeholder sessions were attended by a total of 26 participants representing 27 organizations, including those listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Stakeholder Focus Group Participants

| Indoor Recreation and Sport Stakeholders | Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Campground Stakeholders |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blyth Adult Broomball • Blyth Brussels Minor Hockey • Blyth Junior Broomball • Original 6 Hockey – Wingham • Wingham Ironmen • Wingham Minor Hockey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blyth Minor Ball • Barn Dance Historical Society • Blyth BIA • Blyth Threshers • Pickleball – Wingham • Wingham Smokies Baseball • Wingham Trail Committee |
| Community, Social and Service Stakeholders | Arts and Cultural Stakeholders |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgrave Community Centre Board • Blyth Legion & Ladies Auxiliary • Blyth Lions Club • Friends of the Village of Blyth • Wingham & District Horticultural Society • Wingham BIA • Wingham Lions Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Munro Festival of the Short Story • Blyth Festival • Community Living - Theatre Group • Muskrat Festival • North Huron Museum Committee |

Due to COVID-19, stakeholder focus group sessions were conducted virtually. This section collectively summarizes the key themes from the discussion sessions.

- Participants were **very proud** of the fact that there is a wide variety of parks, recreation and culture amenities in the Township, particularly given the size of North Huron. Particular references were made to the community centres, arenas, indoor pool and fitness spaces, theatres, museum, parks, campground, trails and special events.
- The dedication of **community organizations and volunteers** was viewed as a strength in the community. It was expressed that volunteers are the backbone of many community initiatives such as special events, fundraising, delivering key services, and assisting with providing and/or maintaining facility space. Some groups have experienced volunteer fatigue and challenges with attracting new volunteers, particularly among the younger demographic.
- There was a general consensus that the **COVID-19 pandemic** has impacted organizations in various ways. Membership and participation levels among sports organizations have declined

considerably since the beginning of the pandemic. However, it was felt that there is a pent-up demand for parks, recreation and culture activities that will assist with normalizing participation levels when it is safe to re-introduce programming. Participants have also observed increased use of outdoor spaces and trails, particularly the G2G Trail and Wingham Community Trail.

- Suggestions to **improve parks, recreation and culture opportunities** were made including maximizing the use of existing assets, improving the quality of facilities to enhance the user experience and ensuring that spaces are inclusive and accessible for all members of the community.
- It was mentioned that the Township's public spaces should be **community hubs and gathering spaces** that are welcoming of residents and visitors in North Huron. To achieve this, suggestions were made to maximize the use of existing assets (before building new ones), improve the quality of facilities to enhance the user experience and ensure that spaces are inclusive and accessible for all residents and visitors.
- A variety of suggestions were expressed to **strengthen parks, recreation and culture opportunities** in North Huron including exploring new trail opportunities that direct users to the downtown areas (e.g., signage), opportunities for youth (e.g., basketball, tennis, skateboarding, etc.), resurfacing the existing tennis courts at F.E. Madill Secondary School, and exploring new special event opportunities such as outdoor performing arts (e.g., theatre and music concerts). Better use of the newly renovated Wingham Town Hall Theatre (available for public rentals) was also suggested, such as more performances geared towards the younger demographic.
- There is a desire for the Township to **continue supporting community organizations** to ensure that they are successful and sustainable, rather than duplicating services. This may be a collaborative process with others including community groups, Huron County and the Huron County Library, which may already have resources to assist groups. This may include supporting organizations with attracting volunteers and coordination between organizations. The Township may also have a role in elevating the importance of local arts and culture resources to support grassroots initiatives as well as to ensure that regional and national events continue to be successful.

4.5 Staff Workshop

A workshop was held on May 17, 2021, to provide an opportunity for Township staff to share their valuable expertise as part of the planning process. The session was attended by 12 individuals representing various positions related to parks, recreation and culture including facility operators, recreation programmers, aquatics and fitness staff, and administration. Discussion topics were wide-ranging and key themes are highlighted below:

- Staff are proud of the **variety of facilities, programs and services** that are provided by the Recreation & Community Services Department including the indoor recreation facilities in Wingham and Blyth, parks and campground, and cultural assets such as the theatres.

- The **relationships and partnerships with community organizations and others** (e.g., school boards) was recognized as a strength as staff felt that the contributions of these groups were crucial to the success of the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in the Township.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has impacted the way residents participate. Increased use of outdoor spaces such as parks and trails have been observed. Concerns were raised with respect to whether or not residents and customers would return to using the Township's indoor spaces once it is considered safe to do so.
- The impact of **non-resident fees for recreation programs** was discussed in terms of ensuring sustainable programming as all Township programs depend upon participation from outside the community to remain viable. Coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff raised concerns about the ability to achieve pre-pandemic usage and revenue levels. *Note: Council recently decided to eliminate the non-resident fee.*
- It was expressed that **the Township should lead the delivery of programs, services and special events** to ensure that they are visible within the community. The Township may have more resources and flexibility to establish and operate programs, and also to position these opportunities to be welcoming and inclusive of all residents in the community. Volunteers could be engaged to support the delivery of these opportunities as necessary.
- There is a need to continue to strengthen **communication** with the public and raise awareness and the opportunities that are available.
- From an **organizational** standpoint, concerns were raised regarding the re-organization of staff and responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and Public Works, which has resulted in challenges such as short staffing and confusion in the community regarding the roles and responsibilities of each department. The need for succession planning was raised due to some staff approaching retirement age, as well as ensuring staff support and appreciation is a priority (e.g., training and recognition, career advancement, etc.), and ensuring that policies and procedures are in place to address unique Departmental practises and programming (e.g. part-time staff benefits, staff scheduling related to on-call and overtime, recognition, evening and weekend facility operations, safety and security, etc.).

4.6 Council and Staff Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the Director of Recreation & Community Services, CAO, Reeve and members of Council to provide an opportunity for key Township decision makers to offer their input for consideration in the Master Plan. Due to the nature of the discussions, a summary of input was not prepared; however, the key themes that emerged from these sessions are considered in the preparation of the Master Plan.

4.7 Final Public Information Centre

A virtual Final Public Information Centre was held on the Township's website to present the draft key directions to test with the public and solicit feedback. The Final Public Information Centre was promoted through the Township's website, social media, news articles, word of mouth, at Council meetings, press release, and more. A summary of the planning process was also presented including highlights from the community profile, trends, consultation strategy and key themes, and the draft vision, mission and guiding principles. 50 individuals and organizations provided feedback on the draft key directions. The following is a summary of key themes from the feedback that was received. The feedback has been reviewed, considered and where appropriate, revisions to the Master Plan have been undertaken as a part of the finalization process. Input received from the feedback process can be found in Appendix B.

- Respondents appreciated the fact that the Township has a variety of parks, recreation and culture opportunities that have been considered as a part of the Master Plan process. Support was received for expanding the trails network, promoting unstructured activities, continuing to engage and provide opportunities for youth, general park improvements, directions that focused on improving the use of existing assets, strategies to promote inclusive play opportunities, and more.
- Support was received to continue maintaining the Blyth Campground as some respondents felt that it plays a key role in supporting local economic development and tourism, as well as outdoor recreation given the connection to the G2G Trail and proximity to other amenities at the Blyth & District Community Centre and Lion's Park. It was felt that enhanced marketing and promotion, potentially in partnership with community groups, together with campground upgrades, could improve the use of the campground. Continuing to monitor campground usage post-pandemic was also suggested.
- A greater emphasis should be placed on recognizing the fact that the G2G Trail runs through the Blyth Village; improved promotion of the G2G Trail was suggested to promote its use.
- There was a desire to keep the Library Branches in their current locations; extending operating hours of the Blyth Library Branch was suggested to improve usage.
- Support and opposition was received for some key directions in Blyth including new daycare service, re-purposing the ball diamond, investing in a new skateboard park and playground, and working with the Blyth Lions Club to explore the feasibility of converting the outdoor wading pool to a splash pad. The desire for a BMX pump track was also expressed.
- Marketing and promotion of the parks, recreation and cultural opportunities should be improved, such as an online and hardcopy recreation guide.
- Volunteer groups are highly valued in North Huron and should continue to be supported.
- Suggestions were made to continue to maintain the concession spaces; it was also suggested that the concession spaces could be used for cooking classes.
- The Howson Dam should be recognized in the Master Plan. Note: Council has made a decision to decommission the Howson Dam given its advanced age and refurbishment costs.

5.0 Parkland, Open Space and Trail Opportunities

5.1 A Definition for Parkland and Open Space

The Township of North Huron Official Plan identifies that parkland and open space have many functions. They act as locations for recreation activity, supports local tourism, beautifies the community, serve as buffers between land uses, and have important ecological functions such as managing stormwater, improving air quality and tree canopy cover, and more.

The focus of this Master Plan is on park spaces that facilitate active and passive recreational activities. These lands are the focus of parkland dedication under the Planning Act. Section 8.1 of the Township's Official Plan defines these spaces as follows:

***Active recreation** means activities that result in a healthy increase in aerobic rate. They are typically associated with developed facilities, trails and structured activities. In contrast, passive recreation means self-directed activities that require few facilities. While **passive recreation** typically does not result in increased aerobic rates, it provides important benefits for mental health and stress reduction.*

Active and passive recreational uses in parks provide more informal space in order to promote unstructured and organized recreational activities, as well as emerging interests. These may also incorporate elements that cater to individual, physical and wellness, through features such as exercise, stretching stations, personal reflection, meditation gardens, and pathways.

The natural environment is an important component of the Township's open space system as it has important environmental and ecological functions to protect, preserve and restore watercourses, wetlands, woodlands, areas of natural and scientific interest, valleylands, and other environmentally sensitive areas. While these areas have no to low development potential, passive recreation is permitted.

5.2 Parkland Classification System

The Township does not currently have a parkland classification system, which can be used to guide the development of parks by directing usage, size, form, function, and/or level of amenity found within different types of parks. A classification system can also be used as an educational tool to help the public and the development industry with understanding what a park may include and position parks to be compatible with adjacent land uses. The significance of a parkland classification system can be further heightened when it is incorporated within an Official Plan.

Table 5 contains a classification hierarchy that should be used as a guide to inform the planning and design of new parks and revitalization of existing parks. This classification system is based on what currently exists within the Township's parks system, as well as park planning best practices. The proposed classification system is composed of three park categories – Township Park, Neighbourhood Park and Parkette.

Table 5: Recommended Parkland Classification System

| Parkland Classification |
|---|
| <p>Township Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to serve all residents in the Township, as well as regional visitors. • Permitted uses include lit sports fields, splash pads, hard surface sport courts, playgrounds, skateboard parks, cultural and special event spaces, public art, elements of historical or cultural significance, specialized facilities, open space for unstructured passive activities, trails, landscaping, naturalized areas and supporting amenities such as on-site parking, shade and seating. • Ideally co-located with community and recreation facilities, along major roads that can be accessible by car and active transportation. • Size may vary depending on the intended function of the park. |
| <p>Neighbourhood Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to serve residents living within walking distance of the neighbourhood • Permitted uses include one sports field for casual play, hard surface sport courts, playgrounds, trails, open space and supporting amenities such as shade and seating. • Ideally located in highly visible areas that can be accessed by active transportation. • Size may vary depending on the intended function of the park; however, they should not be less than 0.8 hectares. |
| <p>Parkettes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to create a sense of place and gathering location for residents. • Permitted uses include playgrounds, trails, landscaping, public art, elements of historical or cultural significance, trails, specialized facilities, and supporting amenities for gatherings and related civic uses. • Size may vary depending on the intended function of the part; however, they should not be less than 0.4 hectares. |

Recommendations – Parkland Classification System

1. Formalize a **parkland classification system** to guide the planning and design of new parks and the revitalization of existing parks according to park type, size, function and appropriate amenities. This may include incorporating the classification system into the Official Plan at the time of a comprehensive review or as an amendment.

5.3 Parkland Supply and Distribution

North Huron manages or maintains approximately 21.0 hectares (51.9 acres) of parkland across 11 sites. These parks contain a range of outdoor spaces, facilities and amenities including sports fields, playgrounds, splash pads, seating, and passive spaces for informal gatherings and activities. This supply includes the Galbraith Soccer Field, which is maintained by the Township, although it is located in Morris-Turnberry and owned by the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. Excluded from the supply is the campground portion of the Blyth & District Community Centre.

Based on the current population estimate (5,000 residents), the Township is achieving an overall parkland service level of 4.2 hectares per 1,000 residents; considered to be a good level of supply. A summary of parkland is contained in Table 6, which is followed by a description of each park. The geographic distribution is illustrated in Figure 10.

The Township’s parkland system is complemented by natural heritage features such as the River Flats Ecological Park and the Maitland River. The Howson Dam has existed on the Maitland River for over 100 years and has historically supported water-based recreational activity such as boating and water skiing, although these activities are no longer permitted. Council has made the decision to decommission the dam due to its advanced age and the cost associated with refurbishment. Other outdoor spaces are provided by non-municipal organizations including the Blyth Lions Club (Lions Park), Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (Wawanosh Valley Conservation Area), schools, and the Royal Oaks Health Clinic.

Table 6: Township of North Huron Parkland Inventory

| Park Name | Area (Ha) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Belgrave | |
| Belgrave Community Centre & Park | 3.1 |
| Children’s Memorial Park | 0.2 |
| Blyth | |
| Blyth & District Community Centre | 5.6 |
| Horticulture Park | 0.4 |
| Memory Garden | 0.2 |
| Wingham | |
| Alice Munro Literary Garden | 0.1 |
| Cruickshank Park | 0.5 |
| Galbraith Soccer Field | 5.8 |
| Riverside Park | 4.1 |
| Wingham Cenotaph | 0.01 |
| Wingham Splash Pad & Playground | 1.0 |
| Total | 21.0 |

North Huron’s current parkland service level is 4.2 hectares per 1,000 residents
 (excluding non-township parks managed by conservation authorities and others)

Note: Supply excludes the Blyth Campground, River Flats Ecological Park and non-municipal parks and open spaces including Wawanosh Valley Conservation Area, Blyth Lions Park, schools, and the Royal Oaks Health Clinic. The Galbraith Soccer Field is maintained by the Township of North Huron, though it is located in Morris-Turnberry and owned by the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. The current parkland service level is based on a population estimated of 5,000 persons.

5.3.1 Belgrave Parks

Belgrave Community Centre & Park

The Belgrave Community Centre & Park is owned by the Township but it is operated by a separate board. Located on the west side of London Road in Belgrave, the community centre features a natural skating rink and community hall. Outdoor amenities include a lit ball diamond, basketball court and playground.

Children’s Memorial Park

Children’s Memorial Park is a small passive park on the west side of London Road in the rural area of North Huron, approximately four kilometres north of Blyth and 15 kilometres south of Wingham. The park features mature trees, seating, and a memorial for those who attended the East Wawanosh and Morris School that was formerly located at this site.

5.3.2 Blyth Parks

Blyth & District Community Centre

The Blyth & District Community Centre is found on the west side of Gypsy Lane in Blyth. Adjacent to the Blyth Lions Park (owned by the Blyth Lions Club), the community centre features a single pad arena and community meeting space. Outdoor amenities includes two lit ball diamonds, skateboard park, and an outdoor performing arts venue (used by the Blyth Centre for the Arts) and a campground.

Horticulture Park

Horticulture Park is located on the south side of Dinsley Street, west of Coombs Street in Blyth. This park features landscaping by the Friends of the Village of Blyth, seating, and a sign for the Blyth Horticultural Society.

Memory Garden

Memory Garden is located at the east end of Drummond Street in Blyth. This park contains landscaping by the Friends of the Village of Blyth and seating, as well as a connection to the Blyth Brook Community Greenway Trail.

5.3.3 Wingham Parks

Alice Munro Literary Garden

The Alice Munro Literary Garden is a small landscaped area on the east side of Josephine Street in Wingham. Abutting the North Huron Museum (currently closed) and adjacent to the Wingham Town Hall Theatre, the Alice Munroe Literary Garden celebrates the award-winning writer who was born in Wingham.

Cruickshank Park

Cruickshank Park is located on the southwest corner of Josephine Street and Alfred Street West. The park is named after Wilford Thomas “Doc” Cruickshank, who founded CKNX in Wingham. This park features landscaping by the Wingham and District Horticultural Society, walking pathway, a water fountain and seating. This park is also used for the Township’s Christmas display and may be used for other passive activities.

Galbraith Soccer Field

The Galbraith Soccer Field are lands that are located in Morris Turnberry that are owned by the Maitland River Conservation Authority and maintained by the Township through an agreement. A soccer field is located at this location.

Riverside Park

Riverside Park is located along the north side of Park Drive in Wingham. Abutting the Maitland River, Riverside Park features two lit ball diamonds with supporting amenities (e.g., parking, seating, batting cage, washrooms, etc.), basketball court, volleyball court, playground and open greenspace, which can support passive activities and special event gatherings such as the Township’s fireworks display. Access to the Wingham Community Trail is also available at this park.

Wingham Cenotaph

The Wingham Cenotaph is located on the southeast corner of Josephine Street, John Street East and Veterans Road in Wingham. This small park features a war memorial.

Wingham Splash Pad & Playground

The Wingham Splash Pad & Playground is located on the northwest corner of William Street and John Street West in Wingham. Located adjacent to the North Huron Childcare Centre, this park features a splash pad and playground, as well as a connection to the Wingham Community Trail.

5.4 Parkland Needs

Municipalities generally provide parkland in the range of 2.0 to 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents. This suggests that the Township is currently providing a strong level of service. Over the next ten years, North Huron’s population is expected to grow by up to 600 residents. In order to maintain the current level of service to address growth related needs, the Township would require a total parkland supply of up to 23.6 hectares, which is 2.5 hectares more than what is currently available.



A distributional analysis of the Township’s existing parkland was undertaken to evaluate parkland gaps within settlement areas and where acquisition opportunities should be emphasized. Figure 10 illustrates all locations of Township Park with an 800-metre service area, which generally equates to a five to ten-minute walk within settlement areas that is unobstructed by physical barriers such as major roads or waterbodies.

The distributional analysis reveals that the Township’s primary settlement areas are generally well served with parkland. Notable parkland gaps exist in Hutton Heights where there is currently no parkland, although future growth in this area is expected and should create opportunity to add parkland. In Blyth, the two passive parks on the east side of community do not provide any opportunity to facilitate active recreation activities. The former school site previously served this purpose, although it no longer exists. A parkland gap also exists in the north end of Blyth, north of Thuell Street.

Opportunities to reconcile parkland gaps in these areas should be pursued and at a minimum, consideration should be given to the provision of basic outdoor recreation amenities such as playgrounds and design guidelines contained in Section 5.7.

While there are currently a number of active plans of subdivision in development or under review, the Township is not expected to receive any land as a condition of development for park purposes. In order to address the parkland needs identified in this Master Plan, maximizing parkland dedication allowable through the Planning Act is recommended for future residential land developments.

Where necessary, parkland dedication should be augmented by other strategies available to the Township to address parkland gap areas such as land purchase, land swaps, or public access agreements with landowners. Working with existing partners to maintain public access to non-municipal parkland should also continue to be encouraged.

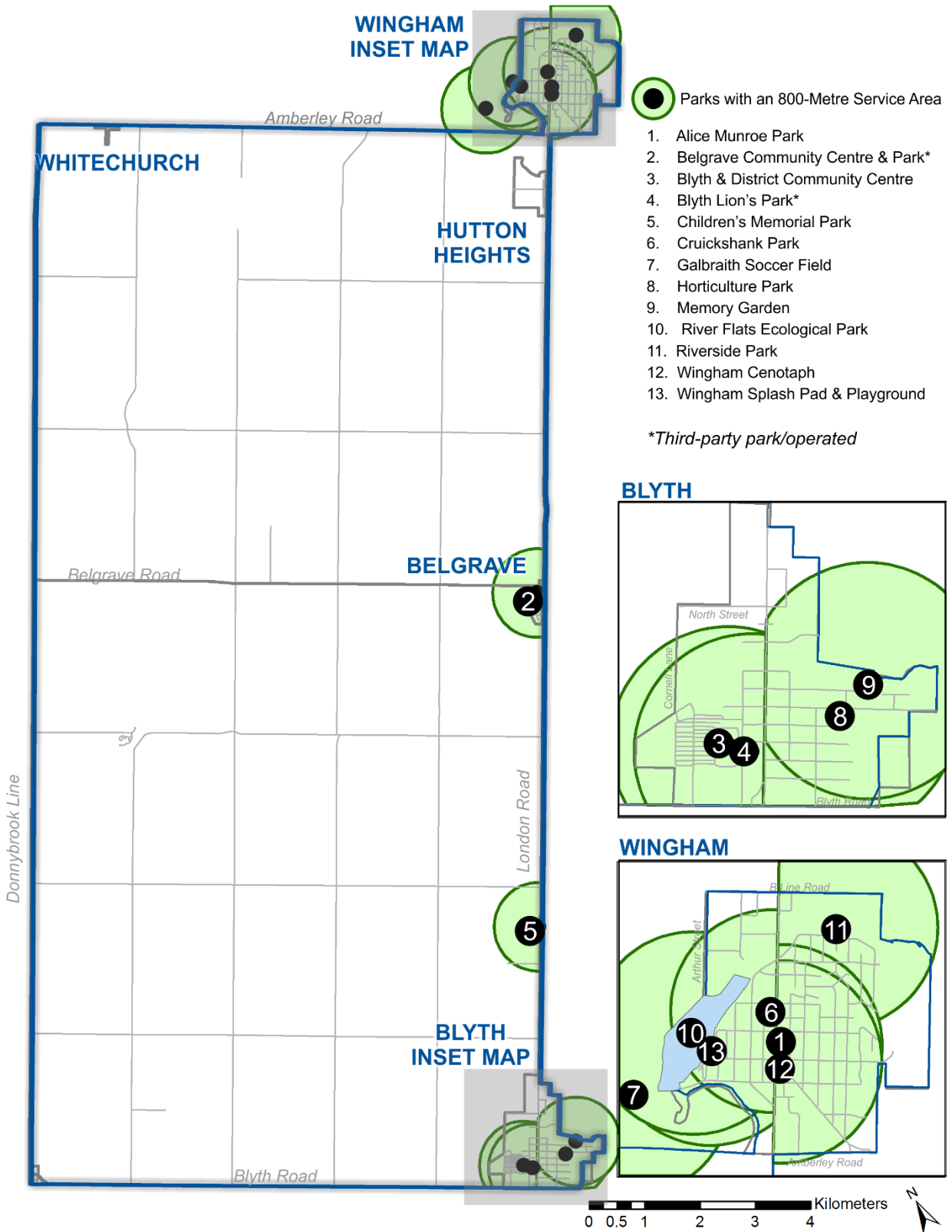
Recommendations – Parkland Needs

2. **Acquire 2.5 hectares of additional parkland by 2031** to address growth-related needs and distribution by maximizing parkland dedication as permitted by the Planning Act and other acquisition strategies available to the Township (e.g., land purchase) to reconcile gap areas including in Huron Heights and in the north end and east side of Blyth.



Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 10: Distribution of Parkland



5.5 Parkland Redevelopment

User experience within the parks system is influenced by design, intended function, and the quality of facilities and amenities found within them. These factors are often informed by the era of original construction. Parks built decades prior can impart positive feelings of history, sentiment, and pride; however, older parks may also be in need of rejuvenation if deterioration is apparent or if the intended function no longer responds to modern and/or local area needs and changing area demographics.



Park revitalization is an important part of attracting continued use over time. Rejuvenation efforts can be major in scale, ranging from complete park development to a review of minor amenities or adding new facility components to respond to evolving needs and trends, where space permits.

The Master Plan process identifies an excellent opportunity to re-imagine the park space at the Blyth & District Community Centre. With a surplus of one ball diamond at this location and a lack of available park space elsewhere in the village, this site creates an opportunity to redevelop the park to accommodate other outdoor recreation needs to serve residents including an enhanced skateboard park, provision of tennis and pickleball courts (2), and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. Integrating park features as described in Section 5.7 should also be considered in the refresh of the park.

Strategic parkland renewal and redevelopment projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital investment.

Recommendations – Parkland Redevelopment

3. Strategic **parkland renewal and redevelopment** should be undertaken at the **Blyth & District Community Centre** to re-purpose one surplus ball diamond to other needed amenities as identified in this Master Plan including an enhanced skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. Redevelopment of this park should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to establish capital and operational assumptions.

5.6 Parkland Policies

Policies guiding the development of parkland in the Township is guided by the 2004 North Huron Official Plan. Section 2.5 of the Official Plan supports the development of parkland to meet the needs of the community, as well to support recreational opportunities, promote tourism and protect unique or fragile natural landscapes and environments. The Official Plan also establishes that the provision of parkland or parkland fees are required as a part of new subdivision development and lot creation.



Policies for open space and parkland are established in Section 8 of the Official Plan. Section 8.3.3 of the Official Plan establishes the policies for the development and maintenance of open space and parkland. This section of the Official Plan establishes two methods of acquiring and developing parkland including:

- a) Parkland dedication or payment in lieu of parkland dedication will be required in accordance with section 42 or 51.1 of the Planning Act, unless specifically exempted by the policies of this Plan or by By-law.
- b) Through public purchase, donations, gifts and bequests of land and/or monies.

In addition to these two methods, the Official Plan encourages the Township to continue to work collaboratively with school boards and the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority in the use and development of open space and recreation features.

With the passing of Bill 197 (COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act), changes were made to various legislation including the Planning Act, although provision related to parkland dedication generally remain the same. The Planning Act allows approval authorities (the Township) with powers to impose parkland dedication requirements as a condition of development of land. Up to 2% of land for commercial and industrial purposes, or 5% of land for residential purposes, may be conveyed to the municipality for parkland or other public recreational purposes. In certain cases, where the approval authority has established specific policies regarding parkland dedication, an alternative rate of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units may be utilized. The alternative rate can only be applied if the Township has established a by-law, as well as specific policies regarding the use of the alternative rate. Additionally, the Planning Act permits municipalities to accept cash in lieu of parkland at rate of one hectare per 500 dwelling units.

Recognizing that the Township's Official Plan refers its parkland dedication policies to the Planning Act, no additions or revisions are recommended. However, the Township should review the changes that have been made to the Planning Act to ensure that staff are aware and convey the changes to planning applicants, as necessary. As future planning applications are available, it is recommended that consideration be given to the parkland needs identified in this Master Plan to ensure that the Township obtains meaningful parcels of parkland, as well as understands where parkland gaps exist.

Recommendations – Parkland Policies

4. The review of **planning applications** should have regard for the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan to address parkland gaps and to guide when parkland dedication versus cash-in-lieu is most appropriate to accept.

5.7 Parkland, Open Space and Trail Design Considerations

An emphasis should be placed on designing parks, open spaces and trails that are welcoming and comfortable outdoor spaces for people to use and have safe, meaningful and positive experiences. To achieve this goal, there are a number of best practices that the Township should consider in the planning, design, and redevelopment of its parks, open spaces and trails. By making them more visible, comfortable, welcoming, safe, inclusive and accommodating of a variety of uses, these improvements have been proven to increase the frequency of usage among residents and users.

5.7.1 Designing for Comfort

Parks and trails need to provide attractive and comfortable experiences in order to attract and encourage use. Users tend to look for convenience and comfort-based features depending upon their intended use. In non-programmed or passive spaces where social activities such as family gatherings and special events are taking place, visitors may be seeking amenities such as treed areas and shade structures, picnic tables, seating areas and washrooms (either permanent or temporary).



Comfort amenities are especially beneficial in strategic locations along major trail routes and at trail heads, and are highly desired by all population segments, but particularly families, older adults and seniors. Experiences in other communities suggests that the development of supporting trail amenities may encourage use, regardless of one’s age or ability.

There is evidence of the Township incorporating comfort amenities with the parks and trails system to encourage use of these public spaces. For example, trail heads in Wingham and Blyth both feature parking lots in visible areas of the community. A number of the Township’s parks also offer comfort features such as seating, shade, washrooms and other amenities to create an inviting atmosphere to draw in users and encourage use. Some of the Township’s park amenities, such as seating, are nearing the end of their lifecycle and will require refurbishment and/or replacement. Recognizing that there is a cost associated with creating comfortable parks and trails, public investment should be strategically directed to high traffic areas to optimize the use of Township resources.

5.7.2 Inclusive Parks and Trails

Accessibility and inclusivity are important considerations when designing parks and trails. These public amenities are viewed as spaces for all residents, thus ensuring that they are accessible for the most vulnerable groups such as older adults and seniors and persons with disabilities is something to strive towards. Not all parks and trails or areas within them are appropriate for universally accessible infrastructure such as ecologically sensitive areas; however, community-focused spaces where use is encouraged should consider how residents can access them such as providing paved circulation areas that connect users within the park and to the amenities within them.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Design of Public Spaces Standard requires that municipalities design new and redeveloped recreational trails and exterior pathways (e.g., sidewalks) to meet accessibility standards, where possible. This requires incorporating design elements that address minimum widths, grades, surface types, cross-slopes and more. The need to consult with persons with disabilities and the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee is also required.

Summary of design requirements for new or redeveloped recreational trails:

- Minimum clear width (1 m) and height (2.1 m);
- Firm and stable surface;
- Restrictions on the size of surface openings (20 mm)
- Minimum clear width at trail entrance (0.85 m to 1 m)
- Trail head signage requirements.

Source: Pathways to Recreation Learning about Ontario's Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces <https://www.prontario.org>

These design requirements will be important considerations for the Township in implementing the conceptual recreational trail network identified in 5.8 of this Master Plan. Where possible efforts to go over and above the minimum design requirements is encouraged, where feasible. For example, it is a best practice for primary trails to have a minimum width of 2.5 to three metres to facilitate accessible bi-directional movement. This could be applied to key trails in the Township such as the Wingham Community Trail and Blyth Brook Greenway Trail – which is a section of the G2G Trail. Other trails and pathways, such as those within parks, could be designed with a minimum width of 1 to 1.5 metres. These parameters should be further refined as a part of the recommended Trails Master Plan (see Recommendation #10).

While it may be impractical to ensure that all recreational trails are accessible (nature trails are largely exempt, as are trails that have been in place since 2016), the development of accessible trails can be focused on locations where high levels of utilization are anticipated and terrain is suitable.

5.7.3 Multi-Generational and Multi-Seasonal Usage

The ability to attract a broad range of users into the parks and trails system throughout the year is central to many municipal design philosophies and consistent with community consultation inputs. Although not all parks and trails can or should be everything to everybody, a good park or trail ensures that there is at least something that a person can do regardless of their age or physical ability. Whether it is a family activity such as using a playground or flying a kite, an ability for adults to meet and socialize with friends around a checkerboard table for a coffee, or simply providing a place for somebody to relax on a shaded bench, parks should be a destination within the catchment area they are intended to serve.

Many parks and trails in North Huron embody this notion such as Cruickshank Park, which is a passive park where residents of all ages can meet throughout the year for casual gatherings or special events.

5.7.4 Environmental Sustainability and Parkland Naturalization

There is an increasing desire to reduce impacts on the environment in being more sustainable. To support this desire, an emphasis is being placed on leaving open spaces in a natural state, which is also beneficial to support and preserve important ecological functions and habitats. Many municipalities have made efforts to design parks to be more environmentally-sustainable by reducing grass cutting in strategic locations, planting native species, establishing tree canopy targets, creating pollinator gardens and programs aimed at creating awareness and educating the public about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms or interpretive signage), and considering strategies to be more resilient to climate change.



The Township is recognized for its commitment in environmental sustainability as it is one of the key goals of the Township's Strategic Plan. It identifies a number of actions to protect the natural environment such as reducing the Township's carbon footprint in public facilities, educating the public on waste reduction, and more.

Within the parks system, the Township continues to protect and restore important natural heritage areas including the Wingham Ecological Park, which contains native plant species and ecosystems. Pollinator gardens have also been planted in the Township to support pollinator species. To achieve the Township's goal of becoming more environmentally sustainable, continue to implement initiatives that align with this goal. Potential opportunities that should be considered include identifying new locations for pollinator gardens, establishing tree canopy targets, planting trees and native species, utilizing sustainable building materials, establishing community gardens, and programming to raise awareness about the environment, as well as partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to re-open the Nature Centre. Some of these initiatives may be explored with community organizations such as the Wingham Trail Committee, G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee and others to leverage the expertise of volunteers.

Parkland naturalization may also be considered in an effort to be more environmentally-friendly. Naturalization refers to the process of returning park space back to a natural state by allowing grass, native plants and wildlife species to grow and flourish with minimal or no municipal maintenance. A naturalization approach restores the ecological lifecycle of flora and fauna in the area, while reducing the need for grass cutting, watering, fertilizing and other park maintenance practices, that can collectively result in cost savings and the ability to redirect municipal resources to other areas.

Children’s Memorial Park, which is located on the west side of Highway 4 between Blyth and Belgrave, is identified as a candidate for park naturalization. The small park offers seating under mature trees with signage (including a memorial plaque) and is generally considered to be underutilized and surplus to the Township’s parks, recreation and cultural needs. Reducing the level of maintenance at this site is recommended; the Township may also explore other alternative uses for this land.

5.7.5 Signage

Signage plays an important role in establishing a visual identity for the Township and communicates vital information to users. Park and trail signage is available at some Township locations, but they employ different branding styles and formats, which is likely a function of when they were installed. Signage is absent at some parks including Riverside Park, Memory Garden, and the Wingham Cenotaph. By adopting a standardized signage template at all parks and trail heads, the Township can achieve the following benefits:



- Communicate the Township’s corporate brand in a consistent manner throughout North Huron;
- Serve as an indicator of the quality of the parks system as a whole;
- Promote awareness among residents and visitors of the location of Township-owned parks and trails, including wayfinding;
- Develop a unique sense of place; and
- Provide interpretive information to highlight key natural heritage features and other areas of interest.

5.7.6 Safety

Parks are being designed with patrons’ safety in mind through the application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and other design principles. These design best practices dictate that high traffic areas should be well lit, while areas with low visibility should be limited. Neighbourhood level parks should be visible and designed so that there are “eyes on the park” from the street and nearby residences to discourage undesirable activities. Regular park maintenance and inspections are accepted in the industry as a key component of perceived “safety” in parks and in deterring inappropriate behaviour. The Township’s parks generally appear to be designed with safety in mind. As necessary, the Township is encouraged to engage their local emergency services to aid in improving safety in parks.

5.7.7 Outdoor Fitness Opportunities

The integration of outdoor fitness opportunities within parks, open spaces and trails has been a growing interest to encourage no-cost physical activity outdoors. The desire for low-impact fitness activities has been further heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic when indoor fitness services have been temporarily closed.

The provision of outdoor fitness opportunities varies by community. Outdoor fitness equipment can be consolidated at a specific park that receives high traffic. This approach provides a similar experience compared to indoor fitness centres where users can engage in workout circuits either alone or in a small group. Grouping outdoor fitness equipment together at a single location also allows for potential program opportunities and the ability to offer other amenities such as WIFI can allow users to download or view online instructional fitness exercises. Outdoor fitness equipment can also be provided along a trail to allow for interval training and a mix of cardio and strength training, while other approaches involve the use of existing terrain (e.g., berm or hill) to run on or landscaped open space to participate in outdoor fitness programs.

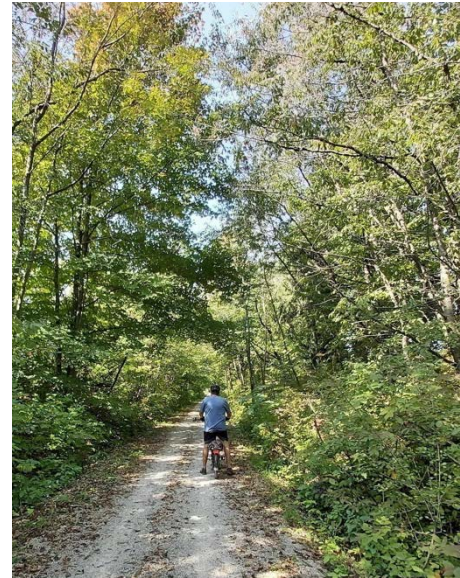
There are a number of opportunities within the Township to build upon its existing outdoor fitness opportunities. For example, outdoor fitness equipment may be installed in strategic park locations such as Riverside Park, Wingham Splash Pad and Playground, and Blyth & District Community Centre. These locations offer complementary community and recreation amenities, including connections to trails. These strategies respond to community requests for a wider range of fitness activities and is a natural complement to the indoor fitness opportunities that are currently available.

Recommendations – Parkland, Open Space and Trail Design Considerations

5. Township parks and trails should be **designed** in a manner that considers universal accessibility and multi-seasonal usage and opportunities for all ages. Safety and comfort measures should also be considered including the placement of seating, shade and other amenities, as well as replacing aging amenities that already exist within public spaces. Coordination with the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee, emergency services, and others should form a part of the parks and trails design process.
6. Potentially working with others, explore initiatives to **protect and enhance the natural environment** such as identifying new locations for pollinator gardens, establishing tree canopy targets, planting trees and native species, establishing community gardens, creating programs to raise awareness about the environment, using sustainable building materials and partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to evaluate opportunities to re-open the Nature Centre.
7. **Naturalize** Children’s Memorial Park in order to reduce parkland maintenance efforts.
8. Create a **standardized signage template** to identify the location of public parks and trails.
9. Investigate strategic locations for **outdoor fitness equipment**, potentially at Riverside Park, Wingham Splash Pad and Playground, and Blyth & District Community Park. Promoting outdoor fitness program opportunities within the parks system is also encouraged.

5.8 Recreational Trails

Recreation trails are among the most highly desirable amenities in any community. They facilitate low-cost outdoor physical activity opportunities and can be used by residents of all ages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township experienced a strong uptake in trail usage, highlighting the importance of providing a connected trail network that connect residents within the community. The popularity of walking and trail usage was found through the consultation process as there was strong support for improving or expanding trail opportunities.



There are approximately seven kilometres of trails in North Huron. With the assistance of community organizations, the Township manages over four kilometres of trails including the Blyth Brook Greenway Trail, which forms a portion of the G2G Trail system, and a community trail in Wingham. Walking and cycling are the primary modes of active transportation along these trails. Sidewalks can also be found within North Huron’s settlement areas. In addition, a three kilometre trail is located within the Wawanosh Valley Conservation Area.

County and municipally-owned roads can also be used for cycling. Huron County’s Cycling Guide identifies approximately 37 kilometres of paved cycling routes along London Road, Belgrave Road, Westfield Road and Donnybrook Line.

Huron County has made efforts to strengthen active transportation opportunities through its 2016 Cycling Strategy. This guiding document promotes the development of the G2G Trail and supports initiatives that encourages safe cycling in Huron County through signage, a Share the Road education program, and building cycling infrastructure (e.g., paved shoulders), although no new cycling routes have been identified. Huron County also prepared a Call to Action for Active Transportation in 2014 that recommended a number of County and municipal-level initiatives. Actions relevant for municipalities including North Huron included promoting multi-use trails within settlement areas, using signage to encouraging walking and cycling, consider closing a road for a day to promote active transportation, and more.

Public support for recreational trails in North Huron was received through the consultation process for the Master Plan. Four out of five respondents in the community survey went walking or hiking for leisure prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was the most popular recreational activity. There was strong support for continuing to invest in trails in the Township. 87% of respondents supported additional investment in nature trails, which was the highest priority among 32 different facility types. 70% of respondents also supported investment in paved multi-use trails.

Recognizing the high importance that the public places on trails, there is merit in establishing a Trails Master Plan to prepare a long-term vision for the future of active transportation in North Huron. At a conceptual level, the Master Plan advances potential trail routes and linkages to build upon the existing trail network. These opportunities should be reviewed and refined through the Trails Master Plan process to identify feasibility, detailed routing options, and other potential connections. These linkages,

which support the public's desire for more walking opportunities, were identified based on public input and proposed routes that have been identified through separate planning processes (Figure 11). Deviations from the conceptual trail routes may be considered, provided that the general intent of strengthening community connections is maintained. Key routes include:

- a) Extending the Wingham Community Trail from the Maitland River Elementary School northward towards Riverside Park to create a loop trail.
- b) Establishing accessible circulation areas within the Township's parks, including pathways that connect users to on-site amenities.
- c) Developing recreational linkages to and within future residential areas.
- d) Connecting trail users to the downtown area and other key destinations (e.g., potentially through sidewalks, signage, etc.).
- e) Promoting the use of paved shoulders for cycling as per the Huron County 2016 Cycling Strategy.
- f) Partnering with the G2G Trail Advisory Committee to promote the use of the G2G Trail.
- g) Partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Area to promote the use of trails at the Wawanosh Conservation Area, including for winter use (e.g., cross-country skiing).

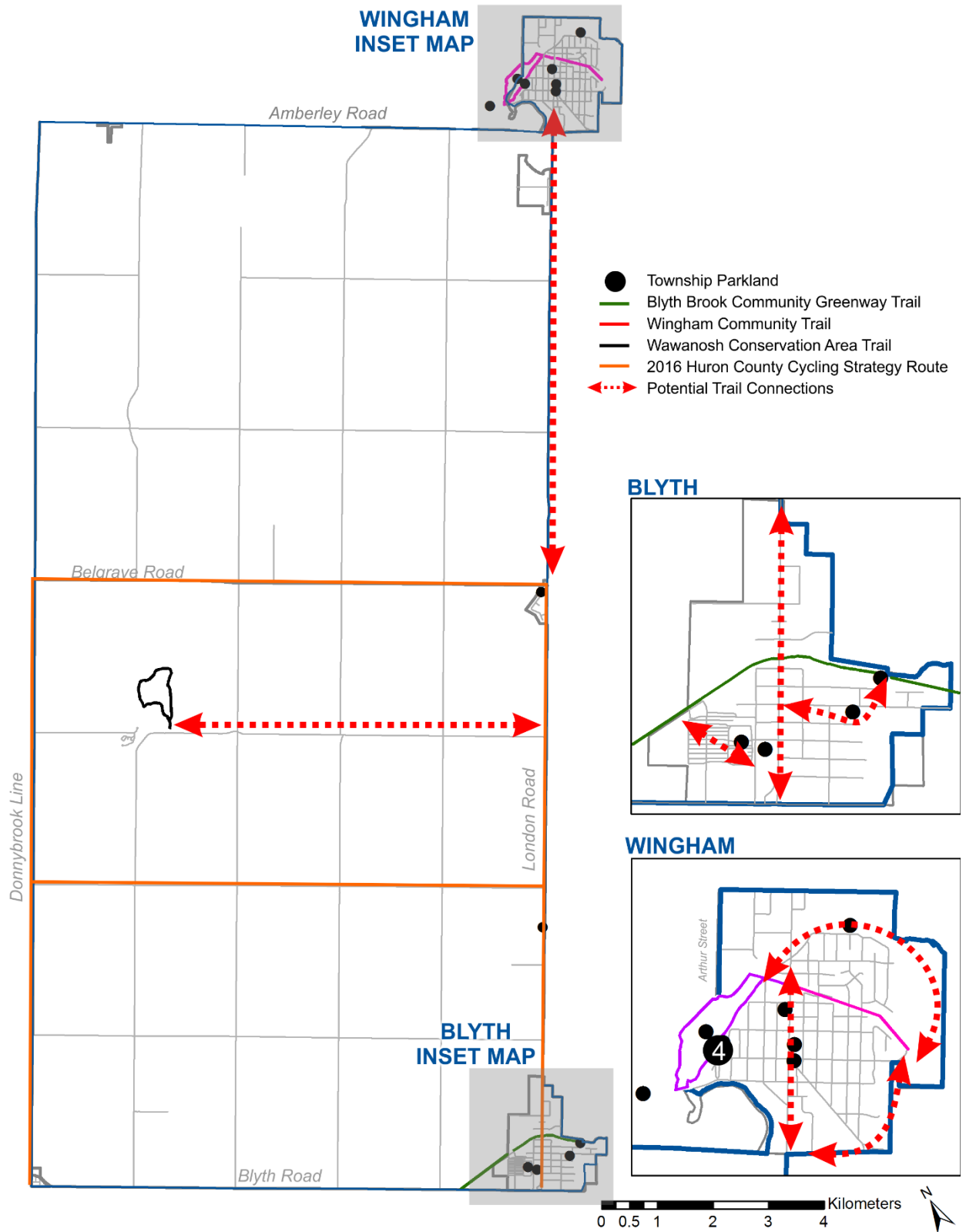


The development of trails is well supported throughout the Township's Official Plan to create walkable developments and link key destinations. Land use planning tools are available through the Planning Act to support the development of active transportation opportunities within newly developing areas. Section 51(25) of the Planning Act permits approval authorities to require the dedication of land for pedestrian (and bicycle) pathways as a condition for plan of subdivision approval. This requirement would provide an opportunity for the Township to strengthen connectivity within future residential area and support public desire for more walking opportunities throughout the community.

The Trails Master Plan should also consider opportunities to coordinate with others to achieve a fully connected trail network in North Huron such as the Wingham Trail Committee and G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee. For example, partnerships or agreements may need to be established with landowners to gain public trail access, such as with the Maitland River Conservation Authority. In these instances, maintaining or securing public access to these areas is encouraged, potentially through agreements, lease, land purchase, partnerships or other strategies. Public consultation is encouraged as new trails are developed. Other considerations that should be investigated through the Trails Master Plan include the provision of trail amenities and design requirements (see Section 5.7) to ensure that they are inclusive of all users, where it can be feasibly accommodated.

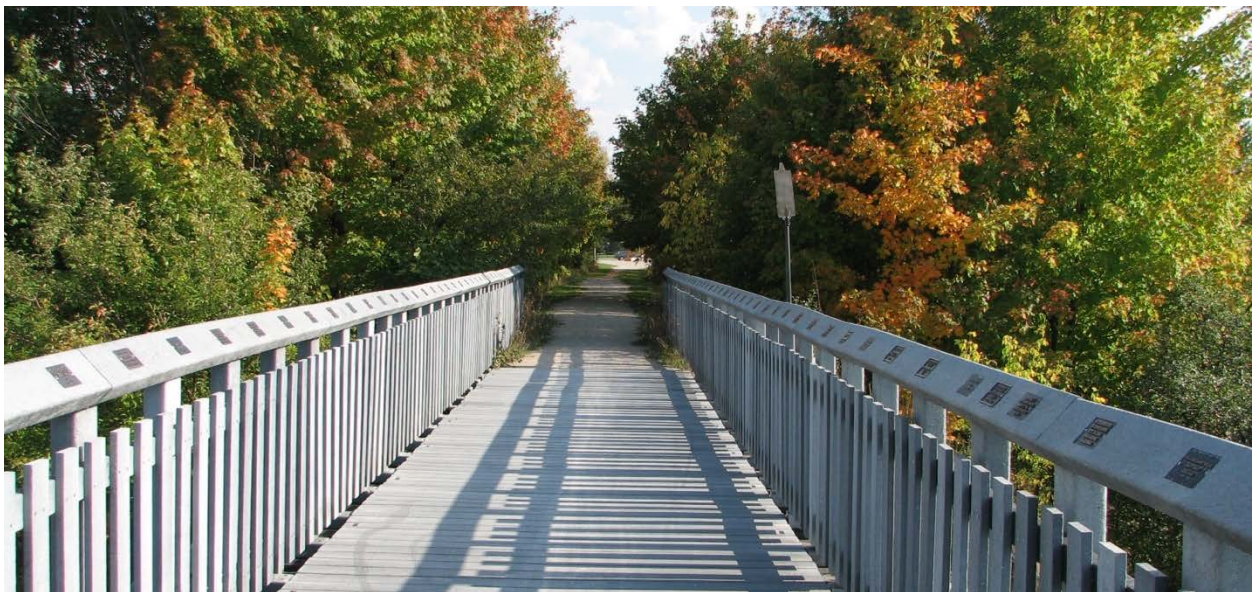
Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 11: Conceptual Recreational Trail Map



Recommendations – Recreational Trails

10. In coordination with the public and relevant groups such as the Wingham Trail Committee, G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee and the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, prepare a **Trails Master Plan** to create a long-term vision for the development of a comprehensive trail network in North Huron. In addition to partnership opportunities, funding, design, provision of amenities, and other strategies to promote active transportation, the Trails Master Plan should have regard for the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan and explore:
- a) Extending the Wingham Community Trail from the Maitland River Elementary School northward towards Riverside Park to create a loop trail.
 - b) Establishing accessible circulation areas within the Township’s parks, including pathways that connect users to on-site amenities.
 - c) Developing recreational linkages to and within future residential areas.
 - d) Connecting trail users to the downtown area and other key destinations (e.g., potentially through sidewalks, signage, etc.).
 - e) Promoting the use of paved shoulders for cycling as per the Huron County 2016 Cycling Strategy.
 - f) Partnering with the G2G Trail Advisory Committee to promote the use of the G2G Trail.
 - g) Partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to promote the use of trails at the Wawanosh Conservation Area, including for winter use (e.g., cross-country skiing).
11. The Township should seek the **dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycle pathways** in appropriate areas as a condition for plan of subdivision approval for the purposes of strengthening active transportation opportunities as permitted under the Planning Act.



6.0 Recreation and Culture Opportunities

Table 7 summarizes the publicly-accessible indoor and outdoor facilities in North Huron. This includes municipally owned and operated facilities as well as municipal facilities that are operated by community organizations through a lease agreement. The distribution of facilities is illustrated in Figure 12.

In addition to these facilities, residents also benefit from amenities that are owned and/or maintained by others, although public access may be limited, such as schools, conservation area, religious institutions, community organizations, adjacent municipalities and private providers.

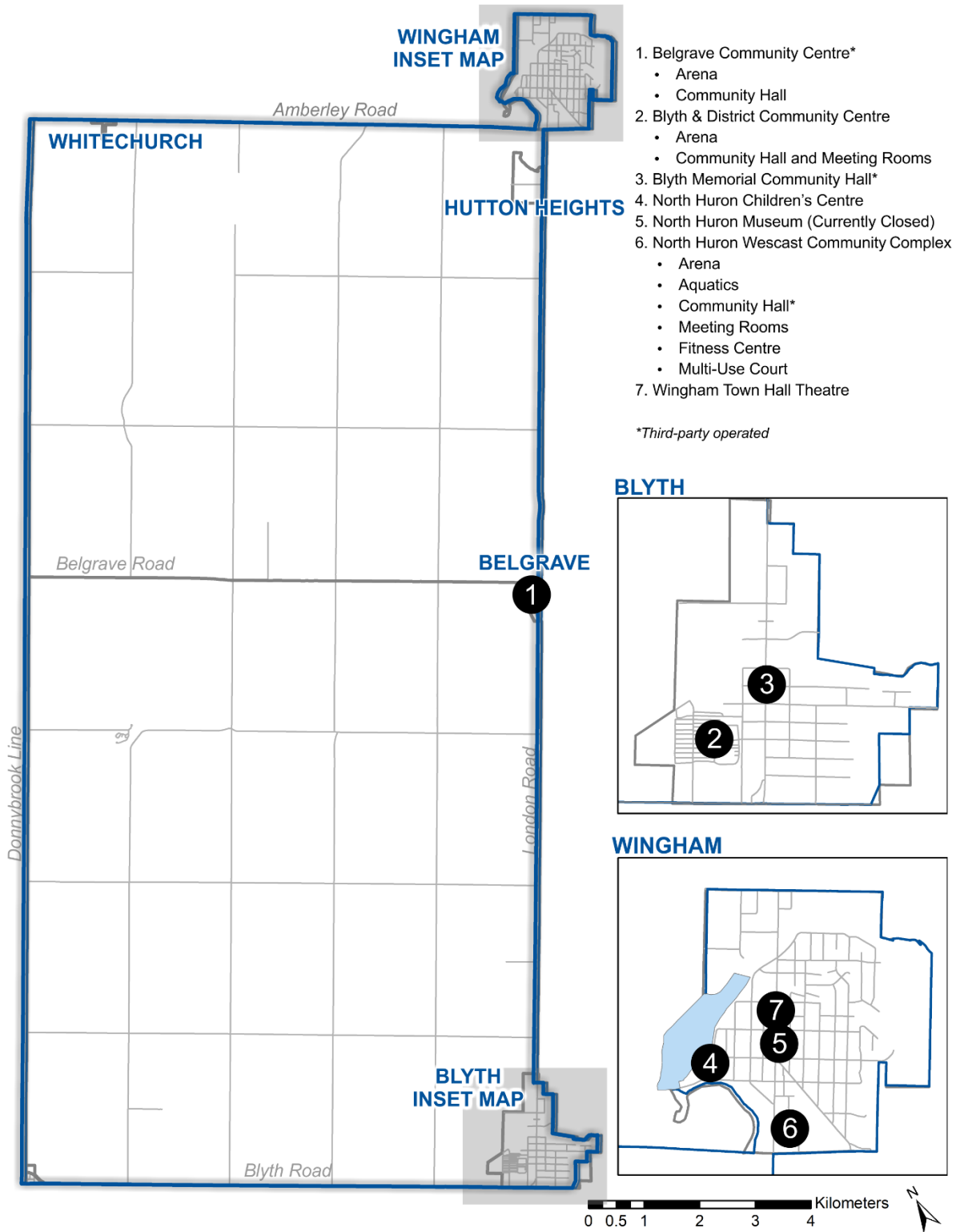
Table 7: Municipal Indoor and Outdoor Facilities

| Facility Type | Supply | Location(s) | Current Service Level |
|--|--------|--|-----------------------|
| Arenas | 3 | Belgrave Community Centre & Park, Blyth & District Community Centre, North Huron Wescast Community Complex | 1 : 1,700 |
| Aquatics | 1 | North Huron Wescast Community Complex | 1 : 5,000 |
| Arts and Cultural Facilities | 3 | Blyth Memorial Hall*, North Huron Museum (currently closed), Wingham Town Hall Theatre | 1 : 1,700 |
| Community Hall & Multi-Use Spaces | 8 | Belgrave Community Centre & Park*, Blyth & District Community Centre (2), North Huron Wescast Community Complex (3), Blyth Memorial Hall (2) | 1 : 600 |
| Fitness Centre | 1 | North Huron Wescast Community Complex | 1 : 5,000 |
| Indoor Multi-Use Court | 2 | North Huron Wescast Community Complex | 1 : 2,500 |
| Ball Diamonds | 5 Lit | Belgrave Community Centre & Park, Blyth & District Community Centre (2), Riverside Park (2) | 1 ULE : 700 |
| Rectangular Sports Fields | 1 | Galbraith Soccer Field | 1 : 5,000 |
| Tennis and Pickleball Courts | 4 | F.E. Madill Secondary School (3), Royal Oaks Health and Wellness Centre | 1 : 300 |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | 2 | Belgrave Community Centre & Park, Riverside Park | 1 : 2,500 |
| Playgrounds | 4 | Belgrave Community Centre & Park, Blyth Lions Park, Riverside Park, Wingham Splash Pad and Playground | 1 : 1,250 |
| Skateboard Park | 1 | Blyth & District Community Centre | 1 : 5,000 |
| Splash Pad | 1 | Wingham Splash Pad and Playground | 1 : 5,000 |
| Volleyball Court | 1 | Riverside Park | 1 : 5,000 |

Note: Unlit equivalents (ULE) are counted as 1.5 for every lit ball diamond to account for extended periods of play. Current service level based on a population estimate of 5,000 persons.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 12: Distribution of Facilities



6.1 Arenas

The Township operates two ice pads in Blyth and Wingham. The Blyth & District Community Centre has one ice sheet (190'x80'), which is supported by four dressing rooms and seating for 400 spectators. Built in 1978, the building has undergone a number of renovations to update the building since it was constructed. A building condition assessment completed in 2020 considered the arena to be in good condition. Over \$600,000 in lifecycle replacement costs have been identified for this arena including new mechanical equipment, rubber flooring, scoreboard and dash boards.



The second ice pad is located at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Constructed in 2001, this arena features an NHL size ice surface (200'x85') with six dressing rooms and seating for 700 spectators. The building condition assessment identified that the arena is in good condition with approximately \$250,000 in lifecycle replacement costs to renew aging mechanical equipment and the scoreboard.

A third arena is also located at the Belgrave Community Centre & Park, which is owned by the Township but operated by the Belgrave Community Centre Board under a lease agreement, which has recently been renewed until 2031. This arena features a natural ice pad (165'x65'), which is available between late-December and mid-February, with four dressing rooms.

For decades, ice sports such as hockey and figure skating have been considered a cornerstone of Canadian pastime activities. Recent data from Hockey Canada, however, indicates that participation in minor hockey is steadily declining. Hockey Canada reported that there were nearly 210,000 affiliated minor players in Ontario for the 2019/20 season, which was a 16% decline from the peak during the 2008/09 season.⁴ This can be linked to several factors such as the high cost of participation, safety concerns, competing interests, aging populations, and competition from leagues/organizations that are not sanctioned by Hockey Canada.

Declining participation levels across the Province have resulted in surplus arena capacity in many communities, particularly during weekends and shoulder hours that fall just outside of prime time. As a result, municipalities have implemented strategies to cope with these trends such as amending ice allocation policies, offering new programs and sport subsidies, or closing arenas at certain times of the day to reduce operating costs.

The Township's arenas are utilized by a number of local and regional groups including the Wingham Minor Hockey Association, Blyth Brussels Minor Hockey Association, Wingham Skating Club, Junior and Senior Blyth Broomball, Blyth Skating Club, Wingham Ironmen Junior C Hockey, Huron Heat Girls Hockey, Goderich Ringette and Goderich Men's Rec Hockey League. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these organizations reported a total of approximately 900 participants. Discussions with some of these

⁴ Hockey Canada Annual General Meeting Reports

groups suggest improvements to the arena's support spaces such as the washrooms and change rooms would enhance the user experience at both locations.

The community survey found that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 33% of respondents participated in arena activities such as hockey and figure skating. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents also supported additional investment in arenas, which was the third highest facility priority. Suggestions were made for a wider range of arena programs such as shinny, summer ice and public skating.



Typical weekly arena schedules from the 2017/18 to 2019/2020 ice season were reviewed to understand North Huron's arena usage profile. For the purposes of this Master Plan, peak prime time usage was analyzed, which is defined as 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm during the week and 8:00 am to 10:00 pm on weekends. Based on these parameters, North Huron had a system-wide usage rate of 84% for the 2019/20 season, which was an increase of 6% from the 2017/18 season.

The Township's arena usage trend is contrary to declining utilization levels being experienced in other communities across the Province. The increase in ice usage was primarily due to a growth in non-resident users, particularly at the Blyth arena during the weekends. There was also a modest growth in Township arena programs that are offered during the early prime-time period. Between the 2017/18 and 2019/20 season, other key findings included:

- **System-wide weekday prime time usage increased from 92% to 96%**; weekend prime time usage decreased from 73% to 66% (Figure 13).
- **The usage rate at the North Huron Wescast Community Complex arena remained unchanged at 85%**. Weekday prime time usage was steady at 98%, while weekend prime time usage declined marginally to 73% (down one percent) (Figure 14).
- **The usage rate at the Blyth & District Community Centre arena increased from 71% to 83%**. Weekday prime time usage grew from 86% to 94%, while weekend prime time usage increased from 58% to 73% (Figure 15).
- During the non-skating season, the arena floor pads are used for a variety of activities including lacrosse, ball hockey, group fitness, daycamps, school use, and other rentals such as dances and special events.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 13: Township of North Huron System-Wide Arena Usage Summary, 2017/2018 to 2019/2020

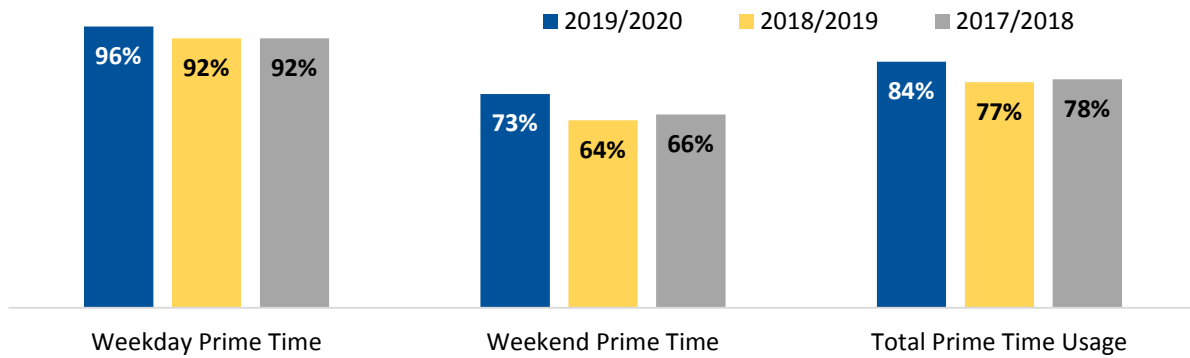


Figure 14: North Westcast Community Complex Arena Usage Summary, 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 Season

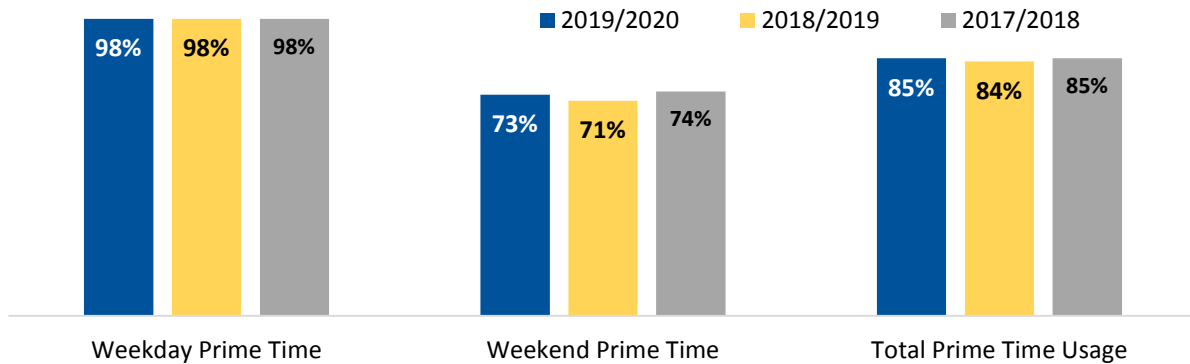
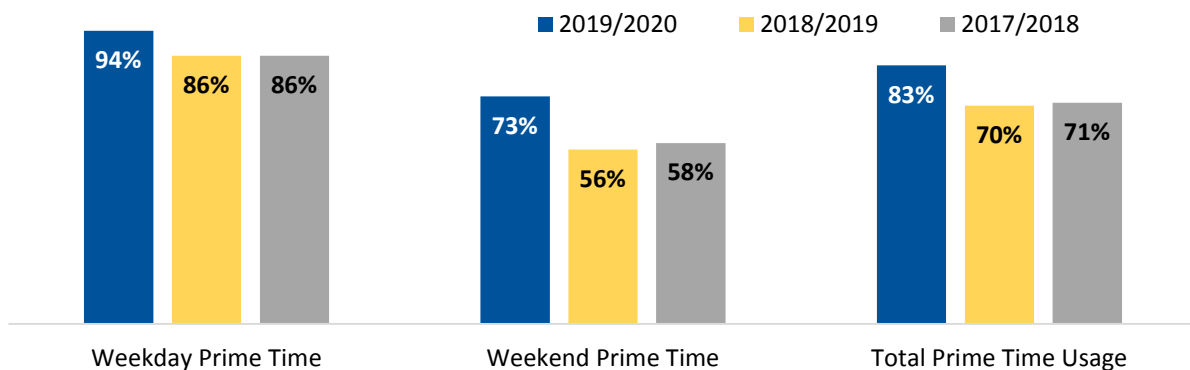


Figure 15: Blyth & District Community Centre Arena Usage Summary, 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 Season



These findings suggest that the Township’s arenas have a strong level of utilization, particularly during the weekday prime time period. Capacity exists to accommodate additional usage during the weekend, though it is recognized that this period has traditionally been a challenge to fill as groups tend to have a preference for weekday prime time hours.

With respect to the natural ice rink at the Belgrave Community Centre, the arena is not rented for organized play as it functions as a community rink given its small size and short operating window.

During the skating season, it's primarily used for recreational skating such as public skates, shinny, and family events.

North Huron's aging population, along with declining ice sport participation trends being experienced across the Province, may reduce current and future pressures being placed on the Township's arenas. It is recognized, however, that the regional ice supply may change over the short to medium term as some municipalities are evaluating their arena supply. Should there be a reduction in the regional ice pad supply, the Township may experience increased usage from other arena users.

Ice pad provision levels confirm that there is excess arena capacity within the existing system and that no additional ice pads are anticipated to be required during the Master Plan period. As a general rule of thumb, municipalities provide ice pads at a rate of one ice pad per 400 to 450 minor players. With approximately 740 minor players (including non-resident members) using North Huron arenas, the Township is providing a service level of one ice pad per 370 players. While the proportion of resident versus non-resident minor participants that use the North Huron arenas is not available, the Township reports that approximately one-third of ice time is used by non-resident groups. In addition, non-residents also participate in Township user groups.

Additionally, while some requests have been made for summer ice, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the Township should provide this level of service, particularly given that the arena floors are currently used for non-ice activities during the spring and summer.

Moving forward, the Township will need to ensure that the existing supply remains in a state of good repair to serve the needs of the community by undertaking necessary arena updates (as identified in the building condition assessments). A proactive approach to maximizing the use of the arena system is also recommended, which may include strategies such as promoting available ice time and working with arena groups to address challenges they may be facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., attracting participation and volunteerism, etc.).

Other strategies that may be considered are opportunities to adjust the level of service at appropriate times to achieve operational efficiencies and cost savings. For example, the Township staggers the start of the ice season – Wingham starts after Labour Day and Blyth begins on October 1st. Wingham has historically begun its ice season earlier to accommodate hockey camps (and other users); however, September rentals have declined as the camp is no longer held in Wingham, thus utilization during this period is lower. Preparing ice in August to be ready for September at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex is costly for the Township and also places pressures on staff who have other responsibilities during the summer. To achieve reduced operating costs, it is recommended that the Township shift the start of the ice season at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex to align with the Blyth & District Community Centre to begin on October 1st. If the demand exists, staggering the removal of ice at each arena at the end of the season is recommended to minimize operational costs, while ensuring that ice continues to be available in the Township for users that require it.

Re-purposing underutilized arena space should also be explored. Both of the Township's arenas are supported by concession spaces that historically provided spectators and facility users with food and beverages. The demand for concessions within municipal facilities across the Province has dropped considerably as a result of competing businesses. For example, there are a number of restaurants

adjacent to the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and a Tim Hortons within close proximity to the Blyth & District Community Centre.

Some municipalities have stopped operating concessions at their arenas due to their low demand, such as at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Other municipalities have also established third-party agreements to operate concessions. Finding a willing operator, however, can sometimes be a challenge as concessions generally do not generate revenue. It is recommended that the Township undertake a feasibility study to investigate potential opportunities to re-purpose these underutilized spaces to address other space needs. The planning process revealed potential needs such as, but not limited to, gathering areas with seating, program and office space, storage, and other uses.

Recommendations – Arenas

12. Proceed with undertaking necessary **arena improvements** as per the building condition assessments to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of facility users over the foreseeable future.
13. To achieve **reduced operating costs**, the ice season at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex should begin on October 1st to align with the Blyth & District Community Centre. If the demand exists, stagger the removal of ice at each arena to minimize operational costs, while ensuring that ice is available in the Township for users that require it.
14. Explore the feasibility of **converting the underutilized concession spaces** at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and the Blyth & District Community Centre to alternative uses such as gathering areas for seating, program and office space, storage, or other uses.

6.2 Aquatics

6.2.1 Indoor Aquatics

The North Huron Westcast Community Complex offers an indoor pool (25-metres, 3 metres) with a smaller leisure component, which supports recreational swims, aquafit and swimming lessons. The pool is in good condition as the Township undertook a renovation project in 2017 with funding received through the Ontario 150 Grant. The Township received \$150,000 through this program to replace the pool liner and mechanical upgrades. The Township's most recent building condition assessment identified nearly \$160,000 in lifecycle replacement costs associated with the indoor pool over the next ten years, which includes replacing/repairing flooring, vanities and washroom partitions, dehumidifiers, dectron unit, filters, pumps and more.⁵ Additionally, the Township identified a cost of \$308,000 to replace the Dectron unit in 2022; nearly two-thirds (\$183,000) of this cost is being funded through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Swimming is an essential life skill that all residents can benefit from, particularly in communities such as North Huron that are located along waterways and within close proximity to larger bodies of water such as Lake Huron. Residents are fortunate to have access to an indoor pool, which supports year-round swimming opportunities from learn to swim and public swim to keeping older adults active through low

⁵ Capital Management Engineering Limited. 2020. Capital Plan Building Condition Assessment Westcast Community Centre. Appendix A Building Component Summary Worksheet.

impact aquatic activities. The community survey revealed that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 41% of respondents participated in recreational swimming and 36% in instructional swimming. Approximately half (52%) of respondents supported investment in indoor swimming pools.

The popularity of swimming is reinforced through the Township's aquatic programming profile. In 2019, the Township recorded over 36,600 pool visits, which was an increase of 14% from 2017. Participation in drop-in swims was the most popular activity during this period, which increased by 15%; program registration also increased by 8%. Given that the Township recently introduced non-resident fees for recreation, the impact on aquatic programs is not yet known. Additional details regarding aquatic programming can be found in Section 7.5.2. Strong participation levels in the Township's aquatic programs are indicative of trends in the sector. Swimming continues to be one of the most popular recreational activities as it appeals to all age groups and promotes the development of an important life skill.



As the Township is projected to add up to 600 residents over the planning period, North Huron's indoor pool is expected to satisfy long-term needs over the next 10 years.

6.2.2 Outdoor Aquatics

The Township offers a splash pad at the Wingham Splash Pad and Playground, which replaced an outdoor pool at the same location when the North Huron Westcast Complex was constructed. An outdoor wading pool is located at the Blyth Lions Park, which is owned and operated by the Blyth Lions Club.



Outdoor aquatic amenities are highly sought after public facilities as they can be used to cool down during a hot day by a wide range of ages. Splash pads in particular are in high demand for families with young children. The community survey for the Master Plan found that 69% of respondents supported additional public spending towards new or existing splash pads, which was the sixth highest priority among 32 facility types; a splash pad was also one of the top ten most requested facilities. By comparison, 52% of respondents supported additional public spending towards new or existing outdoor pools, which ranked 19th out of 32 facility types.

From an operational perspective, splash pads are also more cost effective to provide as they require less maintenance and staffing compared to outdoor pools and wading pools. Splash pads also use less water and offer flexibility in design as they can be integrated into most parks and can be developed in a wide variety of stimulating designs with apparatuses that provide an enhanced aquatic experience for residents and visitors.

The Wingham Splash pad is a popular summer amenity that's well used given it is adjacent to a playground and daycare, and it is situated within close proximity of residents who live within walking distance. The splash pad also draws residents and users from further distances as they are considered to be "drive to" facilities, thus the on-site parking lot is a benefit for accommodating higher volumes of traffic. As the number of young families is expected to increase in Wingham, it will be important to ensure that this splash pad is maintained over the planning period.

The Township is in a unique position with respect to the outdoor wading pool at the Blyth Lions Park. As it is owned, maintained and operated by the Blyth Lions Club, the Township has benefited from not having to allocate resources towards its operations while residents in the community can enjoy this amenity during the operating season. The outdoor wading pool has served Blyth for approximately 50 years and during this time the Blyth Lions Club has undertaken necessary lifecycle improvements to ensure that it continues to serve the community.

There are examples across the Province of municipalities converting outdoor wading pools to splash pads to achieve the associated benefits with respect to operations, maintenance, and design. In response to user demands in North Huron, the Township is encouraged to engage the Blyth Lions Club to investigate opportunities to convert the existing wading pool to a splash pad, prior to undertaking any further major capital improvements. It is recognized that the Blyth Lions Club previously explored potentially converting the outdoor wading pool to a splash pad but did not move forward at that time; however, given the previously noted trends and the fact that splash pads was ranked as the sixth highest priority for investment for the Master Plan, there is merit in revisiting this opportunity. Jointly pursuing funding opportunities through the Ontario Trillium Foundation or other grant programs is encouraged.

Recommendations – Aquatics

15. Undertake **indoor pool improvements** in accordance with the recommendations contained in the building condition assessment.
16. Engage the Blyth Lions Club to investigate potential to convert the existing outdoor wading pool to a **splash pad**. Joint funding opportunities through the Ontario Trillium Foundation or other grant programs is encouraged.

6.3 Arts and Cultural Facilities

There are a number of arts and cultural facilities in North Huron which are owned and operated by the Township as well as other entities including the Huron County Library and private organizations. These facilities are venues where residents, visitors and tourists can learn about the Township's rich history, participate in cultural activities, attend special events and access resources.

6.3.1 Blyth Memorial Community Hall

The Blyth Memorial Community Hall is one of the Township's most notable facilities. Owned by the Township, this facility is operated by the Blyth Centre for the Arts under a ten-year lease agreement and is home to the world renowned Blyth Festival Theatre. This facility is ideal for a variety of events from plays to small meetings.



The Township's commitment to the arts and cultural sector is demonstrated by its investment in arts and cultural spaces. In 2019, the Township completed extensive renovations to the Blyth Memorial Community Hall, which was made possible by federal assistance through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund. Renovations included new ventilation, theatre seating, kitchen, refurbished stage and upgrades to the lighting grid. The lower hall was completely transformed by opening up the windows blocked by prior renovations. Electrical, sound and internet services were also installed, along with exterior façade improvements.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township worked with the Blyth Centre for the Arts to develop an outdoor theatre venue by re-purposing a surplus soccer field at the Blyth & District Community Centre. Known as the Blyth Festival Harvest Stage, the development of this performance space is consistent with sector trends as there has been a growing movement towards holding outdoor events and activities that are typically held indoors. This trend was further heightened during the pandemic due to closures and gathering restrictions on indoor public spaces. With pandemic restrictions relaxed, the Blyth Festival Harvest Stage had its first performance in August 2021 and is one of five productions that will run until early October.

The Township's lease agreement with the Blyth Centre for the Arts is ongoing until the end of the Master Plan period and thus no recommendations are made with respect to the Blyth Memorial Community Hall or the Blyth Festival Harvest Stage. However, as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, it will be important for the Township to work closely with the organization to ensure the safety of staff and patrons, as well as long-term success.

6.3.2 Wingham Town Hall Theatre

The Wingham Town Hall Theatre is another important arts and cultural asset in North Huron. This facility was originally constructed in 1890 and it is now operated by the Township as a musical performance space. It is available to rent by the public or community groups and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it hosted about 10 productions a year. The Township Council Chambers is also located in this facility, although they are temporarily being held in the theatre space during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet social distancing measures.



The Wingham Town Hall Theatre also underwent renovations in 2016 to enhance the user experience of the space. The renovation project was made possible by a group of dedicated volunteers who assisted with fundraising and undertaking the improvements, as well as an Ontario Trillium Grant. As a result, the renovations were completed at no cost to taxpayers.

Research indicates that there's a growing interest in arts and culture experiences. The community survey for the Master Plan found that while 67% of respondents felt that arts and cultural facilities are important, only 39% are satisfied with what currently exists in North Huron. This gap suggests that there is room for improvement, although some may not be aware of recent improvements made to the Township's arts and cultural spaces due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a part of post-pandemic planning, opportunities exist to focus efforts on marketing the Township's arts and cultural spaces to raise awareness of what's available in the community and to encourage use. In an effort to increase use of the Wingham Town Hall Theatre, consideration should be given to promoting the space for school use, hosting programs or events such as movie nights and theatre classes (either by the Township or a third-party), and attracting performers that appeal to different interests and age groups.

6.3.3 North Huron Museum

The North Huron Museum is in a former post office in Wingham across from the Wingham Town Hall Theatre. The North Huron Museum houses a wealth of information and artifacts that connect visitors to the past. The museum has been closed since the 2018 budget deliberations. In 2017, a facility condition assessment was completed, which reported that \$3.8 million was required to undertake repairs and renovations to meet accessibility requirements and museum standards. The community survey for this Master Plan found that 42% of respondents felt that investment in museums should be a lower priority ranking 28th out of 32 facility types. This may suggest that the use of public funds may be better allocated to other areas.

The Township's Municipal Service Delivery Review (2020) identified that the museum operation is a traditional service, which means that while it may be a public service that's expected by residents, it is not a mandatory or essential for the Township to provide. The Municipal Service Delivery Review recommended that the Township consider seeking a third-party museum operator or cease operations and seek alternative strategies to display artifacts such as using other Township space. There are

examples of varying museum operating models across the Province including those that are operated by local municipalities, County or the Region. There have also been examples of municipalities transferring museum operating responsibilities to public libraries that may already be providing similar community services. Some public museums are operated with the support of volunteers or community groups such as historical societies.

Strategies to bolster the use of museums (and cultural opportunities, in general) include raising awareness about the benefits of cultural opportunities and encouraging greater public investment in this sector (including museums), creating a cultural marking plan, re-investing in aging cultural infrastructure, working with schools to create cultural programming, and incorporating the culture and traditions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour into the local cultural environment (e.g., public art, facility design, exhibits, etc.) to promote reconciliation and showcase the positive contributions of these groups. Collaborations with others is also encouraged to share roles, responsibilities and resources to minimize service duplication. Section 7.10 identifies how the Township should work with Huron County to address local cultural opportunities in North Huron.

A community-led proposal was brought forward in 2019 to relocate the museum to the former Wingham Train Station. A North Huron Museum Committee was established to explore this proposal further with consideration given to developing a project plan, a museum operating plan (including programming opportunities), and a fundraising plan. On November 10, 2021, Township Council approved the proposal by the Museum Committee and directed Township staff to proceed with the next steps in the process.

6.3.4 Huron County Library

The Township owns the Wingham Library Branch building and utilizes leased space for the Blyth Library Branch. Both locations are stand-alone spaces that are operated by Huron County, although the Township allocates funding for building maintenance and other associated library costs. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township had a library operating deficit of \$28,905 in 2019, which was an increase from the operating deficit in 2017 (\$18,619). While the library system is beyond the scope of the Master Plan, it is important to recognize the important role they play in providing welcoming and inclusive community spaces for all residents. The library provides a place for residents to access print and digital resources and access services and programs, thus they are highly valued community amenities.

Should extensive capital investment be required to the Township-owned Wingham Library Branch, or the leased space at the Blyth Library Branch is no longer available, the Township should engage Huron County to discuss strategies to ensure continued and enhance access to the library to meet current and future space needs. As part of such an exercise, the Township and County could investigate the feasibility of re-locating one or both library branches to existing community centres, either through expansion or re-purposing existing underutilized space to further strengthen the Township's facilities as community hubs and as civic destinations. The enhancement of existing community hubs was supported through the community input during the preparation of the Master Plan. It should also be noted that while there would be a capital cost investment required to relocate library branches to the community centres, experience in other communities has shown a significantly higher level of use of library services

when combined with recreation facilities as well as increased participation in recreation and culture programs offered at the community centre.

Recommendations - Arts and Cultural Facilities

17. Increase the use of the **Wingham Town Hall Theatre** by hosting programs such as movie nights and theatre classes, attracting performers that appeal to different interests and age groups, promoting the space for school use, or other ideas identified by Township staff.
18. Should extensive capital investment be required to the Wingham Library Branch, or the leased Blyth Library Branch location is no longer available, the Township is encouraged to engage Huron County to discuss opportunities to **ensure continued and enhance access** to the library to meet current and future space needs. As part of such an exercise, the Township and County could investigate the feasibility of re-locating one or both library branches to existing community centres, either through expansion or re-purposing existing underutilized space to further strengthen the Township's facilities as community hubs and as civic destinations.

6.4 Gymnasiums, Community Halls and Multi-Use Spaces

6.4.1 Gymnasiums

While the Township does not provide a gymnasium, it has a reciprocal agreement with the Avon Maitland District School Board that allows North Huron to provide indoor recreation programming within the gymnasiums at the F.E. Madill Secondary School and Maitland River Elementary School, both of which are in Wingham. In addition, the Township has two indoor multi-use courts at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. These courts are designed for squash, but they can also accommodate other active indoor recreation activities including basketball, wallyball and group fitness. The Township's arena floor pads are also used for active indoor programs.



Residents benefit from the reciprocal agreement between the Township and the Avon Maitland District School Board. This agreement allows the Township to deliver a range of indoor recreation programs year-round four to five nights per week in Wingham. Activities include summer camps, martial arts, gymnastics, basketball, modified racquetball, pickleball, indoor soccer, volleyball and badminton. Participation rates for these types of programs are discussed further in Section 7.5.



While the two indoor multi-use courts are designed for squash, they also facilitate other gymnasium-based activities such as basketball, wallyball and group fitness activities. Utilizing the courts for multiple activities is an excellent use of space, particularly given that squash is not viewed as a growth sport. There are examples of communities that have re-purposed underutilized squash courts to accommodate other recreation facilities. The Township's courts are used for drop-in activities so it is difficult to quantify its level of use; however, staff reports that court memberships are low, suggesting that the space is underutilized.

An opportunity exists to re-purpose the squash courts to another in-demand use given that the Master Plan process found that there is a growing need for flexible multi-purpose space that can accommodate indoor activities such as group fitness space. The Township currently offers fitness programs in multiple spaces at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex to accommodate growing interest and to maintain social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Removing the dividing wall between the two courts to create one large space would broaden the variety of active indoor recreation uses that may take place within this space. It is recognized that it would not function as a traditional gymnasium given its size; however, it is recognized that the school gymnasiums are presently meeting the needs of Wingham residents. Conversion of the two multi-use courts should be a long-term vision.

There is no gymnasium access in Blyth and based on input from the consultation process, there does not appear to be a priority for this type of facility. This may be due to the fact that gymnasiums tend to appeal to a younger demographic and Blyth has a high proportion of mature and older adults. In an effort to ensure that opportunities are available for younger age groups, active indoor programming should continue to be accommodated through existing spaces such as the arena floor or the community space at the Blyth & District Community Centre.

6.4.2 Community Hall and Multi-Use Spaces

There are eight community spaces available for rent across North Huron including:

- Belgrave Community Centre & Park;
- Blyth & District Community Centre (2);
- North Huron Westcast Community Complex (3); and
- Blyth Memorial Community Hall (2)

While these facilities are all owned by the Township, some locations are operated by community organizations under a lease agreement including the Belgrave Community Centre Board, Wingham Columbus Centre and the Blyth Centre for the Arts. These spaces accommodate a variety of uses including meetings, birthdays, social gatherings and other events. Amenities vary by location and may include kitchens, seating, tables, storage and more. In addition to these spaces, additional privately-operated spaces are available through other providers in the Township and in adjacent communities such as the Cowbell Brewery.

Halls and multi-purpose spaces are typically incorporated within facility designs as complementary spaces to other spaces such as at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Co-locating these



community spaces within a multi-use facility achieves benefits in cross-programming opportunities and efficiencies in construction, maintenance and management. As a result, the construction of stand-alone community halls and program spaces is discouraged.

The Township is directly responsible for renting the hall and meeting room at the Blyth & District Community Centre and a meeting room at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. These spaces are used periodically (primarily during the evenings) for Township programs and public rentals, which result in low to moderate levels of utilization throughout the year. The level of usage of these spaces is typical compared to other municipalities. Generally speaking, the use of large community halls, such as the one found at the Blyth & District Community Centre, have been declining for some



time due to competition with the private sector (e.g., Cowbell Brewery) that may offer modern amenities and a full range of services. Nevertheless, it is important to note that these types of spaces are not typically used intensively or significant revenue generators. Rather they are provided as a community amenity to ensure that there are publicly accessible and affordable community meeting spaces, as well as venues to deliver vital Township programs and services.

Publicly-owned halls and multi-purpose spaces that are operated by third-parties including the Belgrave Community Centre, Wingham Columbus Centre and Blyth Memorial Community Hall have a usage profile that is similar to Township-operated spaces where bookings range from banquets/receptions, meetings, funerals, and other rentals for social gatherings.

Given that no new indoor community spaces are identified in this Master Plan, additional community halls or multi-purpose spaces are not recommended. Instead, the Township should focus on promoting the use of existing spaces and seeking ways to bolster utilization such as exploring new program areas or undertaking improvements to attract use and improve the user experience. For example, replacing the flooring in the meeting room at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex with a wood sprung floor may be better suited for fitness programming, while continuing to accommodate other types of rentals. An opportunity may also exist to replace the flooring to the community hall at the Blyth & District Community Centre with one that is accommodating of a variety of uses, particularly as site observations identified that some areas of the floor had water damage. Any improvements should be guided by consultation with the public and user groups to identify and prioritize enhancements.

Recommendations – Gymsnasiums, Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Spaces

19. Monitor usage trends of the existing **indoor multi-use courts**. Should utilization remain low over the short-term, re-purpose the two squash courts by removing the dividing wall to create a large indoor space to broaden the variety of active recreation activities that can be accommodate.

Recommendations – Gymsnasiums, Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Spaces

- 20. Continue to utilize the **arena floor and community space** at the Blyth & District Community Centre for indoor active programs to ensure that there are activities available for residents, particularly the younger demographic.
- 21. Investigate strategies to bolster utilization of existing **community halls and multi-purpose spaces** permitted by the Township such as exploring new program areas and promoting its use with community organizations. The public and user groups should be consulted to evaluate, identify and prioritize improvements to community halls and multi-purpose spaces to encourage use or improve the user experience.

6.5 Fitness Spaces

The North Huron Westcast Community Complex offers an equipment-based fitness centre, as well as spaces for group fitness programs. The Township also delivers group fitness activities at the Blyth & District Community Centre and the Belgrave Community Centre and indoor walking programs within school hallways. The Township offers a wide range of fitness opportunities that’s comparable with private sector offerings including strength training, cardio, yoga, zumba, boot camps and more, as well as childminding. For those seeking a more advanced fitness experience, the Township offers personal training by qualified experts that specialize in rehabilitation, weight loss, sports training, retraining, and pre/post-natal.



Physical fitness and individual wellness are top of mind issues among many Canadians, resulting in a greater emphasis being placed on personal health. Group fitness programming has become one of the fastest growing segments of the fitness sector, more so than traditional weight-training, as these programs are designed to be fun and social activities.



Municipalities are also keeping pace with fitness trends such as functional training (e.g., TRX, Cross-Fit, and High Intensity Interval Training) and virtual programming (not currently provided by the Township).

While indoor fitness activities have been disrupted due to the pandemic, this has also fostered a renewed interest on increasing physical activity levels for residents for residents of all ages. The community survey found that 42% of respondents participated in aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight training prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was the third most popular activity. Approximately two-

thirds (67%) of respondents supported additional spending for fitness studios and equipment-based fitness centres.

As there are currently no private fitness centres in North Huron, the Township should continue to implement its current fitness provision model, including offering group fitness programs in Wingham, Blyth and Belgrave. Over the long-term, potentially re-purposing the two multi-use courts to create a larger space that can accommodate group fitness opportunities (see Section 6.4) will assist with bolstering Township programs. Augmenting the fitness opportunities that take place within the Township’s spaces with the indoor walking program offered within school hallways ensures that there is a well-rounded offering of fitness activities that are conveniently located in the Township.

Recommendations – Fitness Spaces

22. Continue to implement the Township’s **current fitness provision model** of a fitness centre at the North Huron Wescast Community Complex, complemented by group fitness activities in Wingham, Belgrave and Blyth, as well as indoor walking within school hallways. Group fitness opportunities may be bolstered re-purposing the two multi-use courts at the North Huron Wescast Community Complex over the long-term, subject to monitoring participation levels.

6.6 Ball Diamonds

There are currently five lit ball diamonds in North Huron, including one at the Belgrave Community Centre & Park, which is operated by the Belgrave Community Centre Board. An equivalency factor of 1.5 unlit diamonds is applied to lit diamonds to recognize the fact that they provide extended periods of play during the evenings. As a result, the Township provides an adjusted supply of 7.5 unlit equivalent baseball diamonds. Excluded from this inventory are school-owned ball diamonds.



After being considered a sport in decline for the better part of the past two decades, baseball and its variations (including softball, fastball, etc.) have experienced a resurgence in communities across Ontario. Baseball Ontario reported nearly 16,000 competitive participants in 2019, which was a growth of 39% compared to 2007, though that figure excludes recreational/house leagues and non-affiliated ball groups (thus actual participation figures are greater).⁶ The renewed interest in ball diamond sports is driven by a number of factors such as a greater focus on skill development, and grassroots programs to engage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport. The popularity of the Toronto Blue Jays is also a contributing factor.

The community survey found that nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents participated in baseball or softball prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over half (54%) of respondents supported additional

⁶ Baseball Ontario. Annual General Meeting Reports.

investment towards the Township's ball diamond facilities. Suggestions with were made for additional baseball leagues including hardball and adult's softball, as well as more tournaments.

The Township's ball diamonds are used by Wingham Minor Baseball and a number of adult ball renters. Registration data was not available for the Master Plan. To better understand participation trends, the Master Plan recommends that the Township regularly collect registration data from sports organizations that utilize Township facilities (including residents and non-residents participation) to inform future facility needs, including ball diamonds (See Recommendation #79). As a point of reference, comparable municipalities provide ball diamonds at a rate of one ball diamond per 100 participants.

The Township's weekly usage schedules indicated that the ball diamonds at Riverside Park are well used during the week when each diamond is booked between one and a half to four and a half hours per evening. The ball diamonds are not booked regularly during the weekend, which is common practice in other municipalities. Weekend usage does occur each year during the annual Hitmen Recreational Ball Tournament. There is currently no evidence to suggest that additional ball diamonds are required to serve the needs of Wingham user groups.

There is currently no active minor ball program in Blyth. Organized minor ball in Blyth was previously offered, although participation declined as players joined organizations in other communities. As a result, the ball diamonds at the Blyth & District Community Centre are underutilized. A review of weekly schedules found that in 2019, only one ball diamond was used twice a week for two to three hours a night by adult recreation and competitive groups. Usage of these ball diamonds has generally been minimal over the past number of years, which suggests that there is a surplus of diamonds in Blyth. It is noted that the ball diamonds are used on occasion for some events such as the Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion, although this is primarily intended to accommodate parking and temporary campsites, rather than using the ball diamond for its intended purpose.

Based on the level of usage of diamonds in Blyth, an excellent opportunity exists to re-purpose one ball diamond to address priority needs for other outdoor recreation facilities in the community. Re-purposing of a ball diamond should take place as a part of the redevelopment plan identified in Section 5.5 of this Master Plan.

The Township should identify which of the two ball diamonds in Blyth should be re-purposed, recognizing that enhancements may be undertaken to the remaining diamond to ensure that it continues to serve users. For example, the Radford Diamond is a newer diamond; however, lighting components may need to be replaced due to the availability of appropriate parts. Similarly, the Arena Diamond is older, and due to the condition of the existing lighting standards, complete lighting replacement may be required. These features and other amenities should be considered as a part of the evaluation process, including associated enhancement costs. In the interim, consideration should be given to reducing the level of maintenance of the surplus ball diamond(s) in order to minimize operational resources and expenses. As user groups begin to return to play post-pandemic, the Township should monitor ball diamond use and work with organizations to maximize its use and attract participants.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

- 23. Due to a lack of demand, **replace one ball diamond** in Blyth with a redeveloped park space to include priority recreation facilities identified in the Master Plan such as an enhanced skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. The Township should identify and undertake improvements to the remaining ball diamond to ensure that it continues to serve users, such as replacing lighting. Should the Township decide to maintain a surplus of ball diamonds and not re-purpose one diamond, a location(s) will need to be determined for other recommended priority outdoor recreation facilities.
- 24. In the interim and prior to re-purposing a ball diamond, monitor use of the **ball diamond(s)** at the Blyth & District Community Centre and as user groups return to play post-pandemic to assess needs, while also working with organizations to maximize use and attract participants.

6.7 Soccer Fields

While the Township does not own any soccer fields, it permits and maintains the Galbraith Soccer Field, which is owned by the Maitland River Conservation Authority and located in Morris-Turnberry. There are also four non-municipal soccer fields in the Township including three school fields in Wingham (two at F.E. Madill Secondary School and one at the Maitland River Elementary School) and one field at the Wingham Pentecostal Church in Hutton Heights.



Registrations in Ontario Soccer’s affiliated organizations have been declining for well over a decade. In 2018, Ontario Soccer reported approximately 287,000 players which is 25% below registrations from 10 years prior.⁷ Declining registrations are driven by factors such as aging demographic trends, growing competition from other sports and activities, and the emergence of elite soccer clubs and academies that are not affiliated with provincial governing body. The Wingham Minor Soccer reported 325 players in 2019, which was a 7% decline from 2017. This translates into a service level of one field per 65 participants, which is higher compared to generally accepted targets of one field per 80 to 90 participants. Despite declining participation trends, soccer continues to be a popular sport due to its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wingham Minor Soccer used the Galbraith Soccer Field regularly four times a week and two and a half hours per night. A recreational soccer group also used the field once a night during the weekend for two hours. Wingham Minor Soccer also utilizes the four non-municipal soccer fields regularly between three and four times per week. At the time of writing, the group had returned to play in the summer of 2021 utilizing a similar playing schedule.

It is not expected that Wingham Minor Soccer will experience a substantial change in its membership, although there may be a slight increase as the Township attracts new families with youth who may have

⁷ Ontario Soccer Association. Annual General Meeting Reports.

an interest in soccer. It will be important to continue to maintain access to the existing soccer field supply and given that none of them are owned by the Township, there will be a need to work with landowners to ensure they continue to be available for use by Wingham Minor Soccer and other field users.

It is recognized that the Township is currently investing operational resources into maintaining the Galbraith Soccer Field, which is not optimal given that it is not a Township asset. Given that there is currently some capacity available at other soccer fields in North Huron such as at schools and the Wingham Pentecostal Church, opportunities may exist to engage soccer users to explore the feasibility of consolidating field scheduling with the goal of removing Galbraith Soccer Field by maximizing the use of fields located within North Huron.

While the use of non-municipal soccer fields has met the needs of local soccer groups, and they are expected to do so over the foreseeable future, the Township must be prepared to respond in the event that these fields are no longer available for use. Should this occur, field users may be looking toward the Township for a solution. This may require adjusting field scheduling (which may not be ideal for younger participants) or result in participants seeking opportunities with other organizations. As a result, the Township should remain aware of potential opportunities to acquire land within the Township (or re-purpose existing land owned by the Township) to accommodate soccer fields, should they be required over the long-term.

Recommendations – Soccer Fields

25. Consult soccer organizations to investigate the feasibility of **consolidating field scheduling** with the goal of removing Galbraith Soccer Field by maximizing the use of fields located within North Huron.
26. The Township should continue to work to secure long-term access to non-municipal soccer fields. However, as a long-term strategy, **opportunities to acquire land** within the Township should be investigated (as well as considering the re-purposing of existing land owned by the Township) to accommodate soccer fields, should the current non-municipal soccer fields no longer be available.

6.8 Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts

In 1976, the Wingham Recreation and Community Centres Board approached the Huron County Board of Education (now Avon Maitland District School Board) to establish three tennis courts at the F.E. Madill Secondary School. The Township has assumed the position of the Wingham Recreation and Community Centres Board since all matters related to recreation have been turned over to North Huron and the agreement is still in effect to this day. Under this agreement, the Township is responsible for surface maintenance. Additionally, a public tennis court is



located at the Royal Oaks Health and Wellness Centre. Both locations are lined for tennis and pickleball activities.

Across the Province, tennis has been experiencing a resurgence over the past several years due to factors including the success of Canadian professionals, a greater emphasis on grassroots programs to attract younger players, and a growing segment of baby boomers that are returning to the sport.

Older adults are also generating interest in pickleball, which is recognized as one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. Pickleball is a low-intensity sport that can be played on a modified tennis court (pickleball courts are smaller in size with a lower net height). The popularity of pickleball continues to spread across Ontario and its prominence is further bolstered by being played at the Ontario Senior Games.

The community survey found that only 9% and 7% of respondents played tennis and pickleball prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, respectively. It is recognized that this may not be indicative of the playing population in North Huron given that these sports are played by a subset of the population. 42% and 37% of respondents supported additional investment in tennis and pickleball courts, respectively.

At the time when stakeholder consultation for the Master Plan took place, the courts at F.E. Madill Secondary School were closed due to the deteriorating surface condition. As a result, input received from stakeholders expressed the desire for improving these courts. The courts have now re-opened to the public following surface repairs completed by the Township. Continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to maintain access to these courts, which also includes ensuring that the courts remain in a state of good repair.

While the current supply of courts is considered to be adequate for communities the size of North Huron, the geographic distribution of courts also needs to be considered to ensure that residents have a reasonable level of access to this type of amenity. As all of Township's courts are concentrated in Wingham, Blyth is viewed as a gap area. Providing tennis and pickleball playing opportunities in Blyth would address this gap and provide residents in this area with an expanded range of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Recognizing that one of the ball diamonds at the Blyth & District Community Centre is surplus to community needs, a portion of this space may be re-purposed to include outdoor courts for tennis and pickleball. Consistent with design best practices, two courts with line markings for tennis and pickleball is recommended to allow for simultaneous play given the social nature of these activities. The design and placement of these courts should be guided by the re-imagination of the Blyth & District Community Centre as identified in this Master Plan.

Recommendations – Outdoor Tennis & Pickleball Courts

27. Construct **two courts with playing lines for tennis and pickleball** at the Blyth & District Community Centre. Continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to maintain access to the existing tennis courts at the F.E. Madill Secondary School in Wingham, which includes ensuring that the courts remain in a state of good repair.

6.9 Outdoor Basketball Courts

North Huron provides two full size outdoor basketball courts – one at Riverside Park in Wingham and one at the Belgrave Community Centre & Park (operated by a third-party). In addition to these courts, basketball courts are also found at Maitland River Elementary School and Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School).

While outdoor hard surface pads are primarily used for basketball, some can be utilized as multi-purpose courts that accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities such as ball hockey. Basketball continues to be a popular pastime activity for youth and young adults in many communities due to its national appeal and the popularity of the Toronto Raptors. Basketball is relatively affordable compared to other sports, easy to learn, and can be played individually or in small groups.



The geographic distribution of basketball courts is considered to address underserved areas, particularly given that youth and young adults are typically limited in the distance that they can travel. Blyth is identified as a gap area where there are currently no basketball courts. The Township should evaluate opportunities to establish a basketball court in Blyth to ensure that users have reasonable access to this type of facility. This strategy would address the demand for this amenity as public requests for basketball courts in Blyth were received through the consultation process for the Master Plan. The community survey also found that 52% of respondents supported investment in outdoor basketball courts.

Constructing a basketball court at the Blyth & District Community Centre would be a logical location given that there are already other outdoor active recreation facility components at this location, including a future permanent skateboard park located as recommended in this Master Plan. Co-locating these two amenities together would strengthen the Blyth & District Community Centre as a gathering place for local youth given that they are geared towards the same target market. The basketball court should be designed to be multi-use to accommodate other hard surface activities (e.g., ball hockey). To ensure that a similar playing experience is offered in Wingham, the Township should also add multi-use lining for basketball and ball hockey to the existing court at Riverside Park.

Recommendations – Outdoor Basketball Courts

28. Construct a **multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey** at the Blyth & District Community Centre.
29. Add multi-use **playing lines** for basketball and ball hockey at the existing court at Riverside Park.

6.10 Skateboard Park

A skateboard park is located at the Blyth & District Community Centre. Constructed from wood and metal, the modular system features railings and ramps that are suitable for skateboarding, as well as other wheeled action sports such as BMX bikes, scooters and rollerblades.



While skateboarding was once considered a fad, it has demonstrated sustained longevity and is now considered to be a core recreational activity and level of service for municipalities across Canada. Many municipalities recognize the benefits of having skateboard parks in the community as they broaden the range of outdoor recreational opportunities for youth, which is particularly important given that not all youth play organized sports. The sport is also becoming increasingly popular with adults, many of whom participated in the sport when they were younger or wish to do so with their children. These types of venues also provide a safe space for users to gather and socialized with others who share common interests. The prominence of skateboarding is further bolstered on an internationally level following its recent introduction in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Municipalities that are similar in size to North Huron typically provide one skateboard park in a prominent area to meet the needs of residents. This would suggest that the Township's skateboard park would be adequate to meet the needs of residents; however, the existing location is considered to be small by industry standards (approximately 4,000 square feet) and it's modular system is aging as it is nearly 15 years old (installed in 2007). Full community engagement of youth requires the provision of recreation opportunities that are fun, engaging and appeal to a range of skill levels. These attributes are not reflected in the current skateboard park given its age and the fact that modular skateboard parks such as the one in Blyth generally tend to be temporary fixtures, it has largely remained unchanged since it was constructed.

There are recent examples of municipalities renewing aging skateboard parks to enhance the user experience, suggesting that re-investment in these types of facilities is a worthwhile endeavour. While it is recognized that Blyth is an aging community, providing opportunities for skateboarding and other wheeled action sports will continue to be important in order to ensure that youth-oriented activities are available, which will also assist with attracting new families.

There is local support for re-investing in the Blyth skateboard park as there is currently a proponent-led initiative to update the existing facility with a new permanent structure. Support for skateboarding and other wheeled action sports was also heard through the consultation process for the Master Plan. Based on sector trends and public requests, it is recommended that the Township continue to support the proponent-led initiative to raise funds towards updating the Blyth skateboard park. The placement of the new skateboard park should form part of the redevelopment process for Blyth & District Community Centre. Given the size of Blyth, a moderately-sized skateboard park is anticipated to be adequate to meet local needs, although the size and design should be guided by public input.

Opportunities may exist to engage local service clubs to assist with the project. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on stakeholders is unknown at this time, stakeholder consultation undertaken as a part of the Master Plan revealed that there is a willingness to explore the potential involvement in new community projects. A collaborative process will be required to identify fundraising targets and municipal and third-party contributions.

It is important to ensure that youth-oriented recreation facilities are accessible to their primary market. Due to the spatial distance of the Township’s urban areas, the skateboard park in Blyth is not accessible for youth and young adults in Wingham. Given that Wingham is expected to accommodate most of the projected population growth over the next ten years, the provision of a second skateboard park is recommended. A similar approach used in Blyth should be applied in Wingham in terms of scale, design, and funding. Recognizing that population growth will be directed to Wingham, the skateboard park may be designed in a manner where it can be expanded over the long-term.

Recommendations – Skateboard Park

30. Continue to support the proponent-led initiative to raise funds towards **replacing the skateboard park** at Blyth & District Community Centre with a permanent structure. The scale, design and positioning of the replacement skateboard park should be determined as a part of the redevelopment of the Blyth & District Community Centre and through public input. Led by the proponent, opportunities may also exist to work with third-party groups such as the private sector or service groups to seek funding towards this project.
31. Evaluate opportunities to construct a **skateboard park** in Wingham in order to improve the distribution of opportunities for skateboarding and other wheeled action sports, as well as to strengthen convenient recreational opportunities for youth. The scale, design and location should be guided by consultation with the public. Opportunities to partner with third party groups such as the private sector or service groups to seek funding towards this project is encouraged.

6.11 Playgrounds

The Township provides three playgrounds in North Huron, including at Riverside Park in Wingham, Wingham Splash Pad and Playground, and the Belgrave Community Centre & Park; the latter is owned by the Township but managed by an operating board. A playground is also located at Blyth Lions Park, which is open to the public but owned by the Blyth Lions Club.

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. While traditional playground equipment generally consists of swings, slides and an array of climbing structures, modern play structures are designed to offer more creative and unique play experiences and often integrates accessible features.



Industry best practices indicates that playgrounds should be provided within 800-metres of residential neighbourhoods within urban settlement areas, without crossing major barriers such as County roads and waterbodies. Applying this service area to the Township's playgrounds (Figure 16) reveals a gap area in the southeast corner of Wingham, although this area is served by a playground at the Maitland River Elementary School and Sacred Heart Separate School.

Hutton Heights and the east side of Blyth are also identified as gap areas; however, recommendations have been advanced in Section 5.4 of the Master Plan to establish new parkland within these areas through parkland dedication or alternative land acquisition strategies. Should the Township be successful in securing parkland sites in these areas, developing a playground at these locations would address these gap areas. The size of the playground structure should be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, junior style playgrounds may be located in smaller neighbourhood parks, while larger parks designed to attract a wider range of users may include senior and junior combination playgrounds.

It is a best practice for municipal playgrounds to be inspected by a certified staff member to ensure that they meet standards developed by the Canadian Standards Association, which includes assessing the condition of materials, surfaces and other matters; repairs should be undertaken on an as needed basis. It is also common for municipalities to renew aging playground structures at the end of their life expectancy, which is approximately 20 years. These strategies are recommended to encourage use and ensure that they are safe for users. Playground renewal also ensures that they are inclusive of all users and address legislative requirements identified in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. The AODA identifies that all new play structures must incorporate accessible play components and feature a firm and stable surface such as engineered woodchips. Playground renewal in the Township is well supported by the public as 72% of community survey respondents were in favour of investing in play structures, which was the fourth highest priority.

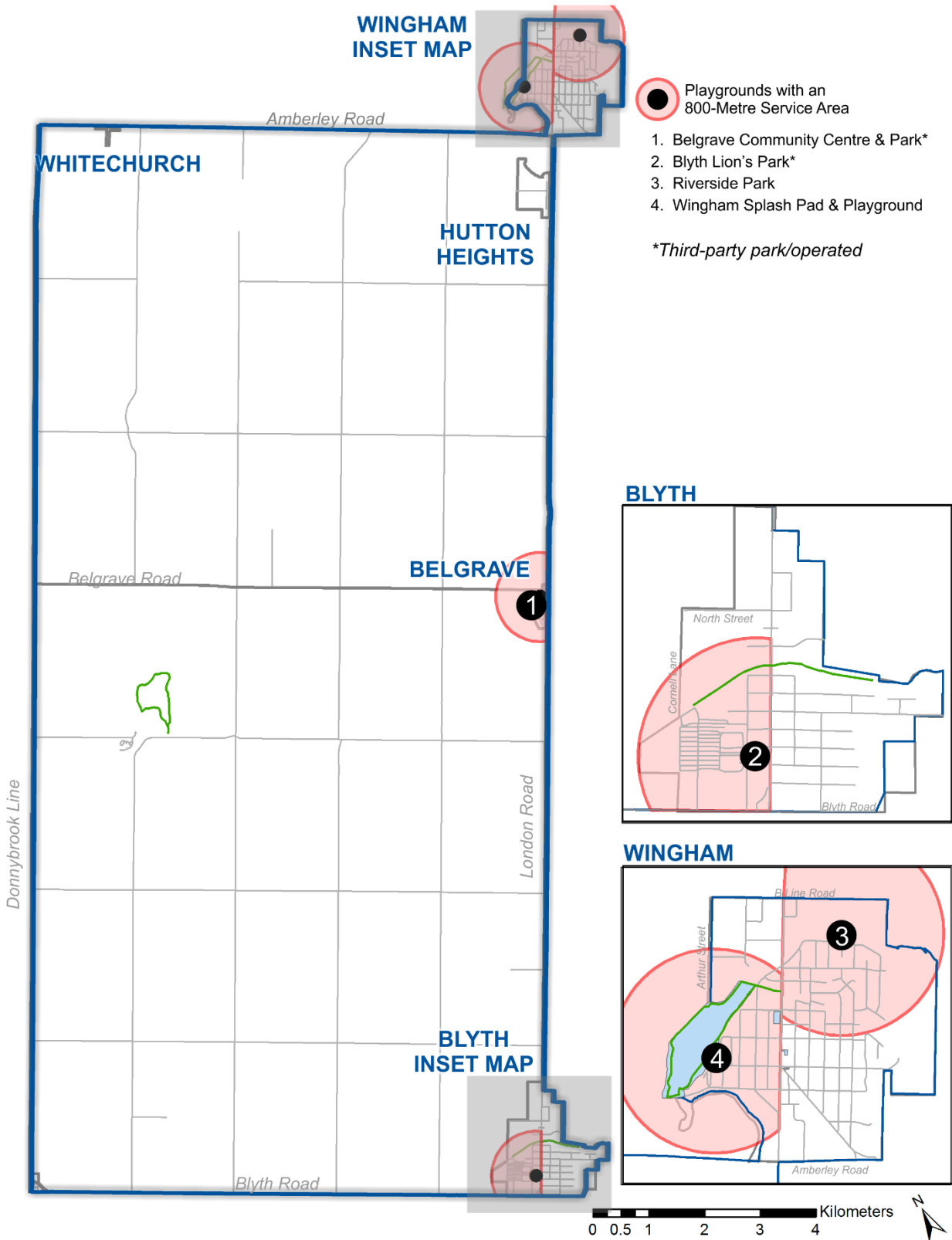
As a part of future playground development or replacement, the Township is encouraged to continue offering creative playground experiences as they tend to be used more frequently than basic play structures. Natural and adventure playgrounds are also gaining traction in many municipalities. These playgrounds encourage the use of existing landscapes and natural materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders to allow users to use their imagination. These playgrounds are designed to appear more precarious, which aligns the concept of "risky play" to encourage children to take more risks through climbing, exploring, and moving vigorously.

Recommendations - Playgrounds

32. To ensure that all residential areas in the Township's urban settlement areas are located within **800-metres** of a playground, unobstructed by major barriers, strive to address playground gaps in Hutton Heights and the east side of Blyth.
33. **Renew Township playgrounds** once they reach a life expectancy of 20 years or as identified by playground manufactures. During the lifespan of each playground, regular inspections should take place to ensure that they are safe for users. The development or redevelopment of playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Creative playground designs are encouraged with consideration given to natural and adventure play components.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 16: Distribution of Playgrounds



6.12 Campgrounds

The Township operates the Blyth Campground, which is also utilized as an event grounds for large, special events held throughout the year, such as the Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion. Located adjacent to the Blyth & District Community Centre, the campground can generally accommodate approximately 130 appropriately-sized camp sites; during the Huron Pioneer Hobby & Threshers Reunion, the campground can accommodate up to 800 camp sites. The North Huron Municipal Service Delivery Review identified that campgrounds are discretionary services, meaning that it is not a required level of service. As a result the Service Delivery Review recommended that the Township evaluate its role in operating the campground.



A seasonal trailer park was previously located in Wingham, which was operated by the Wingham Legion. It was recently decommissioned due to the investment required to address aging infrastructure associated with the property. It is currently being re-purposed for residential development to ease housing pressure to accommodate new growth in the community.

Kampgrounds of America's (KOA) 2021 North American Campground Report identifies that between 2020 and 2021, the number of camping households grew by 3.9 million to reach 94.5 million households.⁸ While it does not specify the number of Canadian camper households, subtracting 86.1 million camping US households would leave approximately 9 million camper households in Canada.

By comparison, a 2015 industry report by the Canadian Camping & RV Council (CCRVC) estimated that there were approximately 5.8 million camping households in Canada, of which 1.8 million reside in Ontario.⁹ These statistics are not directly comparable, but it may infer that there is a growing interest in camping.

Campgrounds have an economic impact on communities as visiting campers seek local experiences such as shopping, dining and entertainment. The CCRVC reports that the camping industry generates approximately \$4.7 billion in economic impact in Canada, along with 66,000 jobs and \$1 billion in tax revenue.¹⁰ While the economic impact from the Blyth Campground has not been quantified, it is recognized that there is some level of benefit given the close proximity of the downtown area. With the development of the new outdoor performance venue for the Blyth Festival, there may be potential synergies to create tourism packages for camping and performing arts, although the market of campers who may be interested in the arts is not known.

⁸ Kampgrounds of America (KOA). 2020. The 2021 North American Camping Report.

⁹ Canadian Camping & RV Council. 2015. Camping Industry Portrait in Canada and Ontario.

¹⁰ Canadian Camping & RV Council. 2015. Camping Industry Portrait in Canada and Ontario.

Recent statements from Ontario Parks officials indicate that there is an almost 100% increase in reservations, with bookings jumping from approximately 30,000 at the beginning of 2020 to over 58,000 for the same period in 2021. Ontario Parks attributes this to the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial stay-at-home orders and lockdown control measures.¹¹

In response to increased camping activities due in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township was approached by the Blyth BIA in June 2020 regarding the need to convert the Blyth Campground to a full-service facility to provide an enhanced user experience and attract more use. A typical full-service campground contains a variety of amenities including, but not limited to, dedicated on-site staffing, controlled entrances, servicing (e.g., water, wastewater and gas), fire pits, washroom and shower facilities, food services, outdoor recreation amenities (e.g., playgrounds, pool, etc.), organized activities and programs, and more.

The Township previously investigated the feasibility of upgrading the campground to offer full services. It was determined that it would require an investment of approximately \$500,000 plus added operational resources for the Township and as a result, Council did not pursue this project. At the time, concerns were also raised about competing with private businesses as there are several competing campgrounds within a 30 minute drive of Blyth, many of which are located along Lake Huron, as well as in Auburn and Goderich. To evaluate the demand for full-service camping in North Huron, the Township recently undertook a pilot project at 25 camp sites that had an associated capital investment cost of \$17,000. The pilot project entailed the implementation of online reservations, enhanced marketing, and the purchase of 25 picnic tables and fire pots. It should be noted fire pots were purchased rather than fire pits (tire rims) due to concerns expressed by the Huron Pioneer Threshers & Hobby Association.

The consultation process found that support for the Blyth Campground was mixed. Approximately half (53%) of the community survey respondents supported additional spending towards the campground, which ranked 16th out of 32 facility types. There were also respondents who supported and opposed keeping the Blyth Campground.

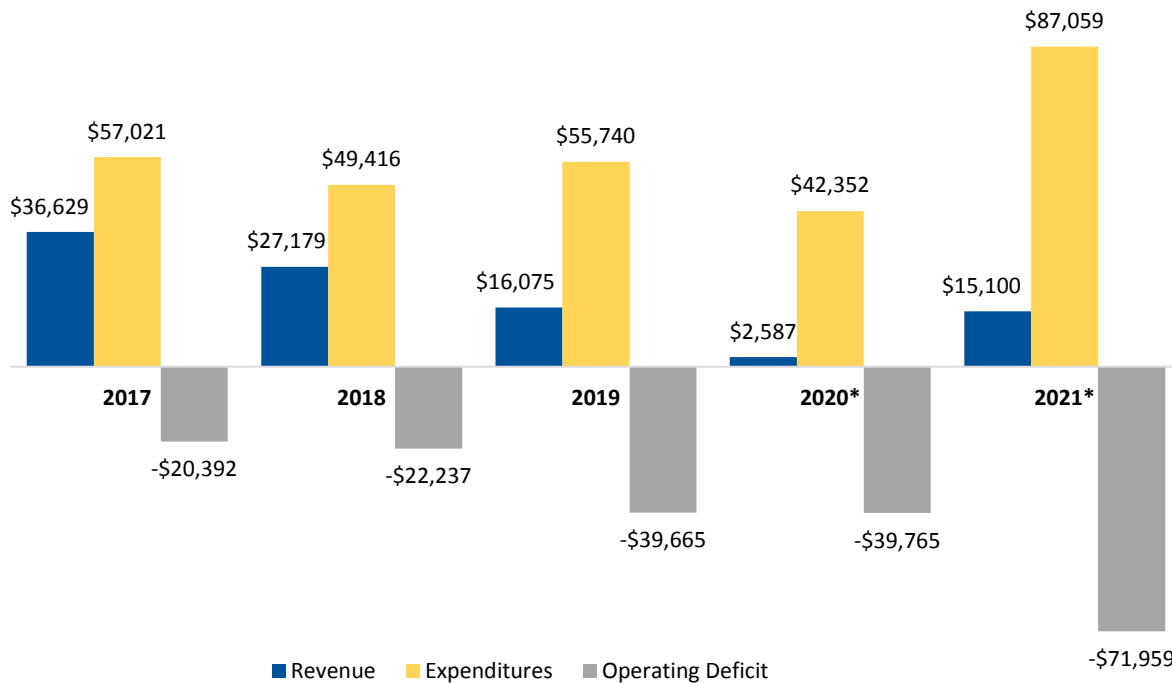
There is no provision target for providing public campgrounds. Municipalities that do provide campgrounds do so as a historical level of service. The CCRVC reported that in 2014, there were 4,200 campgrounds in Canada, of which 505 sites (12%) were municipally-operated and 51 of these were located in Ontario.¹² Campgrounds are not typically new levels of service for municipalities and it is known that some locations have been decommissioned (e.g., Town of Perth). As such, the actual number of public campgrounds that are operating today is likely lower.

¹¹ Butler, C. February 25, 2021. CBC News. Sick of pandemic, lockdowns, eager campers flood Ontario park-reservation sites. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca>

¹² Canadian Camping & RV Council. 2015. Camping Industry Portrait in Canada and Ontario.

Given the uniqueness of public campgrounds and the resources required to provide this service (e.g., land, dedicated staffing, full-services, infrastructure, etc.), they tend to generate a profit in order to justify providing it as a service. For example, the campgrounds in Northern Bruce Peninsula and South Bruce Peninsula offer seasonal and short-term camp sites that bring in between \$20,000 and \$75,000 per year. The campgrounds in Kawartha Lakes and Saugeen Shores generate healthy operating surpluses that range between \$200,000 and \$650,000 per year, although these are seasonal campgrounds that tend to have lower operating costs compared to short-term rentals. A commonality among these communities is that they are waterfront communities that draw a sizable seasonable population as well as short-term and day tourists.

Figure 17: Blyth Campground Operating Performance, 2017 to 2021



*Blyth campground revenues were impacted in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Revenue generated in 2021 excludes \$18,000 transferred from the Township’s reserve.

By contrast, the Blyth Campground operated at a deficit between 2017 and 2019 (Figure 17) prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the operating deficit doubled during this period to nearly \$40,000 due to declining revenue of 56%. During this period, operating costs declined marginally by 2%. It is recognized that operating costs in North Huron may be higher given that the Blyth Campground offers short-term rentals and greater resources may be required for regular maintenance and other day-to-day needs.

While it was believed that the Blyth Campground would experience an increase in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, financial data indicates that this was not the case as the Township generally accommodated up to 12 campers during this time. In 2020, the campground generated less than \$2,600 in revenue although it was only open from mid-July to the end of September, resulting in an operating deficit of \$40,000.

In 2021, the Blyth Campground reported a revenue of nearly \$15,100 and an operating deficit of nearly \$72,000 (excludes money transferred from the Township’s reserve). One of the challenges faced by the campgrounds is that some campers have preferred locations in the campgrounds that were not part of the pilot project sites, leaving the improved sites under-utilized. Given that the Township had decided to pilot the improved camp sites for a year, which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, there is merit in continuing the pilot project for one additional year to better position the Township to evaluate the demand, costs and benefit of these camp sites as well as to continue to market the camping opportunity to the broader camping community. In the interim, the Township should place priority on directing transient camping to the pilot project’s 25 camp sites and consider consolidating the 25 sites in one location of the campground to achieve improved operations and maintenance. The Township should also continue to promote camping opportunities, including working with the Blyth BIA, Blyth Festival, Blyth Lions Club, and others.

As identified in Section 7.13, the Township should continue to support the Huron Pioneer Threshers & Hobby Association as per the Township’s agreement and allow for camping during this event. In the future, there could be other events that the Township may wish to enter similar agreement to assist in bolstering interest in camping and stimulating economic benefits to North Huron.

Recommendations – Campgrounds

34. The Township should extend the pilot project of 25 enhanced camp sites at the **Blyth Campground** for one additional year in order to be better positioned to evaluate the demand, costs and benefits of these sites. In the interim, the Township should place priority on directing transient camping to the pilot project’s 25 camp sites. In the interim, the Township may wish to consolidate the 25 camp sites to one location of the campground, which may result in enhanced operations and management. Promoting camping opportunities should also continue, including working with the Blyth BIA, Blyth Festival, Blyth Lions Club and others.

6.13 Off-Leash Dog Parks

North Huron currently encourages the use of the off-leash dog park at Auburn Park, which is located in the Township of Central Huron.

With municipal by-laws regulating the use of leashes, off-leash dog parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize with their dogs in a controlled area. That said, dog parks should not be viewed strictly for pets as observations at established dog parks suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, particularly for residents living in isolation.



The community survey found that 31% of respondents participated in on and off-leash dog walking prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Slightly less than half (47%) of respondents support investment in off-leash dog parks which was ranked fourth lowest in priority.

While it is common for municipalities the size of North Huron to provide at least one off-leash dog park in the community, it is also a best practice for municipalities to leverage the use of amenities in abutting communities to make efficient use of existing assets. The Township currently relies on the use of the off-leash dog park at Auburn Park in Central Huron, which should continue to be the approach moving forward. The Township should focus on raising awareness about this location and encouraging its use as some members of the public may not be aware of its existence. To ensure continued public access for Township residents, consideration should be given to making financial contributions to Central Huron to be used towards maintenance of the off-leash dog park. This approach would not require the Township to provide its own off-leash dog park.

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Parks

35. Promote the use of the existing **off-leash dog park at Auburn Park in Central Huron** to meet the needs of residents. To ensure continued access to the off-leash dog park, consideration should be given to making financial contributions to Central Huron to be used towards off-leash dog park maintenance.

6.14 Sand Volleyball Courts

The Township offers one beach volleyball court located at Riverside Park. Sand volleyball has become a popular warm weather sport among the younger demographic, which is primarily due to the social nature of the activity and low barriers to participation in terms of skill level and cost.

The community survey found that 7% of respondents played volleyball prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sand volleyball courts had the third lowest levels of support (39%) for additional investment, suggesting that there are other community priorities when it comes to parks and recreation facilities.

There is no industry standard guiding the development of sand volleyball courts as they are typically provided based on local needs. Given that there are no organized sand volleyball users in the Township, it primarily facilitates unstructured activities. While it is difficult to quantify its use, discussions with staff suggests that the sand volleyball court has a low to moderate level of casual use. In the absence of quantifiable demand, no additional sand volleyball courts are recommended.

6.15 Other Recreation and Culture Facility Needs

From time to time, the Township may receive requests for new recreation and cultural facilities that are not currently provided through its core service mandate or there is insufficient demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the Master Plan. However, the Township must be prepared to respond appropriately to requests pending future market characteristics related to population growth, emergence of new sports, future recreational and cultural trends and preferences, and other demands that may arise for existing activities and facilities.

When requests are brought forward for investment in new, non-traditional, emerging and other non-core municipal services, the Township should evaluate these recreational and cultural needs on a case-by-case basis. This should involve an examination into (but not be limited to):

- Local, regional and provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- Examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- Local demand for the activity and/or facility;
- The ability of existing Township facilities to accommodate the new service;
- The feasibility for the Township to provide the service and/or facility as a core service, and be able to do so in a cost-effective manner;
- The availability of Township resources (e.g., staffing) to deliver or assist with delivering the new service, or if new resources will be required; and
- The willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the service and/or facility if provided with appropriate municipal supports.

Recommendations – Other Recreation and Culture Facility Needs

36. Requests for **new indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural facilities** should be examined on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of utilizing existing public space, the need for additional staff resources, the willingness of an established organization to partner in providing the facility or space, and other factors.

7.0 Service Delivery System

7.1 North Huron Municipal Service Delivery Review (2020)

In 2020, the Township undertook a Municipal Service Delivery Review with the objective to identify potential opportunities to strengthen the way in which the Township provides services while maximizing the use of available resources. The following recommendations were identified that have relevance to the Recreation & Community Services Department; some of these recommendations have already been implemented or are ongoing initiatives. Some of these recommendations are explored in appropriate sections of this Master Plan.

- Explore the potential to increase the Township’s human resources and information technology capabilities.
- Explore the refresh to the Township’s approach to customer service.
- Establish an annual maintenance fee for building permits.
- Explore the potential development and implementation of non-resident user fees/shared service agreements for recreational services.
- Consolidate operational and administrative service delivery of parks within one Township department.
- Determine the Township’s role in the operation of the campgrounds.
- Develop standard operating procedures for special events and festivals to ensure effective service delivery and decision making.
- Explore the potential divestiture of the Wingham Trailer Park and the potential closure of the North Huron Museum.

7.2 Recreation & Community Services Department

Municipal recreation and community services departments typically operate under two service delivery models:

Direct service delivery is where municipalities are the providers of physical space as well as the programs that take place within them. This delivery model is often utilized by municipalities that possess sufficient financial resources and staffing to operate facilities and deliver programming.

Indirect service delivery is typically used in departments with limited financial and human resources and as such, the municipality's primary role is to provide physical space, while programming and activities that occur within these spaces are operated by local organizations and community groups.

North Huron's Recreation & Community Services Department utilizes a blend of these two service delivery models as it provides physical space and delivers programming, while community groups are relied upon to provide certain programs and services, as well as special events that take place in the Township. A summary of notable community organizations that provide a variety of parks, recreation and cultural services is found in **Appendix C**.

The Department's blended service delivery model has been successful and it is recommended that it continues over the foreseeable future. It is important to recognize, however, that as the Township continues to grow and evolve, the Department will face increasing public expectations for quality recreation and community services. With finite resources available to the Department, a coordinated approach with community organizations will be required to effectively address to public needs.

While the Recreation & Community Services Department will continue to play a key role in providing programs and services, the Department will need to continue to assist organizations with providing the necessary resources (financial or otherwise) to enable groups to effectively plan, develop and deliver successful programs. Where it may be appropriate to do so, the formation of formal partnership agreements with organizations may need to be considered, which is discussed in greater detail in Section 7.14. This approach will continue to allow the Department to ensure community needs are being met while engaging others in the community to deliver programs and services where expertise exists. This is a cost-effective strategy that requires Township staff to continue a community development role while also a range of direct programming.

In implementing an enhanced blended service delivery model, the Township should strengthen its leadership by:

- Understanding local and regional demographics, community issues, and emerging trends to consider all aspects of the population.
- Determining gaps and needed improvements (with an emphasis on community and individual health improvements).
- Building and fostering partnerships with key providers and stakeholders in service delivery.
- Supporting community groups, volunteers, and partners.

- Providing facilities where gaps exist or the capacity is not present in the community (rationalized by justifiable need).
- Supporting or facilitating social activities that promote community interaction and vibrancy.
- Educating about and promoting the benefits of physical activity, community services, etc.
- Developing meaningful policies and procedures that enhance accountability and transparency.
- Advancing opportunities for recreation and community services.
- Providing exceptional customer service.
- Engaging in community participation through planning, decision-making and service delivery.

Recommendations – Recreation & Community Services Department

37. The Recreation & Community Services Department should **continue to implement a blended service delivery model**, with a greater emphasis placed on supporting and encourage community-based organizations, service clubs and strategic partners to deliver programs and services that are complementary to those that are currently provided; duplication of programs and services should be discouraged.

7.3 Organizational Effectiveness

7.3.1 Staffing Structure

The Recreation & Community Services Department is led by a Director, who reports to the CAO, through which key decisions are considered for approval by the elected Township Council. The Department is staffed with key personnel including supervisors for aquatics, fitness and leisure, as well as facility managers in Wingham and Blyth and a manager for childcare services. The organizational structure of the Department is illustrated in Figure 18

Under each of these divisions within the Recreation & Community Services Department are full and part-time staff responsible for the day-to-day delivery and operation of services within the community including instructors, operators, educators, and other staff. The Department is also supported by a marketing and promotions staff member.

The Department's organizational structure is similar to that found in a number of other municipalities across the Province, though there are opportunities to optimize internal operations to create efficiencies and reduce the duplication of roles. The Department's two facility managers (for Wingham and Blyth) is uncommon in most municipalities, though it is recognized that these are historical positions that the Township inherited through amalgamation. Through amalgamation opportunities to consolidate positions and/or to eliminate staff duplications and achieve cost savings are created. As the Township's two facility managers are approaching retirement age. Once this occurs, it is recommended that these two positions be combined into one. Following the consolidation, the Township may need to evaluate the need for additional full-time or part-time facility staff to ensure that public facilities continue to function accordingly to meet the needs of residents.

As it is recommended that the Township should continue to implement its blended service delivery model, enhanced coordination and emphasis will be required to meaningfully engage community groups, residents and potential partners. Staff time will be required to liaise with community and agency providers and finding new program and rental opportunities to optimize the use of community spaces. Tracking trends, best practices and gaps, while coordinating communication amongst service providers by acting as a centralized resource within the Township will also be required. These responsibilities would ideally be incorporated within the existing staffing complement.

7.3.2 Multi-Departmental Service Provision

The Recreation & Community Services Department also works collaboratively with other departments that are responsible for other aspects of the municipal operations. In 2018, the Township underwent a realignment of services where the maintenance of non-recreational facilities, parks, trails and civic beautification was shifted to the Public Works Department; the Recreation & Community Services Department continues to be responsible for outdoor park bookings and other administration functions. As a part of this realignment, staff were transferred from the Recreation & Community Services Department (which was previously known as the Recreation & Facilities Department prior to 2018) to the Public Works Department.

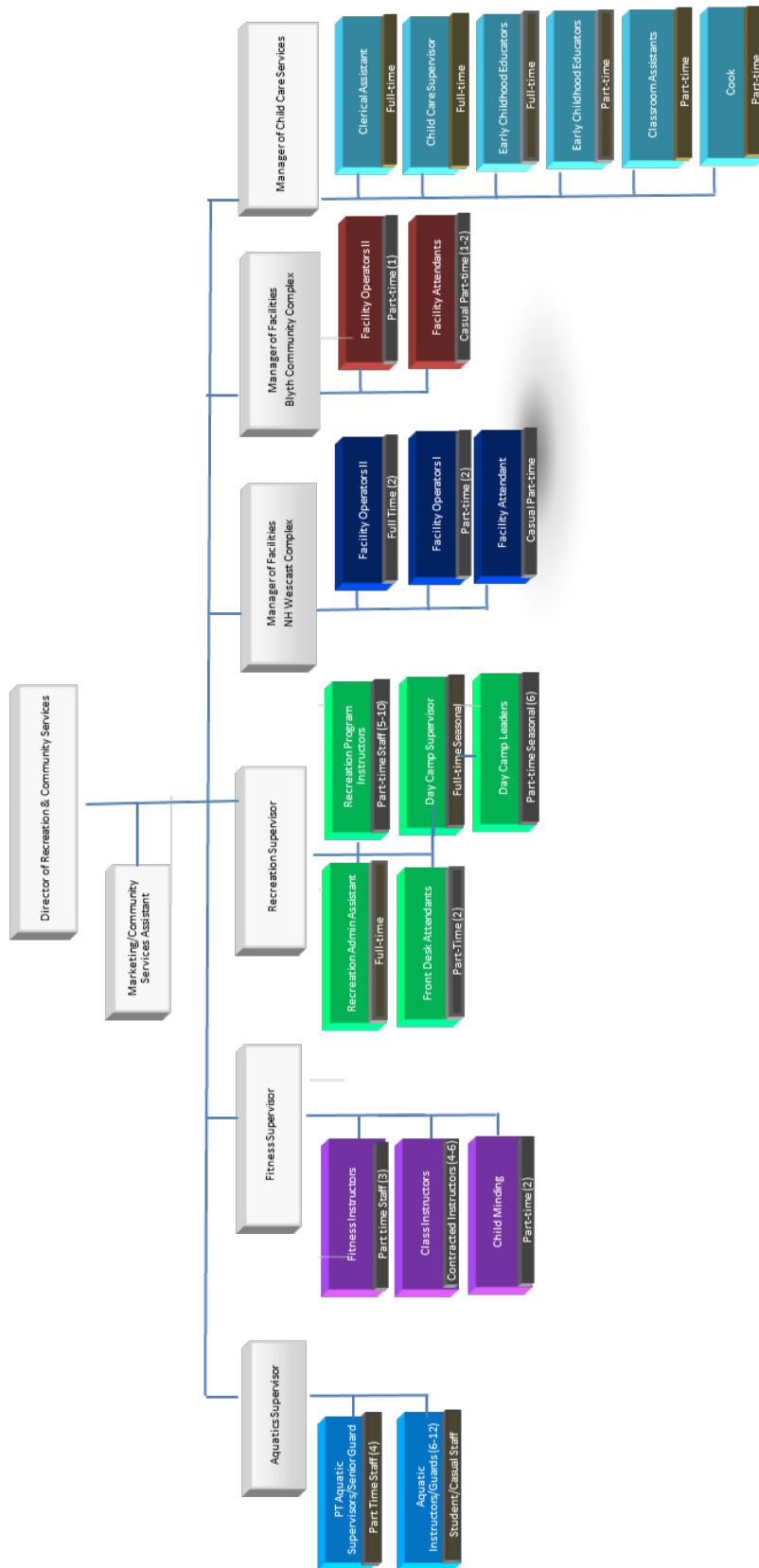
The Municipal Service Delivery Review identified an opportunity to consolidate parks services (operational and administrative) within one Township department to enhance service delivery and decision-making. According to the Municipal Service Delivery Review, this approach is consistent with municipal comparators where parks services sit within public works. At present, this has not yet been implemented in the Township.

Consultation with staff and stakeholders for the Master Plan revealed that there is a level of concern regarding the realignment of responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department, particularly with respect to public confusion regarding which Department should be contacted to resolve parks and trails concerns. The realignment of staff and responsibilities has also reduced the staff level of the Recreation & Community Services Department, which has resulted in a challenge to meet increasing user needs and expectations of a growing community.

While the implementation of the Municipal Service Delivery Review should continue, there will be a need for the Township to continue monitor the transition in the short-term to determine the success of the realignment. As part of the implementation process, it will be prudent for the two Departments to work closely to resolve issues as they arise. This will require Departments to communicate openly and regularly to improve coordination, address issues and challenges, as well as strategies to work together. Engaging stakeholders as a part of the process should form part of this process, particularly those that play a supporting role in maintaining parks and trails such as the Wingham Trail Committee. Raising public awareness about the realignment of services is also recommended to ensure that public concerns are directed to the appropriate Department, such as identifying contact information on the Township's website for residents to report community issues. Should concerns regarding the realignment of services continue to persist over the medium term, it is recommended that the Township revisit the service delivery model and explore alternatives to resolve issues.

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

Figure 18: Existing Organizational Structure, Recreation & Community Services Department



7.3.3 Investing in Township Staff

From an organizational perspective, smaller communities such as North Huron have limited resources, thus there is a need to ensure that staff work efficiently and effectively to maintain and operate public spaces, as well as to work with community organizations and volunteers. Optimization of the staff team can be achieved through the development of a staff manual that defines the roles and responsibilities of staff, outline operating procedures, human resources, and other key information required to assist staff with day-to-day maintenance and operations and deliver high quality public services. The development of a staff manual and succession plan to ensure that important knowledge is retained and passed on to other staff members, particularly as there are a number of staff members within the Department who will be eligible for retirement over within the short term.

As a part of maintaining a high performing organization, continually investing in employee training and professional development is essential to create experienced and knowledgeable staff team, as well as to improve experiences for residents. The Township currently does this to a degree; for example, North Huron is a member of High Five where staff are trained to deliver programs and services that are a high standard. Future opportunities to focus staff training and professional development may centre around inclusivity, sensitivity, customer service, use of technology, and more.

7.3.4 Service Levels

There are benefits with establishing service levels with respect to the Township's parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Established service levels ensures that public expectations are being met and that a certain level of standard is being achieved. This will become increasingly important for North Huron as population growth occurs, it can be assured that service levels are addressed concurrently.

By having set service levels to establish standards for the appropriate level of care and maintenance, the Township can ensure that municipal resources are being directed to the appropriate areas to be used adequately and efficiently. The Township should establish service levels for the provision of municipal parks, recreation and culture. Service levels should consider the frequency or duration of providing the service, legislative requirements, quality assurance, staff time and other resources that are required, as well as public and stakeholder input. Opportunities to reduce the level of service in appropriate areas to achieve operational efficiencies should be explored as a part of this process. Once these service levels are in place, measuring community satisfaction levels will be necessary to understand the success of the service delivery approach and if adjustments are required.

One strategy that may be worth exploring in an effort to optimize the use of staff and municipal resources is to investigate the feasibility of using a third-party to address certain parks, recreation and culture needs. The use of third-party services is a best practice that can reduce staff pressure – either within the Recreation & Community Services Department or the Public Works Department – and allow them to be deployed in higher priority areas. The Township already utilizes third-party services in various other areas of the corporation such as human resources and information technology, as well as in the recreation system such as the agreement with the Belgrave Community Centre Board. There is merit in investigating how this strategy can support parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron.

Recommendations – Organizational Effectiveness

38. As the Municipal Service Delivery Review continues to be implemented, monitor the transition of the realignment of services and responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department. Should the Township continue to experience challenges associated with the realignment, the **service delivery model should be re-evaluated** in the short-term to consider alternatives to address ongoing concerns.
39. Raise **public awareness** about the **responsibilities** between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department, with consideration given to establishing a system for residents to report community issues to ensure that they are directed to the appropriate Departments.
40. Through the existing staffing complement, endeavour to enhance coordination and emphasis on **meaningfully engaging organization**, through including liaising with community and agency providers, finding new program and rental opportunities to optimize the use of community spaces and coordinate communication among service providers by acting as a centralized resource within the Township.
41. **Consolidate** the two existing facility manager positions into one position following retirement. Once this occurs, consideration may need to be given to additional full- or part-time staff.
42. Continually invest in **training and professional development** to create a high performing staff team.
43. Create a **staff manual** that defines the roles and responsibilities of staff, outline operating procedures, human resources, and other key information required to assist staff with day-to-day maintenance and operations and deliver high quality public services.
44. Create a **succession plan** to proactively plan for retirements to ensure that internal knowledge is passed on through employee transition.
45. Establish **service levels** for each area of parks, recreation and culture to right-size opportunities to meet community needs. Opportunities to reduce the level of service in appropriate areas should be considered with the goal of achieving operational efficiencies and cost savings.
46. Explore the feasibility of utilizing **third-party services** to provide parks, recreation and culture services in North Huron.

7.4 Policy Development

There are a number of policies in place that are relevant to the Recreation & Community Services Department to ensure that municipal services and decisions are applied in a fair, consistent and transparent manner including (but not limited to):

- Commemorative Tree and Bench Policy Fee
- Waving and Donations Policy
- Family and Spousal Membership Policy
- Fitness Admittance Policy
- Ice Allocation Policy
- Ice Cancellation Policy
- Ice Rates and Discount Policy
- Municipal Alcohol Policy
- Swimming Admittance Policy
- Swimming Wrist Band Policy

As the Township continues to experience population growth, it will be necessary to review and, if necessary, amend existing policies or create new ones to address new situations. It will be prudent for the Township to ensure policies are reflective of the current conditions, community needs and expectations, particularly as the Township’s population is expected to increase during the planning period. In this regard, the Township has already taken steps towards the creation of a special events policy. As recommended in Section 7.10, the Township should prepare a Public Art Policy; other policy gap areas should be explored, which may include (but not be limited to) financial subsidies, employee service recognition, volunteerism, and sports field lighting.

Recommendations – Policy Development

47. Regularly **review and update of Department policies**, as appropriate, to ensure that they reflect current conditions and public expectations. Create new policies to address gap areas including, but not limited to, financial subsidies, employee service recognition, volunteerism, and sports field lighting.

7.5 Programming

The Township provides a select range of recreation programs that fall under four categories – arena programs, aquatic programs, fitness programs and general leisure programs. These program offerings are comparable to other municipalities that provide community activities.

7.5.1 Arena Programs

Arena rentals are complemented by drop-in skating programs that are offered by the Township during the ice season. Drop-in skating opportunities include public skate, parent and tot skate, senior skate, PA day skate, snow day skate, shinny, Huff N Puff, ladies hockey, and broomball. The Township does not track attendance in drop-in activities and as a result, participation in these programs is unknown.

Establishing a system to monitor participation in

drop-in programming is encouraged as it will provide insight into what activities are in demand or are



undersubscribed, which may allow the Township to adjust its program offerings to ensure alignment with priority needs. Understanding drop-in participation levels is also beneficial in seeking grant funding as opportunities become available.

7.5.2 Aquatic Programs

The Township offers four types of aquatic programs:

- Registered lessons (e.g., swimming lessons, Swim Team, etc.)
- Advanced course (e.g., national lifeguard)
- Drop-in recreational swims (e.g., public swim, lane swim, etc.)
- Instructed fitness programs (e.g., aquafit)

Participation data revealed that interest in aquatic programs is strong. Between 2017 and 2019, the total number of visits to the Township’s indoor pool increased by 14% to 36,600 attendees. Attendance in drop-in swims, which increased by 15%, was the most popular program type, which represented 58% of all pool visits. The popularity of drop-in swims is consistent with aquatic participation trends. Aquatic swim lessons represent a small portion of pool visits, although the number of registrants increased by 8% between 2017 and 2019.

Aquatic memberships can also be purchased from the Township, which provides members with access to aquafit and drop-in swim programs. Data provided by the Township identified that between 2017 and 2019, the number of aquatic memberships sold increased by 27% from 143 to 181 memberships. Complete memberships, which allow access to aquatic and fitness facilities and services, also increased by 41%.



Table 8: Participation in Aquatic Programs, 2017 to 2019

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Change (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
| Total # of Visits | 32,169 | 31,043 | 36,629 | 14% |
| Drop-in Visits | 18,369 | 24,737 | 21,147 | 15% |
| Aquatic Lesson Registrants | 651 | 572 | 703 | 8% |
| Advance Program Registrants | 40 | 30 | 38 | -5% |
| Aquatic Memberships | 143 | 171 | 181 | 27% |
| Complete Memberships | 274 | 323 | 385 | 41% |

7.5.3 Group Fitness Programs

The Township offers an extensive range of group fitness programs. Approximately 40 group fitness classes are offered each week, which fall under three categories – strength, cardio, mind /body. Strength classes includes TRX and boot camps; while cardio comprise of Zumba, Pound (a workout that incorporates music, dance and drumsticks) and cycling classes. Mind/body classes include yoga, pilates and stretching. The Township also works with a number of community partners to deliver fitness programs including the Huron County Alzheimer Society, One Care Home & Community Care Services, F.E. Madill Secondary School and AW Athletic Therapy.



While group fitness programs are primarily offered at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex, satellite programs are also provided at other facilities including the Belgrave Community Centre, Blyth Arena and the Maitland River Elementary School. Users can drop-in to participate in a single group fitness class or register for a full program. Between 2017, and 2019, attendance in group fitness activities experienced a decline of 20% to 6,710 attendees. During this time the number of fitness memberships purchased increased by 20% while complete memberships grew by 41%. This may account for a portion of the declining attendance figures given that membership users have access to group classes.

In addition to these group fitness programs, personal training services are available from a highly skilled staff team that work with customers and patients from chiropractors, physiotherapists, massage therapists and other health professionals. The Township’s fitness experts also have experience with working with those who require physical rehabilitation.

Table 9: Participation in Fitness Programs, 2017 to 2019

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Change (%) |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| Group Fitness Attendance | 8,348 | 5,639 | 6,710 | -20% |
| Fitness Memberships | 222 | 245 | 267 | 20% |
| Complete Memberships | 274 | 323 | 385 | 41% |

7.5.4 General Leisure Programs

A variety of general leisure programs are offered by the Township including registered and drop-in programs. Registered programs are primarily centred around children and youth opportunities including summer and March break day camps, cooking, gymnastics and martial arts. Registered adult programs are limited to ballroom dancing. The Township’s programs generally have moderate levels of participation as registration data revealed a 2019 fill rate of 73%. This is not comparable with previous years given that the number and selection of programs available change each year depending on public interest and registration levels as activities are generally provided based on a cost-recovery basis.



In addition to the Township’s programs, drop-in activities for adults are available including indoor walking, badminton, racquetball, pickleball, basketball, indoor soccer and volleyball.

Table 10: Participation in General Leisure Programs

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|
| Total Program Capacity | 957 | 563 | 549 |
| Total Program Registrants | 732 | 376 | 401 |
| Fill Rate | 76% | 67% | 73% |

7.5.5 Childminding

The Township offers affordable childminding services for recreation facility users during certain periods of the week in Wingham and Blyth. Childminding is a valuable community service in North Huron as it provides adults with peace of mind while enjoying the Township’s amenities and participating in physical activity, particularly for post-natal mothers and those with school-aged children.

Between 2017 and 2019, use of the Township's childminding service declined by 49% from 1,371 to 705 participants. The Township had anticipated a reversal of this trend as it had planned to add a second childminding location in Blyth to support increased recreational opportunities. By providing both recreational programs and childminding concurrently in Blyth and Wingham, it was expected that interest in the service would increase. The Township also received funding through the Gender Equity in Recreational Sport Community Grant that would have supported the second location for one year; however, this plan has not yet been implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Township should continue to monitor demand and right-size staffing and other resources to actual demand for this service as the impact of the pandemic become more apparent.

7.5.6 Programming Outlook

Programs provided by the Recreation & Community Services Department have been influenced by several factors within recent years. Particularly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department has been required to cancel or reduce capacities for a number of programs for most of 2020 and 2021. While restrictions on indoor gatherings and the use of public spaces are slowly being relaxed, the Township faces a new challenge with respect to non-residents who participate in programs and use North Huron facilities.



Through direction advanced through the Municipal Service Delivery Review, the Township implemented a non-resident surcharge on recreational programs and memberships. The non-resident surcharge was not applied across the entire parks, recreation and culture system as it did not apply to facility rentals and minor sports. As a result, the Township continued to subsidize the use of facilities, as well as sports activities, for non-residents.

Non-resident fees are generally applied in these communities as a strategy to ensure that residents have a priority in accessing services. Smaller municipalities are less inclined to implement non-resident fees as there tends to be a certain degree of reliance on non-residents to provide services, particularly if there is excess capacity available to accommodate them and/or to provide a wider range of programs that residents can benefit from (that would otherwise not be feasible without non-resident participation).

As the Township's programs operate on a cost-recovery basis and given that about half of all program registrants are non-residents, programs can be at risk without non-resident participation. In this regard and as noted previously, the Township has been very successful in growing program participation and expanding the range of activities and offerings, while increasing the use of facilities to the benefit of North Huron residents. On November 1, 2021, Township Council directed staff to amend the 2022 fees and charges by-law to remove the non-resident fees for recreation and child care services.

With respect to future programming opportunities, the Township is encouraged to continue exploring new structured and drop-in program ideas to optimize the use of community facilities; some of these programs may be able to be offered in collaboration with others such as existing service providers. Offering programs within the Township's parks should also be explored as there is an emerging interest with connecting with the outdoors, driven in part by the pandemic; the emergence of virtual programs has also been a trend to add another layer of user convenience. While virtual activities have been a growing sector in the programming space, it is also recognized that there are infrastructure requirements (e.g., stable internet access, uninterrupted space for the instructor, equipment needs, etc.) as well as staffing resources and technological knowledge (see Section 7.12).

The consultation process for the Master Plan yielded a wide variety of program suggestions. With respect to recreation activities, a broader variety of fitness activities was suggested such as yoga, meditation, Zumba, cross fit, and outdoor fitness classes. Dance and gymnastics classes were also requested. Respondents suggested that more daytime programs should be offered for residents who

are available during the day such as shift workers, people who work from home, and older adults and seniors. More program opportunities for youth were also suggested such as open gym time at the recreation centre, dances and movie or game nights. With respect to arts and cultural activities or programs, requests were made for more classes focused on the arts, music, theatre, cooking, and writing.

Recommendations – Programming

48. Potentially in collaboration with others, such as existing service providers, **explore new program ideas** to optimize the use of Township parks and facilities including encouraging the development of community-led programs, virtual programs, outdoor programming, and activities suggested by the public through the Master Plan process.
49. Establish a system to **track drop-in attendance** to monitor participation trends over time to determine programs that are in demand or those that require more attention.
50. Monitor the demand for **childminding services** and right-size staffing and other resources to actual demand for this service.

7.6 Childcare Services

The Recreation & Community Service Department provides childcare services at three locations in Wingham including the North Huron Children’s Centre, Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School, and Maitland River Elementary School. These services are complemented by the EarlyON Child and Family Centre offered by Huron County at the Royal Oaks Health and Wellness Centre in Wingham.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Township reported approximately 158 children using the Township’s childcare services, approximately half of whom are non-residents. Recently, there has been pressure for more affordable childcare in North Huron as the Township reports that there are approximately 80 applicants on a waitlist seeking childcare, though it is recognized that in some cases, applicants are on the waitlist before the infant is born. The need for additional childcare has been temporarily alleviated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, although demand may inevitably re-emerge when it is safe to do so. At the time of preparing this Master Plan, the Township reports that childcare enrollment has been increasing among all age groups.

In response to the growing demand for childcare, the Township has been exploring options to expand childcare services in Blyth. In 2020, staff explored the potential to re-purpose underutilized space at the Blyth & District Community Centre to accommodate up to 45 children. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were seven children from Blyth using childcare services in Wingham, although this has declined to six children during the pandemic. There are also six children from Blyth on the waitlist for childcare services. Information regarding residents’ use of childcare services outside of the Township is unknown. The Township had planned to undertake a survey to gauge interest in providing childcare services in Blyth, although this was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Utilizing the space at the Blyth & District Community Centre was identified as a viable option given its already meets mandatory space requirements including a kitchen and ample floor space, as well as the potential to accommodate renovations and other necessary space needs including adding exterior

windows, creating rooms, adding new servicing, and creating an outdoor play area (with fencing). The staff report estimated that these renovations would cost approximately \$150,000. While there are currently reserve funds available to undertake this project, the staff report indicated that the reserve funds may be required to offset pandemic-related operating deficits associated with the main daycare centre. Stakeholders who participated in the consultation process for the Master Plan also raised concerns regarding the relationship between the potential childcare location with arena users, particularly during tournaments.

With respect to operating costs, the Township receives an operating grant from the Province for its childcare centres. Given that the amount of funding for these operating grants are based on the number of childcare spaces in Huron County, the amount allocated to each childcare provider would be reduced if the Township provides an additional childcare space in Blyth.

Convenient access to affordable childcare is an important consideration for many new families. With residential development expected in Blyth during the planning period, access to childcare may be viewed as a community benefit to pursue. Particularly given that the community space in the Blyth & District Community Centre is underutilized, this could be an opportunity to re-purpose the space to serve another need. However, it is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced how families use childcare services as the Township experienced lower registration rates during this time. Until childcare enrollment stabilizes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact is known, it is recommended that the Township defer its decision to provide childcare services in Blyth.

In the interim, the Township should continue its current approach to building upon their childcare programs at existing locations. Staff recruitment to assist with service delivery is ongoing; however, it is a challenge due to the current workforce shortage in Huron County. Modifying the current strategy of staffing childcare services with part-time staff to full-time staff may be necessary to attract greater interest.

Recommendations – Childcare Services

51. Monitor **childcare enrollment** post-pandemic and its impact on demand in order to better inform a decision on the need for, and financial impact of, providing childcare services in Blyth.
52. Modify **staffing** of childcare services from part-time staff to full-time staff in order to attract applicants.

7.7 Youth Services

According to the 2016 Census, youth between the ages of 10 and 19 represented 12% of the population in North Huron, which is a decline of 8% compared to the 2011 Census. Approximately half of this group live in Wingham while the balance resides in Blyth or the rural area. Although this segment of the population is declining, this trend may experience a reversal over the planning period as population growth is expected to occur as residential development is anticipated to attract young families with children and youth.



The youth demographic is commonly referred to as a vulnerable segment of the community as close attention and engagement is needed to ensure lifelong success. The availability of youth-oriented parks, recreation and culture opportunities is a key component to this success and is one that is often viewed as a gap in many communities. The consultation process for this Master Plan revealed that 21% of community survey respondents were satisfied with the parks and recreation opportunities that are available in the Township; 11% of respondents were also satisfied with arts and cultural opportunities. These satisfaction levels were the lowest among all other age groups.

The Township is proud to offer a variety of parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron that are geared towards youth such as outdoor sports fields and basketball court, gymnasiums and cultural spaces – some of which are accessible through schools as a part of reciprocal agreements. While the Township does not provide dedicated space for youth, there are other community organizations that provides this service such as Youth Unlimited in Wingham, which is a religious-based organization.

One of the common challenges associated with engaging youth is that this age group has a wide variety of interests that can change and evolve over time. The Township has tested offering programs geared towards this age group in the past with limited success due to low interest. Opportunities exist to engage youth directly to understand what programs and activities they would like to see offered in North Huron. One approach is to establish a Youth Action Council to empower youth and give them a voice in municipal decision making. While staff resources will be required for coordination, the Youth Action Council would be responsible for providing input on leading trends and consulting with the broader youth population to explore programs and activities that interest them. Potential opportunities may be tested by the Township on a trial basis.

The Township's commitment to enhancing youth opportunities can also be bolstered by seeking a designation as a Youth Friendly Community, which is a direct initiative identified in the Township's Strategic Plan. Created by the Play Works Partnership, youth friendly communities actively work to provide diverse opportunities for youth to play. To be recognized as a Youth Friendly Community, municipalities need to satisfy a minimum of seven of 10 criteria:

1. Youth have options for play.
2. Youth are formally connected community-wide.
3. It is easy for youth to find information about activities in the community.
4. The community recognizes and celebrates youth.

5. The community formally commits funding for youth play.
6. The community supports positive youth development.
7. Youth feel valued by their community.
8. Schools and school boards support the youth friendly application.
9. Play is accessible to youth.
10. Play is socially inclusive.

The Youth Action Council may have a role to play in being recognized as a youth friendly community and should be engaged through this process. Collaboration with community partners should also be considered to recognize the full range of youth opportunities in North Huron

Recommendations – Youth Services

53. Establish a **Youth Advisory Council** to empower youth and give them a voice in the decision-making process. With staff support for coordination, the Youth Advisory Council should be responsible for engaging the broader youth population; identifying trends, issues and programs that matter to them; and identifying how parks, recreation and culture opportunities can be improved to be more youth-friendly. Appropriate staff resources will be required to organize and guide this group.
54. Work with the Youth Advisory Council, community partners and others to become designated as a **Youth Friendly Community**.

7.8 Adult, Older Adult and Senior Services

The number of adults between the ages of 20 and 54 experienced a modest decline of 4% between the 2011 and 2016 Census. By contrast, the population of older adults (ages 55 and 69) and seniors (ages 70+) increased by 14% and 4%, respectively.

These growth trends are indicators of an aging population and research suggests that the aging population is more active than ever before. This trend is driven by older adults wishing to remain active as they age, including those seeking lifelong-learning opportunities; and persons managing chronic illness, disease, and/or those that are seeking low-impact, therapeutic, and rehabilitative programs. North Huron and its community partners offer recreational and cultural activities geared towards older adults and seniors including pickleball, trails, swimming and fitness opportunities. Steps have also been undertaken to make the Township's facilities more accommodating of older adults and seniors with various accessibility improvements.

As North Huron's population continues to age, there will be an increasing demand for parks, recreation and culture opportunities that appeal to adults, older adults and seniors. The provision of high-quality leisure services and activities geared towards these age groups should be a priority over the foreseeable future. To assist with this, it is recommended that the Township regularly engage this segment of the community to discuss their needs and challenges, as well as to identify achievable solutions to ensure that they continue to be active in their retirement years.

Recognizing the limited resources of the Township, it is recommended that a Seniors Advisory Council be established to act as a community voice and represent this segment of the community. The Seniors

Advisory Committee would be responsible for providing the Township with advice and advocate for issues that matter to older adults and seniors in the Township. The Seniors Advisory Committee could also play a key role in assisting with the development of an Age Friendly Strategy for the Township. Given North Huron’s aging population, an Age Friendly Strategy would be beneficial in identifying how parks, recreation and culture opportunities can be better suited for older adults and seniors. This may include ensuring that facilities are well lit, comfortable, inviting, and with ample seating. Parks can be assessed with an age friendly lens to ensure that they have the appropriate design features that encourage use among older adults and seniors (as discussed in Section 5.7). From a service perspective, the Township may seek to expand programs for adults, older adults and seniors (potentially in collaboration with others such as the Huron County Library and One Care) and seek external funding to help support the delivery of senior’s opportunities such as the Seniors Community Grant program.

Recommendations – Adult, Older Adult and Senior Services

55. Establish a **Seniors Advisory Committee** to provide a collective voice for issues that matter to older adults and seniors in North Huron. The Seniors Advisory Committee should play a role in the development of an **Age Friendly Strategy** to identify how the Township’s parks, recreation and cultural opportunities can be enhanced to be more welcoming of older adults and seniors. Consideration should be given to accessibility, comfort amenities, and addressing gaps in programs and services (potentially in coordination with community partners). External funding may be sought to support the delivery of opportunities geared towards seniors such as the Seniors Community Grant program.

7.9 Inclusive Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities

Providing inclusive parks, recreation and cultural opportunities is a key goal for municipal department. Minimizing participation barriers is critical to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate, regardless of income, ability, background and orientation. The Township seeks to provide inclusive opportunities in a number of ways including removing physical barriers from public facilities and offering a wide variety of programs to appeal to a variety of abilities and interests. Less than one-fifth of respondents from the community survey were satisfied with the Township’s ability to provide inclusive parks, recreation and culture services, suggesting that there is room for improvement in this regard. This section explores how the Township can further minimize participation barriers to engage a wider audience.

7.9.1 Level of Income

Research has found that higher income households tend to be more likely to participate in leisure activities. The 2016 Census reported that North Huron’s median income was \$62,432 in 2015, which was lower compared to Huron County (median income of \$65,944) and the Province (\$74,287).

The Township’s median income suggests that there is a segment of the community that may find that the cost to participation is a barrier. Statistics Canada found that 14% of Township residents live below the low-income measure, after-tax, which is on par with Huron County and the Province. Approximately one-in-five respondents to the community survey for the Master Plan reported that the cost to participating in parks, recreation and culture activities was a barrier.

These statistics reinforce the need to ensure that parks, recreation, cultural opportunities in North Huron are affordable for all residents, regardless of income. In this regard, a recreation fee subsidy program should be created for Township-run programs to minimize financial barriers for North Huron residents. This strategy is a best practice in any municipality that provides direct programming to ensure that every resident has a chance to play. This financial assistance program would be complementary to existing programs offered by other organizations such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart, Youth Recreation & Sport Program, Huron Respite Network, Bruce County Children's Services and Huron County Children's Services. The Township's fee-based activities are augmented by a variety of no/low fee opportunities such as trails and special events, as well as free public skating at the Townships arenas and drop-in sports through a reciprocal agreement with the Avon District School Board & Huron Perth Catholic District School Board.

7.9.2 Persons with Disabilities

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that 6.2 million people reported living with some form of disability, most commonly identified as pain-related, flexibility, mobility and mental health-related. This amounts to 22% of Canada's population, a substantial increase from the 13% of the national population (3.8 million people) who reported living with a disability in the 2012 Survey on Disability. Applying the national average of 22% to the Township's population suggests that there could be nearly 1,100 residents living with some form of disability.

To comply with the 2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), municipalities and townships have renovated public spaces to meet barrier-free standards, provided AODA-specific customer service training, and are continuously seeking opportunities to offer inclusive programs and services, regardless of ability. The Township of North Huron provides accessible customer services and public materials in accessible formats. The Township also encourages events that take place in North Huron be designed to be inclusive of all abilities.

The Township is committed to making its facilities accessible where possible. In a joint effort with local municipalities, guidance to make public facilities and services accessible are outlined in the Huron County Accessibility Plan. The plan emphasizes the need to support persons with disabilities by creating inclusive programs, facilities and services. North Huron's accessibility audits of the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and the Blyth & District Community Centre identified recommendations to remove physical barriers and should continue to be implemented. Funding received through the ICIP grant will assist with addressing some of the accessibility improvements at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Additional funding will be required to address the remaining accessibility retrofits at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and Blyth & District Community Centre to ensure compliance with legislation.

7.9.3 Persons from Diverse Backgrounds

According to the 2016 Census, approximately 7% of the Township's population are immigrants, the majority of whom arrived before 1981 primarily from European countries. Visible minorities make up just 1% of the population, while Indigenous persons constitute another 1% of the Township's residents.

With immigrants constituting a major share of population growth province-wide, municipalities are seeking to understand the types of incentives and quality of life factors that draw culturally diverse groups. The Township's Residential and Business Opportunity Study identified that providing a high quality of life is particularly important to attract new residents that are in the working age, who are placing a greater emphasis on quality of community and place. This includes high quality parks, recreation, tourism and cultural opportunities that culturally diverse individuals may consider when deciding whether to settle in a community and thus form part of economic development strategies aimed at attracting new residents and businesses.

Municipalities and community service providers often look at broadening the types of services that they offer to respond to the needs of individuals with "non-traditional" interests, but also recognize that many newcomers are willing to participate in "traditionally" Canadian pursuits. While the Township has not yet experienced the cultural diversification that other communities have seen, trends suggest that this may occur in the future as new residents are attracted to the community. Thus, the Township should monitor population growth and socio-economic characteristics to ensure that there are opportunities for current and future residents as the community becomes more diverse.

7.9.4 LGBTQ+ Communities

Statistics Canada reports that approximately 4% of Canadians aged 15 and over identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community.¹³ Applying this rate to the Township's population suggests that there could be approximately 200 LGBTQ+ residents and trends suggest that this community is more likely to face exclusion. However, their participation in the community is critical as LGBTQ+ advocacy groups attribute exclusionary attitudes with mental health issues, homelessness, suicides and harmful practices in their communities.

The role of municipalities is to ensure that LGBTQ+ residents are welcomed, included and can participate freely from harassment, hatred or bias within safe public spaces and welcoming programs. The Township has demonstrated its commitment to the LGBTQ+ community most recently through undertaking a review of its municipal flag policy to be more inclusive as the pride flag is not currently flown at Township buildings. Pride support is also provided through the Township's website and social media pages. Other resources exist including those provided by Huron County and the Huron Perth Public Health Unit, which runs events during pride month to bring people together and connect through meaningful conversations. There are also a number of other organizations dedicated to supporting individuals such as PFLAG and Youthline. The Township should be aware of the resources that are available and explore potential synergies with others to minimize participation barriers for LGBTQ+ residents in North Huron.

¹³ Statistics Canada. (2021). A statistical portrait of Canada's diverse LGBTQ+ communities. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>

Recommendations – Inclusive Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities

56. Minimize **barriers to participation in parks, recreation and culture** opportunities to ensure that access to facilities, programs and services are **inclusive to all residents**. Strategies include broadening services to include non-traditional interests; designing facilities, programs and services to be accessible for persons with disabilities; engaging the LGBTQ2+ community to discuss ways to make them feel more welcome within the community and providing supporting resources.
57. **Undertake accessibility retrofits** to the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and Blyth & District Community Centre in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Accessibility Site Reports completed by the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Appropriate funding should be made available to undertake retrofits, with consideration given to external grant opportunities.
58. Establish a **recreation fee subsidy program** for Township-run programs to minimize financial barriers for residents in North Huron.

7.10 Cultural Services

In addition to the Blyth Memorial Community Hall and Wingham Town Hall Theater, there are a variety of community-based cultural resources in the Township as well as private sector artisans. In fact, Huron County's 2012 Cultural Mapping identifies that there are over 200 cultural resources in North Huron.

There is a wealth of research that reinforces the notion that arts and cultural opportunities are vital contributors to a high quality of life, bringing a range of benefits to individuals and communities. Arts and culture opportunities contribute to the community in many ways including:

- Creating a sense of local pride through community building, place-making, and providing quality experiences.
- Offering a greater variety of pastime activities for residents to pursue.
- Generating economic multipliers, particularly with events increasingly being marketed outside of communities to draw tourists, thus forming an important element of broader tourism strategies.
- Encouraging social interaction by encouraging residents to get involved in the community and providing venues where new residents can understand what makes the township unique (and interact with established residents).

Huron County has played a strong role in facilitating the growth of arts and culture in the region for some time. Most recently, Huron County's Cultural Plan provides the groundwork for strengthening arts and culture opportunities over the next three years and it includes a number of strategic actions where North Huron may play a key role including, but not limited to:

- Continue to act as the lead for the Alice Munro Festival of the Short Story in 2020 but look at identifying a new lead organization for future years.
- Use a variety of heritage storytelling platforms (e.g., plaques, public art, etc.) to reflect and celebrate diverse contributions to Huron County's heritage.

- Create a central online events calendar.
- Develop a municipal festival and events toolkit.
- Update Cultural Asset Mapping.

The Township should continue to work closely with Huron County and expand this relationship to implement these and other relevant actions to raise the profile of culture in North Huron and across the region. To respond to local demand for local arts and cultural opportunities, consideration should also be given to the suggestions submitted through the consultation process with respect to strengthening arts and culture in the Township including (but not limited to) music in the park, art classes, exhibits and galleries, movie nights, music classes, festivals and events, and classes about writing, theatre and cooking. Finding qualified instructors and partners will be necessary to deliver some of these art and culture opportunities. Opportunities may also exist to leverage the assistance of the Huron County Cultural Development Officer who works with creative organizations and individuals to build capacity and delivery programs and services.

Another strategy to enhance cultural opportunities in North Huron is to integrate public art within the Township's parks, recreation and culture facilities. Public art serves many purposes including creating a sense of place and celebrating local artists and local history. There are many opportunities where the Township can showcase works of art within the hallways of the North Huron Westcast Community Complex or the Wingham Town Hall Theatre, outdoors in Cruickshank Park or along trails, and in other public spaces throughout North Huron.

The creation of a Township Public Art Policy is encouraged to provide guidance on evaluating and approving public art installations across North Huron. The policy should also contain direction on developing, acquiring, maintaining and funding public art, and a Public Art Reserve should be created to support this initiative.

Recommendations – Cultural Services

59. Work with Huron County to implement key actions of the **2020-2023 Cultural Plan** and raise the profile of culture in North Huron.
60. Work with partners such as the Huron County Cultural Development Officer to **address local demand for arts and cultural opportunities** with consideration given to suggestions submitted through the consultation process including, but not limited to, music in the park, exhibits and galleries, movie nights, festivals and events, and programming (e.g., arts, writing, theatre, cooking, etc.). Additional public consultation may be required to inform this process.
61. Examine **opportunities for public art** within Township-owned parks and facilities. A **Public Art Policy** should be established an evaluation and approval process, as well as direction on developing, acquiring, maintaining and funding public art. Establishing a Public Art Reserve should also be created.

7.11 Communications and Marketing

Effective means of community outreach and awareness is critical to ensure that there is a high degree of public participation in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. With an overwhelming amount of information being directed to people in their day-to-day lives combined with limited skills and financial resources of community providers, the ability to effectively message local parks, recreation and culture opportunities can get lost.

Experiences across Ontario demonstrate that people find it difficult to know what services are offered by municipalities and community providers. This was apparent through the consultation process for the Master Plan as the community survey revealed that the lack of information or being unaware of what opportunities exist in the Township as one of the most common barriers to participation.

Compounding challenges are the different forms of communication that are favoured by different market segments; for example, social media advertising may be more effective for younger generations, print media and word-of-mouth may be more accessible for older generations, and digital marketing may be less effective for households that have limited or no internet access. Regularly communicating with community groups should be a focus in the future to better promote opportunities, understand challenges groups are facing, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to improve coordination with Township staff.

Continued use of the Township's municipal website and social media to promote parks, recreation and cultural opportunities is encouraged, which should be supplement with the Township's traditional communication methods such as the bi-annual Recreation Guide. In its current form, the Recreation Guide is focused on activities at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Opportunities exist to broaden the Recreation Guide to capture community opportunities on a Township-wide scale to convey meaningful information that may be helpful for new and existing residents. This strategy would directly respond to input received from the public and stakeholders who identified challenges with finding information about community services and opportunities. Information that could be incorporated into the Recreation Guide may include, but not limited to, the Township's parks and facilities as well as where they are located and what amenities are offered, rental information, cultural opportunities, a directory for community organizations and service clubs, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Recommendations – Communications and Marketing

62. Regularly **engage community organizations** to better promote opportunities, understand challenges groups are facing, and to improve coordination with Township staff.
63. Balance the use of social media, Township website and traditional print methods to **communicate information consistently and accurately.**
64. Expand the **Recreation Guide** to include information about community facilities, programs and services available across the Township of North Huron. Information may include, but not be limited to, the location of parks, facilities and amenities, programs, services, rental information, community directory, volunteer organization, and more.

7.12 Technology

North Huron's Strategic Plan describes a goal to modernize community services in order to position the Township as a progressive and forward-thinking community. The use of technology has certainly played a role in this regard, particularly in supporting parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. For example, the Recreation & Community Services Department implemented new recreation management software in early 2021 to manage point of sale transactions, facility bookings, memberships, communication and more. This system has not yet been fully implemented or promoted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff, however, have raised that the management system does not have the functionality to recognize the surcharge required for non-residents, which may present administrative challenges. As a result, the new management system is not being used to its full potential. There are many other examples of municipalities using technology to communicate with residents including promoting events, facility bookings, and payments, as well as provide wireless internet within public facilities.

It will be important to continue to invest in technology to ensure that information and resources can be easily accessible. Continually exploring new ways of utilizing technology is encouraged such as upgrading staff equipment, creating a portal to view available facility rental times (e.g., ice, sports fields, etc.), people counters, and more. Many communities have experienced a demand for virtual programming that the Township should also explore, recognizing that appropriate staff training and support, equipment, stable WIFI and other resources would be required.

The creation of a technology plan for the Recreation & Community Services Department would be beneficial to investigate the feasibility of using technology to reach a wider audience and achieve the Township's corporate goal to modernize community services such as upgrading equipment and ensuring that there is stable wireless internet within community facilities. Investing in information technology services, programs, equipment and staff training should form a part of this plan to ensure that infrastructure is equipped to support the use of technology.

Recommendations – Technology

65. Create a **technology plan** for the Recreation & Community Services Department to investigate the feasibility of using technology to engage residents. Potential opportunities include upgrading staff equipment, installing people counters within public space, and virtual programming. The technology plan should consider staff and infrastructure needs including training and support, stable wireless internet within community facilities and other resources.

7.13 Support for Special Events

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were a number of special events held in North Huron such as the Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion, Rutabaga Festival, Alice Munro Festival, Blyth Festival, Blyth Community Market, Wingham Farmers' Market (temporarily closed due to the pandemic), and more. A list of notable special events held in North Huron is highlighted in Table 11. These special events celebrate local traditions and foster community spirit along with facilitating tourism and economic benefits, particularly those that attract national and international tourists (e.g., Blyth Festival). These events contribute to building a sense of place with unique experiences that take place in North Huron.



The majority of special events in North Huron are provided by local organizations and volunteers, with the exception of the Township-run Family Day. The Township is primarily responsible for providing space and there is municipal staff person responsible for liaising with organizations to ensure that requirements are met. The Township is currently working towards creating a standardized process for planning, developing and delivering successful event on Township-owned property to assist with the delivery of these important events. Once approved by Council, the special events guide will outline the requirements, policies and procedures that organizations and the events must adhere to such as insurance, alcohol, security, protocols put into place as a result of COVID-19, and other related matters.

Given that vast experience organizations have with planning, developing and delivering special events in North Huron, the Township should continue to play a supporting role by providing physical space and assisting groups as necessary to ensure that organizations and special events continue to be successful and sustainable. Recommendations have been advanced throughout the Master Plan to better support special events including facility enhancements, strategies to strengthen volunteerism and partnership in the community and promotion and marketing. Opportunities may also exist to work with community organizations to plan, develop and deliver new events, potentially on a trial basis. Suggestions received from the public through the consultation process included live music or local art exhibits in the park, outdoor movies, car shows, farmers markets and pedestrian street festivals that restrict vehicle traffic.

It is worth noting that the Township currently has an agreement with the Huron Pioneer Threshers & Hobby Association. This agreement allows the organization to utilize a large portion of the grounds at the Blyth & District Community Centre for a two week period in September for their event. Recognizing that this event draws large numbers of attendees and visitors to North Huron each year – resulting in tourism and economic benefits – there is strong merit in continuing to support this organization in delivering its special event to ensure that it is successful; monitoring attendance levels should form part of this process. Should it be determined that interest in the event is waning, the Township should evaluate alternative uses for the large open space which could include a change in land use, divesture, etc.; outdoor space with existing recreation and cultural amenities, as well as the connection to the G2G Trail should continue to be maintained. The Master Plan did not identify any parks, recreation or cultural needs that would be suitable in the area where the event takes place.

Table 11: Summary of Community Special Events

| | |
|---|---|
| Township-Wide Events | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Day | |
| Blyth Events | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blyth Community Market • Home Town Holiday Weekend • Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Day • Rutabaga Festival |
| East Wawanosh Events | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Fowl Supper • Elementary School Fair | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladies Night • Community Breakfasts |
| Wingham Events | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Munro Festival • ALS Walk • Canada Day Fireworks • Community BBQs • Festival of Lanterns • Hitman Tournament • Musical Muskrat Festival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance Day • Terry Fox Run • Wingham & District Hospital Race • Wingham Farmers’ Market (closed during pandemic) • Wingham Homecoming • Wingham Lions Santa Parade • Wingham RC Jets |

Recommendations – Supporting Special Events

66. Continue to assist community organizations with **planning, developing and delivering special events** (e.g., festivals, farmers’ markets, etc.) through implementation of the Township’s special events guide, the provision of supporting infrastructure, promotion and awareness, coordination with volunteers, and other needs as necessary. Monitoring attendance levels and understanding the economic impact of special events should be an ongoing exercise by the Township to determine the success of special events that take place.
67. Continue to support the **Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion**. If, in the future, participation substantially declines, the Township should undertake an evaluation of alternative uses for the land where the event takes place to meet other Township needs while maintaining outdoor spaces with existing recreation and cultural amenities, including connections to the G2G Trail.

7.14 Volunteerism and Community Partnerships

7.14.1 Volunteerism

The delivery of parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron is a collaborative process between the Township and community organizations. These relationships are crucial to providing high quality programs, services and special events which contribute to North Huron's quality of life and are important for creating a sense of place, strong community cohesion, civic pride and economic spin-offs. A summary of local non-municipal community organizations that are responsible for delivering parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron is contained in Table 16.



Volunteers are critical in parks, recreation and culture systems, especially in municipalities such as North Huron that rely on community volunteers to deliver programs, events and services. In January 2015, Statistics Canada published a Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey whose section focused on volunteering and charitable giving found that 12.7 million people in Canada volunteered nearly 2 billion hours in 2013. However, the research found that volunteers are aging and despite high reports of hours volunteered, the general volunteer rate was lower than recorded in previous surveys. This echoes the sentiments expressed by most of the local stakeholders that participated in the stakeholder sessions for the Master Plan process.

An opportunity exists for the Township to assist organizations with addressing this challenge by establishing a database of volunteers and individuals seeking volunteer opportunities and are open to being called upon in a time of need. This database may include contact information, skill sets, previous volunteer experience, and other vital information that may assist with identifying suitable candidates. Potential opportunities may exist to work with others on this initiative who may already offer volunteer resources such as the Wingham Community Connectors.

As many parks, recreation and cultural groups are volunteer-based or not-for-profit organizations, it can be difficult to find sustainable resources to support volunteer training and development. In response to this, there are examples of municipalities working collectively with organizations to pool resources and share in training sessions that would be beneficial to all groups to assist with attracting, retaining and training volunteers. Assisting organizations to strengthen volunteerism is complementary to creating a volunteer policy as identified in Section 0 to ensure that local volunteers work efficiently and effectively. Demonstrating the Township's appreciation for the dedication of volunteers is one way to strengthen volunteerism. This can be achieved by holding volunteer recognition events or dinners and identifying a Volunteer of the Year Award, which is consistent the Township's Strategic Plan. This is a best practice in many municipalities and is worth considering for the Township.

7.14.2 Community Partnerships

Part of continuing to implement the blended service delivery model recommended for the Recreation & Community Services Department involves formally working with groups and individuals to deliver parks, recreation and culture services. There may be instances where no one party is able to provide a program, service, or facility on its own, or where the risk is too great for any one party to overcome. In such instances, the creation of a partnership can be a great benefit in addressing identified needs or service gaps, while minimizing service duplication.

There are several stakeholders that are vital partners in the delivery of essential programs, services, and events in North Huron. Consultation with these stakeholders yielded support for continued partnerships over the foreseeable future. Maintaining successful relationships requires that the Township regularly review its partnership agreements to ensure that they continue to be relevant, beneficial to the public interest, and achieve the Township's vision for parks, recreation and culture.

When considering new partnership opportunities, it is important to ensure that they are mutually beneficial to all parties. There are a number of factors that the Township should consider when evaluating new partnership opportunities. At a minimum, it is recommended that the Township use the following criteria as a standard framework for evaluation. The Township should consider:

- The purpose of the proposed partnership and how it aligns with the Township and Department mandate and philosophies;
- The role of the Township in providing the proposed program or service;
- Whether there is a quantifiable or justified need for the service in the community;
- If there is a cost-benefit to establishing a partnership to provide the service;
- How the service can be appropriately accommodated within the Township's long-term capital and/or operating resources;
- If the partner is sufficiently capable/qualified to deliver the program or service over the long-term and in compliance with legislative policies and municipal standards;
- That the level of risk is acceptable to both parties and there is a plan in place to manage the risk;
- Whether the potential partner can provide the program or service on a sole basis, and
- There is a full agreement of the terms, conditions, standards and responsibilities for all parties involved.

Formalizing partnership agreements with existing relationships is another area that the Township should explore. For example, there are currently no partnership agreements with the Wingham Trail Committee and G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee, two groups that play a key role in working with Township staff to promote and maintain key trail systems in North Huron. Crafting partnership agreements with these organizations, with consideration given to the criteria identified above ensures that any entity partnering with the Township has the ability to deliver on its promises, so that the Township is not left in a position to take over operations and/or financial commitments if a partner no longer participates.

Recommendations – Volunteerism and Community Partnerships

68. Establish a Township **database of volunteers or individuals** seeking volunteer opportunities to assist with identifying individuals willing to assist with the delivery of community services. This database may contain details including, but not limited to contact information, skill sets, previous volunteer experience, and other details.
69. Engage community organizations to discuss strategies to **strengthen volunteerism** with respect to recruitment, retention and training. Leveraging the use of external advisors to assist groups with improving volunteerism in North Huron may also be considered.
70. Establish an **annual recognition event** and **Volunteer of the Year Award** to demonstrate the Township's appreciation for local volunteers.
71. Regularly **revisit and renew existing partnership agreements** to ensure that they remain relevant and seek to achieve North Huron's vision for parks, recreation and culture opportunities.
72. Establish a **standardized framework** for evaluating potential partnership opportunities to deliver parks, recreation and cultural opportunities.
73. **Formalize partnership agreements** with key agencies and organizations operating in North Huron, where appropriate, to define roles and responsibilities, minimize risk, and other necessary details.



8.0 Master Plan Implementation

8.1 Potential Funding Sources

The Township has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the reasons for undertaking a Master Plan; to understand community needs and priorities. Although North Huron may experience challenges in providing the appropriate financial and human resources to achieve the Master Plan's recommendations, the Township should make an effort to implement these strategies through appropriate and acceptable means. In addition to direct taxation, full implementation of the Master Plan would benefit from the use of various funding sources, including:

Development Charges

Development charges are fees that are collected through the building process in order to address the growth-related infrastructure needs of a community, such as new or enhanced leisure facilities (but not parkland acquisition). Through Bill 197, eligible capital projects may be fully funded through development charges. Funding limitations include replacement portions of facilities, historical service level deficiencies, or excess capacity as a result of the pre-replacement of facilities. Some of the items identified in this Master Plan are partially or fully growth-related, thus will be eligible for Development Charge funding.

Parkland Cash-in-Lieu

The Planning Act establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives, with implementation policies identified through official plans. One such alternative to land dedication is the conveyance of cash-in-lieu of parkland generated by development or redevelopment (up to 5% of residential lands or 2% of commercial/industrial lands). At the Township's discretion, cash-in-lieu may be collected and used to purchase parkland or improve existing parks. Despite some changes, these powers remain in place through Bill 197. Bill 197 also allows municipalities to establish a community benefits charge by-law to collect funds to acquire land for parks for higher-density development over a certain threshold; this tool would have limited utility in the Township due to the scale of future development.

Township Reserves

On occasion, municipalities may decide to set aside monies accrued from tax dollars or other revenue sources for special projects, such as the development or expansion of a specific community facility or park. In addition, annual lifecycle reserves that are earmarked to fund the maintenance and state-of-good-repair of existing facilities are becoming more common. Industry standards suggest that 2% of the capital value of assets be put into a reserve annually.

Fundraising, Donations, and Sponsorships

The capital and ongoing operational costs of constructing parks, recreation and culture services are substantial and will inherently place pressures on the municipal budget. Seeking assistance from the community to contribute resources towards the construction and/or operation of parks, recreation and culture opportunities can be an effective way to provide services and

spaces that are truly desired by residents. In the past, many local user groups and service clubs have collected donations and/or participated in fundraising for new facilities and this practice is expected to continue to some degree. Historically, the Township relied on donations from residents in other municipalities such as the contributions made towards the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. Future fundraising efforts beyond the Township's boundaries may be impacted following the implementation of non-resident fees. Fundraising may also be impacted by residents, businesses and service clubs experiencing pandemic-related financial constraints.

User Fees and Surcharges

User and rental fees for most parks, recreation and culture services – particularly those that are for broad public use – are minimal as they exist to promote physical activity, social interaction and community benefits. Fees are in place for some dedicated-use spaces or amenities (e.g., sports fields, arenas, swimming) that benefit specific groups or individuals. Increases in user fees – such as through a project-specific surcharge – can be used to offset the costs associated with capital upgrades. However, there must be caution in increasing user fees as this can result in creating barriers to participations (e.g., reduced affordability), reduction in the number of participants which can impact program feasibility, etc.

Debenture Financing

In cases where alternate sources of funding are unavailable, some municipalities have shown a willingness to finance a portion of major capital expenditures. Depending on the Township's credit rating, this can be a more expensive funding alternative and can impact the future borrowing rate and fiscal capacity.

Ongoing Government Programs

One example of an ongoing government program is the Federal Gas Tax Fund, which provides municipalities with a long-term funding stream that can be used for the construction and rehabilitation of core public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and leisure facilities.

One-Time Grants

Municipalities often seek financial support from senior levels of government for major municipal capital projects. In 2017, the Federal budget made commitments towards infrastructure investments through the "Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program" – in partnership with the Provincial Government – the Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure funding stream opened in 2019 (with up to 73.33% support for eligible municipal projects). The Township was successful in securing \$900,000 through this program towards improvements to the North Huron Westcast Community Complex. In 2020, a COVID-19 Resilience stream was created to provide an accelerated process to fund projects that respond to the pandemic. While the presence of an approved Master Plan is often a requirement to securing grant funding, additional staff resources may be required to assist with monitoring and applying for grants.

Partnerships

To maximize benefits to the community, the Township has a history of engaging in collaborations or partnerships with the various partners, agencies and municipalities to provide parks, recreation and culture services in North Huron. Strengthening existing and creating new partnerships during the planning period should be the pathway forward to maximize the use of available resources, while sharing roles and responsibilities.

Recommendations – Potential Funding Sources

74. Where appropriate, consider **alternative funding and cost-sharing** approaches such as (but not limited to) user fees, fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.
75. Use this Master Plan as a **resource** in developing the Township’s annual budget documents and related studies.

8.2 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

The Township should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of the Master Plan to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to the changing needs in North Huron. This will require measuring the performance of various parks, recreation and culture services including monitoring of activity patterns and program registration, facility utilization, tracking user satisfaction levels and regular dialogue with community organizations. Regularly tracking registration of sports groups that utilize the Township’s facilities, including understanding the proportion of resident and non-residents, will also assist with determining future facility needs. Understanding these metrics will assist the Township with undertaking a detailed ten-year update to the Master Plan.

Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Master Plan may be required. It will also be important to review and update the population projections contained in this Master Plan and evaluate the impact on future leisure services on an as-needed basis.

To highlight achievements and statistics related to parks, recreation and culture, as well as the implementation status of the Master Plan, regular reporting (e.g., bi-annual or annual) is encouraged and it should outline the recommendations that staff seek to achieve within the short-term.

Reviewing the Master Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the planning, financing, and delivery of parks, recreation and culture services, Council and the public. An appropriate time for this is prior to the annual budgeting process. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan:

- a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);

- b) identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, updated population data and forecasts, etc.);
- c) cursory review of the Master Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- d) preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- e) communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the coming year; and
- f) budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

- 76. Implement a system for the **regular monitoring and reporting** for the Master Plan, such as tracking activity patterns, program registration and facility utilization and providing status reports to Council and the community.
- 77. Develop **annual work plans** that identify recommendations from the Master Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Annual work plans should identify the staffing needs, financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations.
- 78. As new data becomes available, **review and update the population projections** contained in the Master Plan to ensure that they are in alignment with other planning processes. Evaluate the impact of new population data on future parks, recreation and culture services.
- 79. Require sports organizations that regularly use Township facilities to submit **annual registration data** including the proportion of residents and non-residents for the purposes of tracking trends and informing future facility needs.
- 80. Undertake a **mid-term review** around 2026 and **comprehensive review and update** of the Master Plan by 2031. Timing may also be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in the community.

8.3 Priority of Recommendations

Throughout the body of this Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or topic area. By approving the Master Plan as a guiding document, the Township is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or manner indicated; rather, this Master Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Township's capital and operating budget development exercise. It is expected that the Township will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the budget process.

In addition to funding availability, factors that might change priorities year to year may include:

- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;

Township of North Huron Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in participation rates;
- availability of alternate providers; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

The following tables summarize all recommendations contained in the Master Plan in the order that they appeared. A priority level has been assigned to each recommendation and is organized in four categories. The general timing of priority has been identified; however, this should only be interpreted as a guide given that there are many factors that may impact the timing of implementation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **High Priority (2022 – 2025):** Immediate attention is strongly suggested in the short-term.
- **Medium Priority (2026 – 2029):** Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.
- **Lower Priority (2030 – 2031+):** Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated/completed.
- **Ongoing Priority:** A best practice that the Township should implement (or continue to implement over the planning period in order to maintain high quality parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Huron.

The resource implication for each recommendation is also identified, including estimated capital costs. Cost estimates should be interpreted as a guide only and should be refined as a part of the Township's annual work plans.

Due to the uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, the general timing of implementing recommendations has not been identified. Through the preparation of annual work plans the Township will be required to identify the timing of recommendations that they believe will be realistically achievable. Emphasis should be given to recommendations identified as a high priority, followed by medium and low priorities.

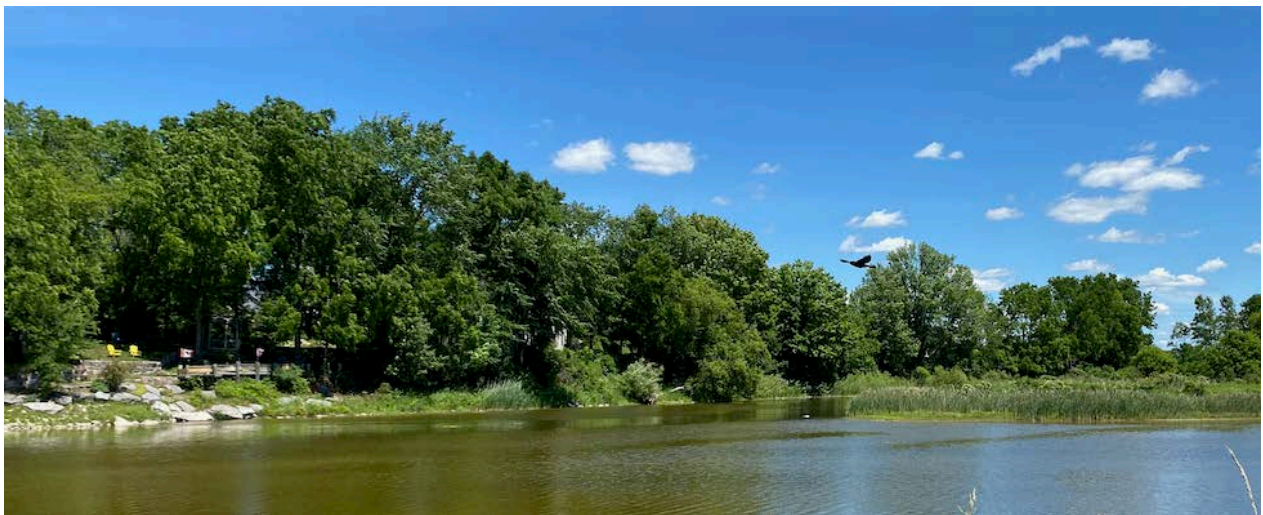


Table 12: Recommendations - Parkland, Open Space and Trails

| Parkland, Open Space and Trails | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|--|
| Parkland Classification | | |
| 1. Formalize a parkland classification system to guide the planning and design of new parks and the revitalization of existing parks according to park type, size, function and appropriate amenities. This may include incorporating the classification system into the Official Plan at the time of a comprehensive review or as an amendment. | Short | Staff time |
| Parkland Needs | | |
| 2. Acquire 2.5 hectares of additional parkland by 2031 to address growth-related needs and distribution by maximizing parkland dedication as permitted by the Planning Act and other acquisition strategies available to the Township (e.g., land purchase) to reconcile gap areas including in Huron Heights and in the north end and east side of Blyth. | Ongoing | Staff time/Land purchase on a case-by-case basis |
| Parkland Redevelopment | | |
| 3. Strategic parkland renewal and redevelopment should be undertaken at the Blyth & District Community Centre to re-purpose one surplus ball diamond to other needed amenities as identified in this Master Plan including an enhanced skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. Redevelopment of this park should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to establish capital and operational assumptions. | Short | Staff time/Cost for consultant (\$20,000) |
| Parkland Policies | | |
| 4. The review of planning applications should have regard for the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan to address parkland gaps and to guide when parkland dedication versus cash-in-lieu is most appropriate to accept. | Ongoing | Staff time |

| Parkland, Open Space and Trails | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|--|
| Parkland, Open Space and Trail Design Considerations | | |
| <p>5. Township parks and trails should be designed in a manner that considers universal accessibility and multi-seasonal usage and opportunities for all ages. Safety and comfort measures should also be considered including the placement of seating, shade and other amenities, as well as replacing aging amenities that already exist within public spaces. Coordination with the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee, emergency services, and others should form a part of the parks and trails design process.</p> | Ongoing | Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| <p>6. Potentially working with others, explore initiatives to protect and enhance the natural environment such as identifying new locations for pollinator gardens, establishing tree canopy targets, planting trees and native species, establishing community gardens, creating programs to raise awareness about the environment, using sustainable building materials and partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to evaluate opportunities to re-open the Nature Centre.</p> | Medium | Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| <p>7. Naturalize Children’s Memorial Park in order to reduce parkland maintenance efforts.</p> | Short | Staff time/Potential cost savings |
| <p>8. Create a standardized signage template to identify the location of public parks and trails.</p> | Medium | Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| <p>9. Investigate strategic locations for outdoor fitness equipment, potentially at Riverside Park, Wingham Splash Pad and Playground, and Blyth & District Community Park. Promoting outdoor fitness program opportunities within the parks system is also encouraged.</p> | Short | \$2,500 - \$5,000 per component |
| Recreational Trails | | |

| Parkland, Open Space and Trails | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------------|--|
| <p>10. In coordination with the public and relevant groups such as the Wingham Trail Committee, G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee and the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, create a Trails Master Plan to create a long-term vision for the development of a comprehensive trail network in North Huron. In addition to partnership opportunities, funding, design, provision of amenities, and other strategies to promote active transportation, the Trails Master Plan should have regard for the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan and explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Extending the Wingham Community Trail from the Maitland River Elementary School northward towards Riverside Park to create a loop trail. b) Establishing accessible circulation areas within the Township’s parks, including pathways that connect users to on-site amenities. c) Developing recreational linkages to and within future residential areas. d) Connecting trail users to the downtown area and other key destinations (e.g., potentially through sidewalks, signage, etc.). e) Promoting the use of paved shoulders for cycling as per the Huron County 2016 Cycling Strategy. f) Partnering with the G2G Trail Advisory Committee to promote the use of the G2G Trail. g) Partnering with the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to promote the use of trails at the Wawanosh Conservation Area, including for winter use (e.g., cross-country skiing). | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time / Cost for consultant (\$50,000)</p> |
| <p>11. The Township should seek the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycle pathways in appropriate areas as a condition for plan of subdivision approval for the purposes of strengthening active transportation opportunities as permitted under the Planning Act.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |

Table 13: Recommendations - Recreation and Culture Opportunities

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|---|
| Arenas | | |
| 12. Proceed with undertaking necessary arena improvements as per the building condition assessments to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of facility users over the foreseeable future. | | As per building condition assessment |
| 13. To achieve reduced operating costs , the ice season at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex should begin on October 1st to align with the Blyth & District Community Centre. If the demand exists, stagger the removal of ice at each arena to minimize operational costs, while ensuring that ice is available in the Township for users that require it. | Short | Staff time |
| 14. Explore the feasibility of converting the underutilized concession spaces at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and the Blyth & District Community Centre to alternative uses such as gathering areas for seating, program and office space, storage, or other uses. | Medium | Staff time/Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| Aquatics | | |
| 15. Undertake indoor pool improvements in accordance with the recommendations contained in the building condition assessment. | | As per building condition assessment |
| 16. Engage the Blyth Lions Club to investigate potential to convert the existing outdoor wading pool to a splash pad . Joint funding opportunities through the Ontario Trillium Foundation or other grant programs is encouraged. | Medium | Staff time |
| Arts and Cultural Facilities | | |
| 17. Increase the use of the Wingham Town Hall Theatre by hosting programs such as movie nights and theatre classes, attracting performers that appeal to different interests and age groups, promoting the space for school use, or other ideas identified by Township staff. | Medium | Staff time |

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|---|
| <p>18. Should extensive capital investment be required to the Wingham Library Branch, or the leased Blyth Library Branch location is no longer available, the Township is encouraged to engage Huron County to discuss opportunities to ensure continued and enhance access to the library to meet current and future space needs. As part of such an exercise, the Township and County could investigate the feasibility of re-locating one or both library branches to existing community centres, either through expansion or re-purposing existing underutilized space to further strengthen the Township’s facilities as community hubs and as civic destinations.</p> | Long | Staff time |
| Gymnasiums, Community Halls and Multi-Use Spaces | | |
| <p>19. Monitor usage trends of the existing indoor multi-use courts. Should utilization remain low over the short-term, re-purpose the two squash courts by removing the dividing wall to create a large indoor space to broaden the variety of active recreation activities that can be accommodate.</p> | Long | Staff time/Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| <p>20. Continue to utilize the arena floor and community space at the Blyth & District Community Centre for indoor active programs to ensure that there are activities available for residents, particularly the younger demographic.</p> | Ongoing | Staff time |
| <p>21. Investigate strategies to bolster utilization of existing community halls and multi-purpose spaces permitted by the Township such as exploring new program areas and promoting its use with community organizations. The public and user groups should be consulted to evaluate, identify and prioritize improvements to community halls and multi-purpose spaces to encourage use or improve the user experience.</p> | Long | Staff time/Costs for program materials |
| Fitness Spaces | | |
| <p>22. Continue to implement the Township’s current fitness provision model of a fitness centre at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex, complemented by group fitness activities in Wingham, Belgrave and Blyth, as well as indoor walking within school hallways. Group fitness opportunities may be bolstered</p> | Ongoing | Staff time |

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------------|---|
| <p>re-purposing the two multi-use courts at the North Huron Westcast Community Complex over the long-term, subject to monitoring participation levels.</p> | | |
| <p>Ball Diamonds</p> | | |
| <p>23. Due to a lack of demand, replace one ball diamond in Blyth with a redeveloped park space to include priority recreation facilities identified the Master Plan such as an enhanced skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. The Township should identify and undertake improvements to the remaining ball diamond to ensure that it continues to serve users, such as replacing lighting. Should the Township decide to maintain a surplus of ball diamonds and not re-purpose one diamond, a location(s) will need to be determined for other recommended priority outdoor recreation facilities.</p> | <p>Short</p> | <p>Staff time/Cost for improving the remaining ball diamond</p> |
| <p>24. In the interim and prior to re-purposing a ball diamond, monitor use of the ball diamond(s) at the Blyth & District Community Centre and as user groups return to play post-pandemic to assess needs, while also working with organizations to maximize use and attract participants.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |
| <p>Soccer Fields</p> | | |
| <p>25. Consult soccer organizations to investigate the feasibility of consolidating field scheduling with the goal of removing Galbraith Soccer Field by maximizing the use of fields located within North Huron.</p> | <p>Short</p> | <p>Staff time/Potential cost savings</p> |
| <p>26. The Township should continue to work to secure long-term access to non-municipal soccer fields. However, as a long-term strategy, opportunities to acquire land within the Township should be investigated (as well as considering the re-purposing of existing land owned by the Township) to accommodate soccer fields, should the current non-municipal soccer fields no longer be available.</p> | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time/Cost to acquire land</p> |

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|------------------------------|
| Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts | | |
| 27. Construct two courts with playing lines for tennis and pickleball at the Blyth & District Community Centre. Continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to maintain access to the existing tennis courts at the F.E. Madill Secondary School in Wingham, which includes ensuring that the courts remain in a state of good repair. | Medium | \$60,000 (two new courts) |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | | |
| 28. Construct a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey at the Blyth & District Community Centre. | Medium | \$40,000 |
| 29. Add multi-use playing lines for basketball and ball hockey at the existing court at Riverside Park. | Short | \$2,500 |
| Skateboard Parks | | |
| 30. Continue to support the proponent-led initiative to raise funds towards replacing the skateboard park at Blyth & District Community Centre with a permanent structure. The scale, design and positioning of the replacement skateboard park should be determined as a part of the redevelopment of the Blyth & District Community Centre and through public input. Led by the proponent, opportunities may also exist to work with third-party groups such as the private sector or service groups to seek funding towards this project. | Medium | \$135,000 - \$400,000 |
| 31. Evaluate opportunities to construct a skateboard park in Wingham in order to improve the distribution of opportunities for skateboarding and other wheeled action sports, as well as to strengthen convenient recreational opportunities for youth. The scale, design and location should be guided by consultation with the public. Opportunities to partner with third party groups such as the private sector or service groups to seek funding towards this project is encouraged. | Medium | \$135,000 - \$400,000 |
| Playgrounds | | |

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|-------------------------|
| <p>32. To ensure that all residential areas in the Township’s urban settlement areas are located within 800-metres of a playground, unobstructed by major barriers, strive to address playground gaps in Hutton Heights and the east side of Blyth.</p> | Ongoing | \$50,000 |
| <p>33. Renew Township playgrounds once they reach a life expectancy of 20 years or as identified by playground manufactures. During the lifespan of each playground, regular inspections should take place to ensure that they are safe for users. The development or redevelopment of playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Creative playground designs are encouraged with consideration given to natural and adventure play components.</p> | Medium | Staff time/ \$50,000 |
| Campgrounds | | |
| <p>34. The Township should extend the pilot project of 25 enhanced camp sites at the Blyth Campground for one additional year in order to be better positioned to evaluate the demand, costs and benefits of these sites. In the interim, the Township should place priority on directing transient camping to the pilot project’s 25 camp sites. In the interim, the Township may wish to consolidate the 25 camp sites to one location of the campground, which may result in enhanced operations and management. Promoting camping opportunities should also continue, including working with the Blyth BIA, Blyth Festival, Blyth Lions Club and others.</p> | Short | Staff time |
| Off-Leash Dog Parks | | |
| <p>35. Promote the use of the existing off-leash dog park at Auburn Park in Central Huron to meet the needs of residents. To ensure continued access to the off-leash dog park, consideration should be given to making financial contributions to Central Huron to be used towards off-leash dog park maintenance.</p> | Short | Staff time |

| Recreation and Culture Opportunities | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|-----------------------|
| Other Recreation and Culture Facility Needs | | |
| 36. Requests for new indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural facilities should be examined on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of utilizing existing public space, the willingness of an established organization to partner in providing the facility or space, and other factors. | Long | Staff time |

Table 14: Recommendations - Service Delivery System

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| Recreation & Community Services Department | | |
| 37. The Recreation & Community Services Department should continue to implement a blended service delivery model , with a greater emphasis placed on supporting and encourage community-based organizations, service clubs and strategic partners to deliver programs and services that are complementary to those that are currently provided; duplication of programs and services should be discouraged. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| Organizational Effectiveness | | |
| 38. As the Municipal Service Delivery Review continues to be implemented, monitor the transition of the realignment of services and responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department. Should the Township continue to experience challenges associated with the realignment, the service delivery model should be re-evaluated in the short-term to consider alternatives to address ongoing concerns. | Short | Staff time |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| 39. Raise public awareness about the responsibilities between the Recreation & Community Services Department and the Public Works Department, with consideration given to establishing a system for residents to report community issues to ensure that they are directed to the appropriate Departments. | Short | Staff time |
| 40. Through the existing staffing complement, endeavour to enhance coordination and emphasis on meaningfully engaging organization , through including liaising with community and agency providers, finding new program and rental opportunities to optimize the use of community spaces and coordinate communication among service providers by acting as a centralized resource within the Township. | Medium | Staff time |
| 41. Consolidate the two existing facility manager positions into one position following retirement. Once this occurs, consideration may need to be given to additional full- or part-time staff. | Medium | Staff time |
| 42. Continually invest in training and professional development to create a high performing staff team. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 43. Create a staff manual that defines the roles and responsibilities of staff, outline operating procedures, human resources, and other key information required to assist staff with day-to-day maintenance and operations and deliver high quality public services. | Medium | Staff time |
| 44. Create a succession plan to proactively plan for retirements to ensure that internal knowledge is passed on through employee transition. | Short | Staff time |
| 45. Establish service levels for each area of parks, recreation and culture to right-size opportunities to meet community needs. Opportunities to reduce the level of service in appropriate areas should be considered with the goal of achieving operational efficiencies and cost savings. | Medium | Staff time |
| 46. Explore the feasibility of utilizing third-party services to provide parks, recreation and culture services in North Huron. | Medium | Staff time |
| Policy Development | | |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|--|
| 47. Regularly review and update of Department policies , as appropriate, to ensure that they reflect current conditions and public expectations. Create new policies to address gap areas including, but not limited to, financial subsidies, employee service recognition, volunteerism, and sports field lighting. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| Programming | | |
| 48. Potentially in collaboration with others, such as existing service providers, explore new program ideas to optimize the use of Township parks and facilities including encouraging the development of community-led programs, virtual programs, outdoor programming, and activities suggested by the public through the Master Plan process. | Ongoing | Staff time/Costs for program materials |
| 49. Establish a system to track drop-in attendance to monitor participation trends over time to determine programs that are in demand or those that require more attention. | Short | Staff time |
| 50. Monitor the demand for childminding services and right-size staffing and other resources to actual demand for this service. | Medium | Staff time |
| Childcare Services | | |
| 51. Monitor childcare enrollment post-pandemic and its impact on demand in order to better inform a decision on the need for, and financial impact of, providing childcare services in Blyth. | Medium | Staff time |
| 52. Modify staffing of childcare services from part-time staff to full-time staff in order to attract applicants. | Short | Staff time |
| Youth Services | | |
| 53. Establish a Youth Advisory Council to empower youth and give them a voice in the decision-making process. With staff support for coordination, the Youth Advisory Council should be responsible for engaging the broader youth population; identifying trends, issues and programs that matter to them; and identifying how parks, recreation and culture opportunities can be improved to be more youth-friendly. Appropriate staff resources will be required to organize and guide this group. | Medium | Staff time |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|---|
| 54. Work with the Youth Advisory Council, community partners and others to become designated as a Youth Friendly Community . | Medium | Staff time |
| Adult, Older Adult and Senior Services | | |
| 55. Establish a Seniors Advisory Committee to provide a collective voice for issues that matter to older adults and seniors in North Huron. The Seniors Advisory Committee should play a role in the development of an Age Friendly Strategy to identify how the Township’s parks, recreation and cultural opportunities can be enhanced to be more welcoming of older adults and seniors. Consideration should be given to accessibility, comfort amenities, and addressing gaps in programs and services (potentially in coordination with community partners). External funding may be sought to support the delivery of opportunities geared towards seniors such as the Seniors Community Grant program. | Medium | Staff time |
| Inclusive Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities | | |
| 56. Minimize barriers to participation in parks, recreation and culture opportunities to ensure that access to facilities, programs and services are inclusive to all residents . Strategies include broadening services to include non-traditional interests; designing facilities, programs and services to be accessible for persons with disabilities; engaging the LGBTQ2+ community to discuss ways to make them feel more welcome within the community and providing supporting resources. | Medium | Staff time |
| 57. Undertake accessibility retrofits to the North Huron Westcast Community Complex and Blyth & District Community Centre in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Accessibility Site Reports completed by the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee. Appropriate funding should be made available to undertake retrofits, with consideration given to external grant opportunities. | Medium | Staff time/Costs to be determined on a project specific basis |
| 58. Establish a recreation fee subsidy program for Township-run programs to minimize financial barriers for residents in North Huron. | Short | Staff time |
| Cultural Services | | |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| 59. Work with Huron County to implement key actions of the 2020-2023 Cultural Plan and raise the profile of culture in North Huron. | Short | Staff time |
| 60. Work with partners such as the Huron County Cultural Development Officer to address local demand for arts and cultural opportunities with consideration given to suggestions submitted through the consultation process including, but not limited to, music in the park, exhibits and galleries, movie nights, festivals and events, and programming (e.g., arts, writing, theatre, cooking, etc.). Additional public consultation may be required to inform this process. | Long | Staff time |
| 61. Examine opportunities for public art within Township-owned parks and facilities. A Public Art Policy should be established an evaluation and approval process, as well as direction on developing, acquiring, maintaining and funding public art. Establishing a Public Art Reserve should also be created. | Long | Staff time |
| Communications and Marketing | | |
| 62. Regularly engage community organizations to better promote opportunities, understand challenges groups are facing, and to improve coordination with Township staff. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 63. Balance the use of social media, Township website and traditional print methods to communicate information consistently and accurately . | Long | Staff time |
| 64. Expand the Recreation Guide to include information about community facilities, programs and services available across the Township of North Huron. Information may include, but not be limited to, the location of parks, facilities and amenities, programs, services, rental information, community directory, volunteer organization, and more. | Medium | Staff time |
| Technology | | |
| 65. Create a technology plan for the Recreation & Community Services Department to investigate the feasibility of using technology to engage residents. Potential opportunities include upgrading staff equipment, installing people counters within public space, and virtual programming. The technology plan | Medium | Staff time |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| <p>should consider staff and infrastructure needs including training and support, stable wireless internet within community facilities and other resources.</p> | | |
| <p>Support for Special Events</p> | | |
| <p>66. Continue to assist community organizations with planning, developing and delivering special events (e.g., festivals, farmers’ markets, etc.) through implementation of the Township’s special events guide, the provision of supporting infrastructure, promotion and awareness, coordination with volunteers, and other needs as necessary. Monitoring attendance levels and understanding the economic impact of special events should be an ongoing exercise by the Township to determine the success of special events that take place.</p> | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |
| <p>67. Continue to support the Huron Pioneer Threshers Reunion. If, in the future, participation substantially declines, the Township should undertake an evaluation of alternative uses for the land where the event takes place to meet other Township needs while maintaining outdoor spaces with existing recreation and cultural amenities, including connections to the G2G Trail.</p> | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |
| <p>Volunteerism and Community Partnerships</p> | | |
| <p>68. Establish a Township database of volunteers or individuals seeking volunteer opportunities to assist with identifying individuals willing to assist with the delivery of community services. This database may contain details including, but not limited to contact information, skill sets, previous volunteer experience, and other details.</p> | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |
| <p>69. Engage community organizations to discuss strategies to strengthen volunteerism with respect to recruitment, retention and training. Leveraging the use of external advisors to assist groups with improving volunteerism in North Huron may also be considered.</p> | <p>Long</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |
| <p>70. Establish an annual recognition event and Volunteer of the Year Award to demonstrate the Township’s appreciation for local volunteers.</p> | <p>Short</p> | <p>Staff time</p> |

| Service Delivery System | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| 71. Regularly revisit and renew existing partnership agreements to ensure that they remain relevant and seek to achieve North Huron’s vision for parks, recreation and culture opportunities. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 72. Establish a standardized framework for evaluating potential partnership opportunities to deliver parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. | Short | Staff time |
| 73. Formalize partnership agreements with key agencies and organizations operating in North Huron, where appropriate, to define roles and responsibilities, minimize risk, and other necessary details. | Long | Staff time |

Table 15: Recommendations - Master Plan Implementation

| Master Plan Implementation | Priority | Resource Implications |
|---|----------|-----------------------|
| Potential Funding Sources | | |
| 74. Where appropriate, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches such as (but not limited to) user fees, fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 75. Use this Master Plan as a resource in developing the Township’s annual budget documents and related studies. | Long | Staff time |
| Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan | | |
| 76. Implement a system for the regular monitoring and reporting for the Master Plan, such as tracking activity patterns, program registration and facility utilization and providing status reports to Council and the community. | Ongoing | Staff time |

| Master Plan Implementation | Priority | Resource Implications |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| 77. Develop annual work plans that identify recommendations from the Master Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Annual work plans should identify the staffing needs, financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 78. As new data becomes available, review and update the population projections contained in the Master Plan to ensure that they are in alignment with other planning processes. Evaluate the impact of new population data on future parks, recreation and culture services. | Long | Staff time |
| 79. Require sports organizations that regularly use Township facilities to submit annual registration data including the proportion of residents and non-residents for the purposes of tracking trends and informing future facility needs. | Ongoing | Staff time |
| 80. Undertake a mid-term review around 2026 and comprehensive review and update of the Master Plan by 2031. Timing may also be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in the community. | Long | Staff time |

Appendix A: Community Survey Summary

1. How physically active has your household been during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before? This includes leisure-time activities, such as participation in organized or in unorganized sports, physical activities, and play.

| | # | % |
|--|-----|------|
| More physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic | 80 | 17% |
| Less physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic | 216 | 45% |
| No change/the same level of physical activity | 181 | 38% |
| Unsure | 2 | 0% |
| answered question | 479 | 100% |

2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following parks and recreation activities? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participated, either at home or in public.

| | # | % |
|---|-----|------|
| Walking or Hiking for Leisure | 386 | 81% |
| Enjoying Parks and Open Spaces | 297 | 63% |
| Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness or Weight-training | 198 | 42% |
| Swimming (recreational) | 196 | 41% |
| Use of Playground Equipment | 195 | 41% |
| Swimming (instructional or aquafit) | 170 | 36% |
| Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating or Ice Skating | 159 | 33% |
| Dog Walking (on or off-leash) | 146 | 31% |
| Use of Splash Pad | 142 | 30% |
| Cycling or Mountain Biking | 141 | 30% |
| Camping | 122 | 26% |
| Baseball or Softball | 107 | 23% |
| Jogging or Running for Fitness | 93 | 20% |
| Soccer | 85 | 18% |
| Curling | 65 | 14% |
| Organized Children & Youth Programs (e.g., day camps) | 62 | 13% |
| Basketball | 48 | 10% |
| Tennis | 42 | 9% |
| Squash | 36 | 8% |
| Pickleball | 33 | 7% |
| Volleyball | 31 | 7% |
| Organized Seniors' Programs (e.g., cards, dancing) | 24 | 5% |
| Wheeled Action Sports (e.g., skateboarding or BMX) | 16 | 3% |
| Wallyball | 6 | 1% |
| Other (please specify) | 44 | 9% |
| answered question | 475 | 599% |

3. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you and members of your household able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

| | # | % |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| Yes | 382 | 80% |
| No | 74 | 15% |
| Don't Know | 24 | 5% |
| answered question | 480 | 100% |

4. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, why were you NOT able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

| | # | % |
|--|----|------|
| Lack of personal time / Too busy | 39 | 44% |
| Program not offered at convenient time | 39 | 44% |
| Lack of desired programs or facilities | 28 | 31% |
| Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities | 22 | 25% |
| Lack of money / Too expensive | 20 | 22% |
| Lack of motivation / Not interested | 14 | 16% |
| Health problems / Disability / Age | 10 | 11% |
| Lack of child care | 4 | 4% |
| Lack of transportation / Facility too far away | 2 | 2% |
| Language / Cultural barrier | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 2 | 2% |
| Other (please specify) | 11 | 12% |
| answered question | 89 | 215% |

5. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following arts and cultural activities? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participated, either at home or in public.

| | # | % |
|---|-----|------|
| Attend a Special Event (e.g., Blyth Festival, Canada Day Fireworks, etc.) | 378 | 86% |
| Visit a Farmers' Market | 321 | 73% |
| Attend Live Theatre (e.g., Wingham Town Hall Theatre, etc.) | 292 | 66% |
| Visit a Museum (e.g., North Huron Museum) | 131 | 30% |
| Singing or Playing an Instrument | 124 | 28% |
| Visit an Art Gallery | 90 | 20% |
| Drawing or Painting | 83 | 19% |
| Pottery or other Artisan Crafts | 38 | 9% |
| Other (please specify) | 18 | 4% |
| answered question | 441 | 334% |

6. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you and members of your household able to participate in arts and culture as often as you would like?

| | # | % |
|-------------------|-----|------|
| Yes | 332 | 70% |
| No | 82 | 17% |
| Don't know | 57 | 12% |
| answered question | 471 | 100% |

7. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, why were you NOT able to participate in arts and cultural activities as often as you would like?

| | # | % |
|--|-----|------|
| Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities | 52 | 39% |
| Lack of desired programs or facilities | 50 | 37% |
| Lack of personal time / Too busy | 38 | 28% |
| Program not offered at convenient time | 28 | 21% |
| Lack of money / Too expensive | 28 | 21% |
| Lack of motivation / Not interested | 27 | 20% |
| Lack of transportation / Facility too far away | 9 | 7% |
| Health problems / Disability / Age | 9 | 7% |
| Lack of child care | 9 | 7% |
| Language / Cultural barrier | 1 | 1% |
| Don't know | 11 | 8% |
| Other (please specify) | 11 | 8% |
| answered question | 134 | 204% |

8. If applicable, list up to two (2) parks and recreation activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in North Huron that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top Ten Requested Parks and Recreation Activities/Programs

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Dog Park | 6. Camping |
| 2. Skateboard/BMX Park | 7. Gymnastics/Dance Classes |
| 3. Walking Trails | 8. Youth Programs |
| 4. Fitness Classes (e.g., Bootcamp, Cross Fit, etc.) | 9. Outdoor Basketball Court |
| 5. Water Activities (e.g., Howson Dam) | 10. Splash Pads |

9. If applicable, list up to two (2) arts and cultural activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in North Huron that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top Ten Requested Arts and Cultural Activities/Programs

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Music in the Park | 6. Music Classes |
| 2. Art Classes | 7. Outdoor Festivals |
| 3. Museum/History Exhibits | 8. Writing Classes |
| 4. Art Exhibitions and Galleries | 9. Theatre Classes |
| 5. Outdoor Movies and Movie Theatres | 10. Cooking Classes |

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10. In general, how important are the following items to your household?

| | Not Important at All | | Somewhat Unimportant | | Neither Important nor Unimportant | | Somewhat Important | | Very Important | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered # |
|---|----------------------|----|----------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------------|----|------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Recreational trails and pathways | 3 | 1% | 3 | 1% | 12 | 3% | 64 | 15% | 340 | 79% | 9 | 2% | 431 |
| Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas and community spaces | 8 | 2% | 9 | 2% | 23 | 5% | 78 | 18% | 310 | 71% | 6 | 1% | 434 |
| Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds | 10 | 2% | 9 | 2% | 21 | 5% | 81 | 19% | 293 | 68% | 15 | 3% | 429 |
| Open space parks for unstructured use | 6 | 1% | 9 | 2% | 39 | 9% | 121 | 29% | 234 | 55% | 15 | 4% | 424 |
| Arts and cultural spaces such as museums | 19 | 4% | 31 | 7% | 68 | 16% | 138 | 32% | 146 | 34% | 23 | 5% | 425 |

11. In general, how satisfied are the following items to your household, as they relate to the Township of North Huron?

| | Not Satisfied at All | | Somewhat Unsatisfied | | Neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied | | Somewhat Satisfied | | Very Satisfied | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered # |
|---|----------------------|----|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Recreational trails and pathways | 10 | 2% | 29 | 7% | 38 | 9% | 166 | 39% | 172 | 40% | 15 | 3% | 430 |
| Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas and community spaces | 16 | 4% | 23 | 5% | 43 | 10% | 162 | 37% | 180 | 41% | 10 | 2% | 434 |
| Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds | 10 | 2% | 25 | 6% | 51 | 12% | 169 | 40% | 142 | 33% | 30 | 7% | 427 |
| Open space parks for unstructured use | 9 | 2% | 15 | 4% | 88 | 21% | 140 | 33% | 136 | 32% | 36 | 8% | 424 |
| Arts and cultural spaces such as museums | 25 | 6% | 44 | 10% | 124 | 29% | 118 | 28% | 48 | 11% | 68 | 16% | 427 |

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12. For each age group listed below, what is your level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation activities in North Huron?

| | Not Important at Satisfied | | Somewhat Unsatisfied | | Neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied | | Somewhat Satisfied | | Very Satisfied | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------------|-----|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # |
| Preschool Children (0 - 4 years) | 10 | 3% | 22 | 6% | 32 | 9% | 83 | 23% | 56 | 16% | 158 | 44% | 361 |
| School-Age Children (5 - 12 years) | 8 | 2% | 25 | 7% | 27 | 7% | 107 | 29% | 57 | 15% | 144 | 39% | 368 |
| Teens (13 - 18 years) | 25 | 7% | 52 | 15% | 39 | 11% | 48 | 13% | 26 | 7% | 166 | 47% | 356 |
| Young Adults (19 - 39 years) | 16 | 4% | 38 | 11% | 61 | 17% | 89 | 25% | 41 | 12% | 111 | 31% | 356 |
| Adults (40 - 59 years) | 12 | 3% | 27 | 8% | 45 | 13% | 95 | 27% | 64 | 18% | 115 | 32% | 358 |
| Older Adults (60+ years) | 11 | 3% | 30 | 8% | 44 | 11% | 90 | 23% | 91 | 23% | 132 | 33% | 398 |
| Families | 12 | 3% | 36 | 10% | 52 | 15% | 110 | 31% | 63 | 18% | 85 | 24% | 358 |

13. For each age group listed below, what is your level of satisfaction with the arts and culture activities in North Huron?

| | Not Important at Satisfied | | Somewhat Unsatisfied | | Neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied | | Somewhat Satisfied | | Very Satisfied | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------------|-----|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # |
| Preschool Children (0 - 4 years) | 11 | 3% | 32 | 9% | 65 | 19% | 40 | 11% | 11 | 3% | 192 | 55% | 351 |
| School-Age Children (5 - 12 years) | 13 | 4% | 45 | 13% | 57 | 16% | 43 | 12% | 18 | 5% | 177 | 50% | 353 |
| Teens (13 - 18 years) | 18 | 5% | 43 | 12% | 59 | 17% | 31 | 9% | 8 | 2% | 191 | 55% | 350 |
| Young Adults (19 - 39 years) | 17 | 5% | 41 | 12% | 63 | 18% | 61 | 17% | 18 | 5% | 149 | 43% | 349 |
| Adults (40 - 59 years) | 15 | 4% | 30 | 8% | 55 | 16% | 78 | 22% | 32 | 9% | 144 | 41% | 354 |
| Older Adults (60+ years) | 10 | 3% | 38 | 10% | 59 | 15% | 90 | 23% | 44 | 11% | 148 | 38% | 389 |
| Families | 13 | 4% | 46 | 13% | 69 | 20% | 71 | 20% | 17 | 5% | 133 | 38% | 349 |

14. For the amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support or oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards building new or improving the following indoor facility types?

| | Strongly Oppose | | Somewhat Oppose | | Neither Support nor Oppose | | Somewhat Support | | Strongly Support | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered # |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Swimming Pools | 26 | 6% | 13 | 3% | 48 | 12% | 101 | 25% | 195 | 48% | 27 | 7% | 410 |
| Performing Arts Theatres or Space | 12 | 3% | 19 | 5% | 76 | 19% | 114 | 28% | 157 | 39% | 27 | 7% | 405 |
| Arenas | 22 | 6% | 28 | 7% | 60 | 15% | 110 | 28% | 157 | 40% | 20 | 5% | 397 |
| Equipment-Based Fitness Centre | 20 | 5% | 31 | 8% | 75 | 19% | 107 | 27% | 126 | 32% | 38 | 10% | 397 |
| Gymnasiums | 19 | 5% | 18 | 5% | 106 | 27% | 85 | 22% | 106 | 27% | 56 | 14% | 390 |
| Fitness Studio | 21 | 5% | 34 | 9% | 86 | 22% | 94 | 24% | 110 | 28% | 44 | 11% | 389 |
| Indoor Space for Large Special Events | 26 | 7% | 24 | 6% | 111 | 28% | 91 | 23% | 113 | 29% | 31 | 8% | 396 |
| Curling Facilities | 23 | 6% | 19 | 5% | 117 | 30% | 90 | 23% | 74 | 19% | 71 | 18% | 394 |
| Museums | 31 | 8% | 35 | 9% | 96 | 24% | 98 | 25% | 90 | 23% | 47 | 12% | 397 |
| Indoor Community Meetings Space | 16 | 4% | 43 | 11% | 123 | 31% | 99 | 25% | 70 | 18% | 44 | 11% | 395 |
| Squash | 21 | 5% | 34 | 9% | 122 | 31% | 70 | 18% | 45 | 12% | 96 | 25% | 388 |
| Wallyball | 28 | 7% | 30 | 8% | 136 | 36% | 43 | 11% | 28 | 7% | 117 | 31% | 382 |

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15. For the amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support or oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards building new or improving the following outdoor facility types?

| | Strongly Oppose | | Somewhat Oppose | | Neither Support nor Oppose | | Somewhat Support | | Strongly Support | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered # |
|--|-----------------|-----|-----------------|----|----------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Nature trails | 4 | 4% | 1 | 0% | 19 | 5% | 91 | 22% | 270 | 65% | 16 | 4% | 415 |
| Farmers Markets | 6 | 4% | 5 | 1% | 60 | 15% | 106 | 26% | 212 | 51% | 12 | 3% | 413 |
| Playgrounds | 10 | 5% | 7 | 2% | 42 | 10% | 94 | 23% | 194 | 48% | 44 | 11% | 401 |
| Splash Pads | 14 | 3% | 9 | 2% | 54 | 14% | 98 | 26% | 165 | 43% | 47 | 12% | 383 |
| Paved Multi-Use Trails | 18 | 4% | 18 | 5% | 62 | 16% | 97 | 25% | 174 | 45% | 21 | 5% | 386 |
| Community Gardens | 11 | 6% | 11 | 3% | 70 | 17% | 117 | 29% | 151 | 37% | 35 | 9% | 409 |
| Acquisition of Parks and Open Space | 17 | 4% | 22 | 6% | 72 | 18% | 124 | 31% | 143 | 36% | 18 | 5% | 396 |
| Camp Sites | 30 | 3% | 18 | 5% | 83 | 23% | 65 | 18% | 130 | 35% | 61 | 17% | 368 |
| Outdoor Ice Rinks | 23 | 6% | 20 | 5% | 70 | 18% | 88 | 23% | 143 | 37% | 47 | 12% | 391 |
| Outdoor Swimming Pools | 40 | 1% | 30 | 9% | 86 | 25% | 76 | 22% | 106 | 30% | 47 | 13% | 349 |
| Performing Arts Space | 17 | 8% | 15 | 4% | 84 | 21% | 99 | 25% | 130 | 33% | 40 | 10% | 398 |
| Outdoor Space for Large Special Events | 18 | 4% | 20 | 5% | 95 | 25% | 100 | 26% | 113 | 29% | 39 | 10% | 384 |
| Baseball or Softball Diamonds | 20 | 5% | 22 | 6% | 87 | 22% | 110 | 28% | 104 | 26% | 50 | 13% | 393 |
| Soccer Fields | 20 | 5% | 18 | 5% | 86 | 22% | 112 | 28% | 96 | 24% | 64 | 16% | 396 |
| Outdoor Basketball Courts | 17 | 4% | 13 | 3% | 95 | 24% | 131 | 33% | 71 | 18% | 65 | 17% | 392 |
| Tennis Courts | 20 | 5% | 14 | 4% | 100 | 26% | 95 | 25% | 65 | 17% | 92 | 24% | 384 |
| Off-leash Dog Parks | 33 | 8% | 29 | 7% | 81 | 21% | 78 | 20% | 104 | 27% | 66 | 17% | 391 |
| Sand Volleyball Courts | 25 | 2% | 19 | 5% | 125 | 34% | 85 | 23% | 58 | 16% | 71 | 20% | 364 |
| Skateboard/BMX Park | 25 | 10% | 23 | 6% | 87 | 22% | 83 | 21% | 97 | 24% | 66 | 17% | 396 |
| Pickleball Courts | 18 | 6% | 20 | 5% | 107 | 27% | 89 | 23% | 57 | 15% | 95 | 24% | 391 |

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16. For the items listed below, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the Township's ability to provide appropriate parks, recreation and culture services.

| | Greatly Below Expectations | | Below Expectations | | Matched Expectations | | Exceeds Expectations | | Greatly Exceeds Expectations | | Don't Know / Don't Use | | Answered |
|--|----------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|------------------------------|----|------------------------|-----|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # |
| Location of parks, recreation and culture amenities. | 9 | 2% | 54 | 13% | 257 | 64% | 48 | 12% | 19 | 5% | 16 | 4% | 403 |
| Affordability of parks, recreation and culture programs. | 15 | 4% | 71 | 18% | 236 | 59% | 38 | 9% | 13 | 3% | 30 | 7% | 403 |
| Maintenance of parks, recreation and culture amenities. | 21 | 5% | 93 | 23% | 203 | 50% | 55 | 14% | 13 | 3% | 20 | 5% | 405 |
| Inclusion and accessibility for residents with low income backgrounds and persons with disabilities. | 25 | 6% | 103 | 26% | 131 | 33% | 22 | 6% | 11 | 3% | 108 | 27% | 400 |
| Value of tax dollars spent towards facilities and recreation. | 50 | 12% | 116 | 29% | 151 | 38% | 17 | 4% | 12 | 3% | 55 | 14% | 401 |

17. Looking ahead, what lasting impacts – if any – might the COVID-19 pandemic have on your participation in parks, trails, recreation and culture activities?

Responses have not been presented but the key themes from the input received have been considered in the development of the Master Plan.

18. Please provide us with any additional comments.

Responses have not been presented but the key themes from the input received have been considered in the development of the Master Plan.

19. What is the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories?

| | Number of Persons | % |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| under 10 years - Number of Persons | 180 | 15% |
| 10 - 19 years - Number of Persons | 164 | 14% |
| 20 - 39 years - Number of Persons | 155 | 13% |
| 40 - 59 years - Number of Persons | 284 | 24% |
| 60 - 74 years - Number of Persons | 250 | 21% |
| 75 years and over - Number of Persons | 138 | 12% |
| total persons | 1,171 | 100% |

20. In what year were you born? (Optional)

| Age | # | % |
|---------------------|-----|------|
| 25 years or younger | 16 | 7% |
| 26-35 years | 32 | 14% |
| 36-45 years | 35 | 16% |
| 46-55 years | 24 | 11% |
| 56-65 years | 44 | 20% |
| 66-75 years | 49 | 22% |
| 76 years or older | 24 | 11% |
| answered question | 224 | 100% |
| Median Age | 57 | |

21. Do you live in...

| | # | % |
|---|-----|------|
| Wingham | 228 | 55% |
| Blyth | 49 | 12% |
| Rural area within the Township of North Huron | 42 | 10% |
| Belgrave | 12 | 3% |
| Auburn | 3 | 1% |
| Hutton Heights | 2 | 0% |
| Whitechurch | 2 | 0% |
| Outside of the Township of North Huron | 73 | 18% |
| answered question | 411 | 100% |

Appendix B: Input from the Final Public Information Centre

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 13, 2021 12:27:27 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 13, 2021 12:30:11 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:44
IP Address: 76.67.237.108

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I like the different options that have been considered.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I would like to see the option for snack sales at the rec centre. Not cooked food necessarily but drinks and candy and chocolate. Also remove the little candy/toy machines.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Hopefully the added cost for residents outside of North Huron will change. We will not attend paid programs through North Huron as long as that is in place.

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, November 15, 2021 8:24:18 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 15, 2021 8:30:23 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:04
IP Address: 67.220.41.246

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Many good points. A lot of work went into this.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Explanations.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Why is the Blyth Campground not open to seasonal camping? Lack of support and resources?

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:34:55 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 4:40:35 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:40
IP Address: 163.182.217.162

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I like the inclusion of active transportation in the draft.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The G2G Rail Trail is missing from this plan. I use the trail frequently, as well as volunteer by providing maintenance. I am never on the trail when I don't see other people of all ages using it. Local people of abilities use it, and it brings in people from other areas who support local businesses in North Huron.

Support from the local municipalities that it runs through will help enhance the trail and enable it to be even more inclusive than it already is. Please include the G2G Rail Trail in your Master Plan as it is a well-used resource just in the beginning of its life.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document.

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 10:47:53 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 10:53:19 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:26
IP Address: 184.94.178.140

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

The repeated mentions of high quality and inclusive.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The plan does not indicate how many survey's were completed, interaction with the public information centre and number of focus group participants. It doesn't feel transparent.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I somehow missed the public engagement phase. I am concerned that others did as well and that this plan isn't reflective of how the community feels.

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 8:17:24 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 8:38:25 PM
Time Spent: 00:21:00
IP Address: 24.138.189.23

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Trails are high top of the list,, which they should be because of all demographics are using it.They must be well looked after and I am sure they will be.As they are easy to get to from most parts of the town. I don't think we should be in the camp site business just event campgrounds and question if all those acres are needed for those events THAT IS A LARGE NUMBER OF ACRES SITTING IDLE FOR A LARGE PORTION OF THE YEAR!!

Q2

Was there anything missing?

With the museum going to train station I believe it will become a hub and give a lot of support to the needs of the ageing demographics as the do not use the rec centre a lot maybe just aquatics.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Thought one playground would be sufficient, for Blyth at the centre of town at lions park area it is a village and a lot of senior adults.I would like to see rec and public works work very closely together.

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 18, 2021 11:57:22 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 18, 2021 12:16:46 PM
Time Spent: 00:19:24
IP Address: 163.182.220.203

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

This seems vague and not enough information to make positive comments on.

I did watch this being presented to council and feel that the first priority of this report should have been how to maintain what North Huron has now before the discussion of adding or deleting amenities could be discussed

Q2

Was there anything missing?

What could be done now at low cost

What could be done with medium costs

What could be done down the road that would have higher costs

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The main outline of this action plan seems to be miss informed. North Huron owners no playground space in the Blyth ward, the Lions Club maintains the only park in town, the objective of the wading pool is for the Lions Club to provide a summer youth employment opportunity. All things that are run or organized by service clubs are financed by the Thrashers reunion held every year at the camp ground, the new out door theater is accessed through the camp ground so eliminating the camp ground would end both the out door theater as well as our very important volunteers and cultural events.

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 18, 2021 3:29:18 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 18, 2021 3:44:22 PM
Time Spent: 00:15:03
IP Address: 67.220.47.153

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Improvement/extension of trails

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Mention of what is to happen with the old dam/bridge

Mention of winter clearance/maintenance of the trail for walkers- hard to go for an interesting walk once streets are narrowed by snow. Also students walking to school could use the trail instead of the roads.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Concerned re: moving the library to the outskirts of town- they tried to do that in N Perth and had a huge public outcry. However a simple reading room would be a good idea- place for families to hang out while waiting for sports activities to finish.

#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 18, 2021 3:51:08 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 18, 2021 4:07:03 PM
Time Spent: 00:15:54
IP Address: 216.46.157.80

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 Respondent skipped this question

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2
Was there anything missing?

Structured/organized youth programs and activities
-teen night for example.
Hire a youth director to organize structured activities for teens

Q3
Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Offering a "Tuesday Teen Night" or something to that affect, that offered the opportunity for teens to learn how to use equipment, come and exercise without feeling out of place, and give something for teens to do. It could be weekly or bi-weekly, 6-8:30 or 9.
Having a youth director or expanding someone's role to include programming for youth. Could be included in student memberships or for a \$5 drop in fee.

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, November 19, 2021 12:21:12 PM
Last Modified: Friday, November 19, 2021 12:28:48 PM
Time Spent: 00:07:36
IP Address: 163.182.193.198

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 Respondent skipped this question

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2
Was there anything missing?

The 132 km G2G Rail Trail provides North Huron with an active transportation connection to the Great Waterfront Trail, the Trans Canada Trail and the urban centres of Guelph, Elmira and Waterloo.

The end to end resurfacing completed in 2020 has resulted in 100's of visitors per day in 2021 through the Blyth Greenway Trail and the Lake Huron Route section and provided a robust infusion to hospitality services throughout the region.

The North Huron master plan may want to reflect the effects of the restoration of the Road 25 underpass which is in progress and expected to complete in 2022/3. This will offer safe, barrier free connectivity between Blyth and Auburn, certain to further increase trail usage.

We also suggest that the bridge restoration across the Maitland at Auburn is imminent (2023/4) with preliminary engineering completed. Barrier free passage to Goderich will have a profound effect on Blyth's pattern and volume of use of the trail and associated assets. This may want to be taken into consideration as well.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

We are nearly at our goal of a fully inclusive, barrier-free, safe, 55 km long Lake Huron Route, from the spray of Lake Huron to the wilds of McNaught! We are leading toward Huron County's decarbonized future with a linear parkway, providing an active transportation freeway that is interconnected across southern Ontario.

The G2G annual report is a great resource to help understand the background of the trail development - you can access it here <http://g2grailtrail.com/3d-flip-book/g2g-2020-annual-report/>

Please feel free to contact me directly .

--

Chris Lee
519-902-2946
Walton ON N0K1Z0
G2G Rail Trail Advisory Committee
G2GRailTrail.com

#10

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:06:25 PM
Last Modified: Friday, November 19, 2021 4:10:50 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:24
IP Address: 96.44.58.246

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 **Respondent skipped this question**

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2 **Respondent skipped this question**

Was there anything missing?

There was no mention of the pond created by the Howsan dam and the hundreds or perhaps thousands of times it is used in a year. A new dam may cost 5,000,000 but it will last 100 years. That works out to only 50,000 per year which is not a significant cost compared to the use it gets. Why is there a cover up? Why does this plan pretend the pond doesn't exist?

Q3 **Respondent skipped this question**

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

#11

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:36:47 PM
Last Modified: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:40:32 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:45
IP Address: 99.236.128.71

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I like the idea of expanding trails and conservation use. These things proved essential during Covid lockdowns and attract tourists.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Not that I could think of.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Please do not waste tax payers dollars repairing Howson Dam. Huge cost that benefits few.

#12

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:42:06 PM
Last Modified: Friday, November 19, 2021 5:45:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:59
IP Address: 163.182.223.74

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Continuing to look for ways to engage the youth in North Huron.

Q2

Respondent skipped this question

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The Blyth Campground needs to continue to offer overnight camping to everyone. The true data from the time the campground was open to offering over night stays to the end of the season needs to be known. Compared to the whole entire year, not just when the campground was available to use.

#13

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, November 19, 2021 8:10:42 PM
Last Modified: Friday, November 19, 2021 8:29:05 PM
Time Spent: 00:18:22
IP Address: 67.21.105.152

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

a good start to the parks and recreation & culture plan

Q2

Was there anything missing?

not enough thought given to include people passing through our area. A lot of thought should be given to how the town looks and how we approach the travelers and visitors to our area bringing money from other areas to our town in hopes of residents and employers

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

our Maitland river park is always used every day people are using it for recreation on the water or just walking by sitting in cars watching the river fishing eating on a picnic bench by the river it is a valuable recreation tool in our town

#14

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 8:46:35 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 8:55:11 AM
Time Spent: 00:08:36
IP Address: 204.237.0.71

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I liked that it included improving trails in the area, as well as maintaining and/or improving libraries, parks, and campgrounds.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I thought the G2G trail should have been included. As a business owner along the trail, I think the trail brings a lot of tourism and money into the local area. I also think that improving and maintaining the trail would be very beneficial to this area. Once travel returns to normal, I think it is possible to draw tourism from all over the world with an excellent cycling trail.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I also think that with our aging population, along with the winters and icy conditions we experience here, a small gym in the Blyth arena would be a great asset. I think it is a great benefit to stay active but sometimes with our weather, it can be hazardous to be outside.

#15

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 9:46:35 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 9:54:51 AM
Time Spent: 00:08:15
IP Address: 199.114.241.114

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

The emphasis on parks and trails.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The need to develop not only a trails master plan but a master plan for each of the parks in North Huron. The Wingham Ecological Park and community trail is partially on the Turnberry Conservation Area, therefore there is a need to develop a partnership with MVCA regarding the Wingham Trail and Ecological Park. There was no mention of the Maitland River Trail. The Maitland River is great for canoeing and kayaking from Wingham to Auburn. There are existing access points with parking at the Turnberry Conservation Area; on Belfast Line in East Wawanosh, Wawanosh Valley Conservation Area and Campground and at Auburn.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

An implementation strategy for each element of the master plan should be developed with the business and volunteer communities and groups who have an interest in making it happen. It is imperative that the Township invest in developing the skills and knowledge to maintain the parks and trails in the community and encourage and support business and community involvement.

#16

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 1:43:30 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 1:49:27 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:56
IP Address: 199.114.240.167

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

The idea that you are planning to utilize and expand upon the facilities and park areas that we have. Most of this is at no to low cost, I believe. That is important to people who are on fixed incomes and there is a lot of people in our town.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I did notice a couple of things missing, I think, First, there was no mention of the track at the high school and the other field events that might be better used after school. Second, I didn't see anything about the river/pond area that is a great attraction to a lot of us.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Thanks to those who put this together - well done.

#17

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 1:59:53 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 2:05:05 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:12
IP Address: 206.130.210.214

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Seeing a plan for accessible playgrounds located close to all communities and planning ahead for replacement of the equipment 20yrs out

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Costs associated with the suggestions - how much will the ideas costs and how will they be paid for?
Missing the data that supports the findings - if something isn't used often, would like to see the data that supports that

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I would like to see the Blyth campground continue to be operated, at least for another year. I know upgrades were made in 2021 and I feel more time needs to be given to collect current data based on the new features, advertising, and focus on this space. It is a large piece of land which was donated to North Huron, and it wouldn't be financially responsible to let it sit unused when it could potentially be earning more income with low effort and cost.

#18

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 2:47:52 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 3:15:06 PM
Time Spent: 00:27:14
IP Address: 206.130.210.206

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Not much

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Se my comments below

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I was in charge of camping for Threshers September 1st to 14th and pulled in \$8075.00 so I'm wondering why on your report it shows \$1500 for camping, I know for sure there were numerous people there for month so your numbers are inaccurate.

You need to advertise the availability of camping more extensively, and monitor the park, living 2 minutes from the campground I see some coming in late and leaving early.

I do like the online registering rather than letting the arena staff take care of that but DONT curtail the duration of ones stay. Remember \$35. a night for 30 nights is better than 4 nights only
Heavens there 880 sites.

One more suggestion if I may, some way to monitor the dump station, while I was there on one particular day, working on the Lions gardens there were 6 RVs dumping and then they filled with water in the park, it was said they were going to Walton to a motocross event and when finished back to Blyth to dump. Further more at on point when I watered the said gardens someone had just pulled the level on their tank let it run to the outlet and there was waste and toilet paper in the grass all around the dump station —yes I flushed it back into the drain. Dave Cook was advised of this.

A lock on the outlets would work, a sign for a key go to the arena pay \$10 to dump a further \$10 deposit when the key is returned and a sign when dumping hours are corresponding to your staff

For Threshers unlock them for the 14 days.

North Huron needs to look after North Huron not offer a charity service.

#19

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 6:18:28 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 6:27:07 PM
Time Spent: 00:08:39
IP Address: 99.250.157.10

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Plans to improve playgrounds for kids and making the lions wading pool a more accessible splash pad.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The need to encourage tourism through both high and low price options, don't let culture be a high price tag.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Camping at Blyth was a wonderful experience this summer, rather than ending this program, invest in trees to make it nicer to camp at. It's connection to the rail trail as well as the community, Blyth theaters expansion, and cowbell, plus easy access to all of huron counties other gems, at a very reasonable price for young families. Enjoyed our times spent there last year and was looking forward to next season.

#20

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 7:49:33 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 7:51:42 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:09
IP Address: 206.130.211.128

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Focus on child safe play areas, especially the park in Blyth and consider opening a play area on the east side of Blyth

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Offer more group programs in Blyth community centre. For both children and adult groups, example yoga.

Q3

Respondent skipped this question

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

#21

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, November 20, 2021 9:26:01 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, November 20, 2021 9:41:42 PM
Time Spent: 00:15:40
IP Address: 70.27.46.127

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

What is the reasoning of moving the library to complex?.will it have same room for library plus accommodating a room for painting group,childrens' programmes &book clubs ?My vote would be to remain where it is now...it serves the community well..what rooms would be available at the complex to house these groups?

Q2

Respondent skipped this question

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

We have felt for years that Wingham resident are land -locked if you do not own or have access to a vehicle.How do you get out of town to visit family,medical appts.,etc?The same for people coming into town,a family member living in Toronto ...how does they get here without a vehicle?Buses no longer service this area ...is there going to be research done to help this situation? ..thankyou for your response to this matter..

#22

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, November 21, 2021 9:22:03 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, November 21, 2021 9:25:15 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:11
IP Address: 45.231.169.155

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Planning on improving trails!

Q2

Was there anything missing?

A plan to replace the dam one of our biggest assets for recreation in Wingham

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The plan should be broken up into projects with timelines .

#23

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, November 21, 2021 1:15:17 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, November 21, 2021 1:17:41 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:23
IP Address: 45.231.169.155

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Extending the trails a good idea

We need to develop and reopen our museum. We have a Nobel Prize Winner from wingham and people come to learn about alicemunro's town

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Yes, need to proceed with repairing the dam and thus maintaining accessibility to the river for fishing, canoeing, kayaking etc.

Q3

Respondent skipped this question

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

#24

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, November 21, 2021 4:03:31 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, November 21, 2021 4:04:54 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:23
IP Address: 24.138.185.28

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 **Respondent skipped this question**

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2 **Respondent skipped this question**

Was there anything missing?

Q3
Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I hope that not too much of my tax payers money went into this project

#25

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, November 21, 2021 4:00:59 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, November 21, 2021 4:06:59 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:00
IP Address: 72.140.17.166

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

The goal of unstructured leisure time resonated with this reader, indeed.
The more things there are to do, the more I will be returning to Wingham with my children.
(I grew up in Wingham, but now really just return when there are people to visit and things to do.)

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The 'hook' picture, at the top of the summary, is of the park overlooking the Wingham pond.
However, my understanding is that this will be removed.
Anyway, it is tragic this will be taken away - because it IS such a big draw for people to might visit the Wingham area!

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Please give some thought as HOW Wingham can continue to 'draw' people.
Things like the dam, fishing, water sports.... these are all HUGE in the Ontario tourist checklist. They are really a necessity!
Thanks so much!

#26

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, November 22, 2021 2:28:39 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 22, 2021 2:42:38 PM
Time Spent: 00:13:58
IP Address: 206.130.208.239

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 Respondent skipped this question

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2
Was there anything missing?

Please expedite a childcare centre in Blyth. I'm having to go 30 minutes out of my way for daycare when there should be an option in town. If the Ontario government ever gets their act together and approves a daycare plan, there should be enough funding to have a daycare in Blyth. Parents are having to go outside of town for daycare and that's not right.

- Please do not close the Blyth arena. If you ever wanted to attract young families to the area, this would be a huge drawback.

Q3
Feel free to provide any additional comments.

- Did the authors of the report consult with local volunteer clubs? The splash pad in Blyth sounds great but how is it to be funded and will the large majority of fundraising fall on local volunteer clubs?
- Recommend not to get rid of overnight camping in Blyth. If you're keeping the campground, why would you restrict when it should be open especially with provincial campgrounds being hard to book and the explosion of interest in camping?
- Like the idea of increasing park space in Blyth for kids and for repurposing one ball diamond for tennis/pickleball courts. The Lucknow and District Kinsmen have a great example of this in Lucknow.
- Accessibility is important and should be a given.

#27

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, November 22, 2021 2:21:12 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 22, 2021 3:00:09 PM
Time Spent: 00:38:56
IP Address: 66.206.230.109

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

We should have a skate board park and a bike park, young people are interested in new activities such as skateboarding and bicycling. Something should be done with the concession stand at the arena as it seems that there are no longer enough volunteers to run it, likely because both parents work and there is not a lot of time to volunteer after you have been working all day. I am not sure how much the squash courts are used I used to see high school students using them.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

If the dam is removed what are the plans for the river, when there is no water in the pond frankly it looks like hell and is not at all inviting and there is no way to improve it as it will flood every spring, Just look at the lower pond, really it is just a weed patch. The dam is not going to fail and it will be a total waste of taxpayers money to remove it, nothing has been done to in the last 50 years and it still has with stood the most recent floods without showing any signs of collapsing. Just forget about it and save the money.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The overall plan looks OK but if we do not have an upper pond the town will lose a lot of appeal, it is used for canoeing, fishing and other recreational pursuits not only that the upper pond is beautiful, people love to see water and the scene changes with the season. It's lovely driving over the Hanna bridge and see the water in the pond.
I am sure 250 years ago the river did not change much through out the year, the flow year round was constant as the land and the wetlands drained over the dry season. However the land and most of the wetlands have been drained so after the spring runoff the river is reduced to a trickle and local wild life suffers. There are all kinds of wildlife that use the pond and a dried up river will not support aquatic life that needs deeper pools and water to survive. This problem needs to be addressed long before any thought of removing the dam is considered.

wetlands have mostly been drained and after the spring runoff season but the land a

#28

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, November 22, 2021 11:47:06 PM
Last Modified: Monday, November 22, 2021 11:48:13 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:06
IP Address: 96.44.61.57

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 **Respondent skipped this question**

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2
Was there anything missing?

Yes, what about a dog park?

Q3 **Respondent skipped this question**

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

#29

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:42:59 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:48:28 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:29
IP Address: 24.138.180.122

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 **Respondent skipped this question**

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2 **Respondent skipped this question**

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Does this plan account for all the planned growth resulting from things like new subdivisions and apartment buildings that will be attracting a larger population to our area?

#30

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 10:40:05 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 10:47:08 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:02
IP Address: 163.182.222.232

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

The possibility of a splash pad, working together with other groups.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Public washrooms along the trail; have them open at the arena and post signage along G2G (block off access to the rest of the arena, only the washrooms are accessible)

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Do not take away the overnight camping in Blyth. Instead, advertise in camping magazines, promote it more so people know of it. Most campgrounds are sold out so promote this as an alternative. Advertise along the G2G trail especially in the parking lots so people know about it.

Promote the camping with the theatre/Harvest Stage.

#31

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 1:42:52 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 2:46:57 PM
Time Spent: 01:04:04
IP Address: 199.114.242.244

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I liked that the Rec. Dept. is updating their masterplan. What happened to the survey information that was collected four or five years ago?

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Yes plenty. You had a wonderful opportunity to ask the residents if they would like to see the dam refurbished or build a weir dam. Instead you totally ignored the subject, so at the end of the day, you can say , that the dam wasn't a priority for the community. You looked at Recreation..., Programs..., Parks..., Services..... In the past, the pond has been the focus of the recreation department and the entire community during the summer, and it wasn't mentioned!

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

If you look at www.savethehowsondam.weebly.com, you will see hundreds of people using the pond. Some will be residents, some tourists. Can you honestly tell these people that you are going to, "Improve the quality of life for residents". This seems to be a biased survey to get the results that you want.

#32

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 4:00:55 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 4:17:03 PM
Time Spent: 00:16:08
IP Address: 163.182.223.5

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Plan for a park on the East side of Blyth. Currently we don't generally use the park because it is across the highway and it is outdated and not very safe

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Pre Covid there were exercise classes at the Blyth Arena. Most classes, were well attended. A return to this use would be fantastic

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Maybe we should open up the libraries more where they are before we decide if we should move them

#33

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:24:03 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 9:08:50 PM
Time Spent: 00:44:46
IP Address: 206.130.210.169

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

We think that it is a great idea to be looking into the future. However the timing is not good with the community just starting to release after Covid. The recreational centers and play grounds have been effected due to the closure of most recreational activities.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

The Blyth campground could be a money maker but we need someone in charge of the grounds to take reservation, monitor and promote the camping. I'm thinking that position may be a great summer job, maybe with a government grant to hold this position. We have spent money on fire pits and tables (fancy ones at that). Lets not give up but instead try and promote it. I know that people think it is just used in September for the Threshers, we need to get rid of this stigma. We have a great G2G trail that is fully accessible and has high traffic volume. Let's work together!

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Blyth has a skateboard park. We do need to spent money on a new one. If you want to add equipment that would be great. The Blyth Library is a rental unit. If we want to move it there will be a big cost of renovating wherever it goes. Does the gain really out way the cost. How often is the library really used? Is is open full time. Weigh the cost of the renovation with the amount of hours it is open.

Blyth Ball Diamonds. Leave them as they are. They are of no extra cost to us now and we do not need to convert to something else. The other sport facilities will eventually wear off. Have you checked with other communities to see how adding these recreational opportunities have worked out. We are a population of 5000 in North Huron, and the average age is just over 40, so lets say Blyth is half. How much is it going to cost each resident of Blyth for this recreational addition. Lets see what those number are before we go any further.

We have one playground in Blyth. We do not need another one! We just put funds into a cross walk and sidewalks to get to the park at Queen and Wellington Streets. Lets use them. The Blyth Lions have supported this playground for years and should be encouraged to for many more. If you would like to look at changing the pool to a splash pad that would be a possibility, but please consult with the Lions Club first. Please look at the dollars needed to have this done before we proceed with any tax payers dollars.

NO MUSEUM!! We are going to put big dollars out for a museum! It's good to have a building donated but we still have major renovation cost to make the building fully accessible. The Huron County museum is struggling with a much larger population and drawing area. How can we consider spending tax dollars with a population of 5000 people. We then have to staff the museum and this will be costly and it will be ongoing. These positions will not be minimum wage jobs either. How do you possibly think this is not going to be a continual money pit. We need other items completed in North Huron we do not have any extra fund to put into a museum. A government grant may sound wonderful but it is still going to cost the tax payers big dollars. If everyone went to the museum once a year that would be 5000 X 10 dollar admission fee that is not going to pay the overhead.

#34

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:37:53 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 9:16:43 PM
Time Spent: 00:38:50
IP Address: 104.247.226.86

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I liked that there is a plan that is clear and concise and that you are asking for public input. Whoever wrote it knows what they're doing and I'm glad it's coming together.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I think the 'culture' part was a little bit lacking, how to celebrate our own culture as well as be inclusive and welcoming to newcomers. How to get new people to the area involved and let them know how they can participate. In another place I lived they used to invite the new families to a celebration every year (could just be an event that is happening anyway) and recognize and introduce the new people and give them information about committees or groups they can join, or volunteer for, and how they can get involved, depending on their interests. I went to highschool here and have recently come back, 20 years later, and have no idea how to get involved. As you said in the plan, you need more volunteers, so this could help that challenge as well. Most people want to get involved, share their skills and meet new people.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I think that the idea to convert the concession space in the Complex is flawed and unfortunate. There is such a lost opportunity there, and so many people I talk to do not understand it. How can every other arena in the area and beyond be able to run a booth effectively and efficiently, but North Huron can't? Look at Goderich's booth, it's gourmet! It is incomprehensible that you can't even get a hot coffee or hot chocolate at a hockey game, especially when we have a provincial team. I understand there have been problems with volunteers, but then do what many others do and get volunteer clubs to run it and they can have some of the profits. I'm sure there are other ideas especially if you look to partnerships and best practices of other arenas. Clearly there's a problem with management or wanting to boost the sales at Tim Hortons but if you want to run a facility that is welcoming and comfortable and enjoyable for residents to hang out it, they should be able to buy a bottle of water or a pop.

#35

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 10:31:28 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 11:01:22 AM
Time Spent: 00:29:53
IP Address: 163.182.223.123

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Our community already has many of the activities as listed, skate board park, ball diamonds, Blyth Lions club playground, wading pool, and hiking trails, and bike trails

Blyth already has organized card parties, bingo, free skating on Sundays, our community is very fortunate.

Church groups, Blyth Lions, and Royal Canadian Legion organize take out meals, in the winter many youth young and old spent many hours on the hills up overlooking the soccer field sleigh riding. Ball hockey is already played on the streets, but for everyone's safety, a designated area would be great, but comes with maintenance and upkeep.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Sources of man power. Making activities work, needs supervision and good communication.

Need for child care. Sources of finances.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Blyth Campground is a "gem" in the heart of Huron County. But with any project, supervision, and good communication is needed to succeed. Volunteers are at a premium, community cannot rely on them. More hiring of staff, and increase job descriptions to staff. Advertising the campground is needed,

#36

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 3:45:23 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 4:17:19 PM
Time Spent: 00:31:55
IP Address: 206.130.209.72

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Simple, to the point. I am very happy to see unstructured recreation for youth being a priority in parks, playgrounds, skate parks, walking trails etc...

Q2

Respondent skipped this question

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I spent much of my summer working at the new Blyth Festival Harvest stage at the Blyth arena camp grounds. Although the special events (ball tournaments and threshers) had the highest camping capacities there were plenty of others (including patrons coming to see the show, and cyclists from the G2G trail) utilizing the campground throughout the summer. The campground is quite large and much of the campground is not used other than special events. If the services and maintenance are remaining to host camping for special events, why eliminate the occasional camping? Accommodation is not particularly plentiful in Blyth and removing an accommodation option to the tourist population would send them elsewhere.

#37

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 9:16:00 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 9:35:35 PM
Time Spent: 00:19:34
IP Address: 163.182.192.155

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Committing to providing more opportunities for youth, like a skate park in Wingham is a good idea, but you have to gather the youth together and ask them what they want. Blyth has a skate park - it should be a full year. The campground was VERY busy this year, and if this model of use were extended and actually promoted (instead of talking about promoting it and never doing it) there could be even more camping happening. Why not run it like a money-making business as it could be? Look at the campground in Auburn - it was packed all summer. Pickle ball and tennis courts are a good idea. There is plenty of room to do this and keep the diamonds.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

No mention is made of connecting with the G2G - to promote camping or recreation in general. The fact that the North Huron website provides very little information that is up-to-date or useful should have been addressed. Not everyone is on Facebook and they want to actually find out the times or dates of events. The food booths in the arenas could be converted into community kitchens where people can come and prep food or cook for themselves, events, community members. Who decides that a ball diamond is "unused"? Libraries are not the responsibility of the Township - they are governed by the County. The review staff should have been aware of this. The arenas are not in areas that are community hubs (especially Wingham) because you need to drive there to be able to get there safely - no sidewalk or other safe path of travel. Lion's pool in Blyth provides employment during the summer. Extending the hours of operation would be a good idea.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The report mentions that the recreation should not compete with other providers (#7) - perhaps if there were other providers of services the recreation services would provide more activities and at a variety of locations and times. Blyth area used to provide classes for fitness. Those would be welcome when pandemic restrictions allow. The recreation guide needs to be published well in advance of the dates of the classes (etc.) for planning for families.

Accessibility recommendations have been made but not followed up with.

There is a lot of "how" missing from this report. I hope that there are more details provided to the council? The second floor of the arena in Blyth is NOT a good space for child care. Stairs and kids don't mix well, no outdoor space that is not a parking lot.

#38

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 1:37:21 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 1:55:17 PM
Time Spent: 00:17:56
IP Address: 163.182.220.152

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I think the plan to add extra facilities to Blyth is excellent. My husband and I enjoy playing badminton so some sort of court would be welcomed.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I do not believe that the conversion of Blyths wading pool to a splash pad will be beneficial to the village or its residents! Blyth does not have a full sized swimming pool and therefore this is the only place for children to learn about water safety.

Your own plan identifies a "growing income disparity" within north huron. The suggested wading pool removal would further disadvantage lower income families who are unable to afford a backyard pool. Forcing them to travel outside North Huron to enjoy an outdoor swim.

The plan states that 'there is a strong feeling of pride in terms of the wide variety of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities' yet you propose to reduce this by removing North Hurons only outdoor pool! Would it not be a better idea to concentrate on creating a second park for residents in Blyth, perhaps this could contain a splash pad?

#39

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 3:31:44 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 3:44:07 PM
Time Spent: 00:12:23
IP Address: 167.100.77.222

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I liked that the pride in our community was obvious. I liked idea to make improvements on existing facilities. I liked idea to improve on trails and link them.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Yes. There is no dollar amount attached to any of the suggestions. Suggestions to discontinue programs or improvements did not give dollar estimate of cost to do these things or if it was even feasible.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I am very concerned about the recommendation to discontinue short term camping at Blyth campground. A significant amount of money was invested this year for a pilot project regarding campground. To discontinue day use of it after only a short trial is short sighted.

I also have concerns about repurposing the surplus ball diamond at Blyth. I am certain it is used for ball tournaments. It would need to be built so ball teams could use it when needed.

#40

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 3:58:12 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 4:10:46 PM
Time Spent: 00:12:34
IP Address: 96.44.63.32

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

This is a nice looking summary that seems to have missed some points and probably cost more then it was worth I do not use many of your indoor facilities but it seems like u have steered this summary towards the out come that u have wanted

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I think that u under estimate the use u can get out of the blyth camp ground when every other camp ground is booked to capacity for the summer how are u not able to attract atleast a hundred or more campers for any given weekend as the site is easy to access and close to many attractions for a family at a competitive price, also the loss of a ball diamond in blyth would not help on the busy tournament weekend where teams already have to travel to many different locations and why not see about adding camping and a beer garden to make more use of those weekends also taking something that is not used as much as u think and dumping a bunch of money into it will not fix a problem proper communication with all community groups and tax payers would be a much better use of community resources

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

When trying to collect campin admission why not find some one that is looking to camp for the summer in exchange of collecting from campers and then audit that campers are paying and not just leaving before your mon to Friday personnel return for work

#41

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 4:45:58 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 4:46:52 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:53
IP Address: 163.182.223.238

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1 **Respondent skipped this question**

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Q2 **Respondent skipped this question**

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

Not sure why North Huron is worried about the Blyth Lions Park? Doesn't that belong to the Lions?

#42

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 6:12:04 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 6:27:48 PM
Time Spent: 00:15:43
IP Address: 163.182.220.152

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I like the idea of repurposing one of the ball diamonds in Blyth, to provide a multitude of other activities.

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I would suggest that a BMX pump track may also be investigated as part of the redevelopment of the ball diamonds. (please note, this is not a BMX race track, but a skills track, which can be designed so suitable for scooters, bikes and even skateboards. Please Google if you don't know what a pump track is!). In addition to being an activity in the pump track's own right, it also develops bike handling skills for children, improving their abilities, and promoting safer cycling as a result.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I have grave concerns about the proposal to stop offering overnight camping in Blyth. It seems a rash proposal, considering usage figures will have been significantly impacted over the last two summers by the pandemic. I would suggest that this decision should be delayed until a more reliable, representative dataset can be collected, after the pandemic.

I also have concerns about the proposal to close the wading pool and convert this into a splash pad. The benefit to children, being able to play safely in water, and again, developing their swimming skills, should not be underestimated, and should not be sacrificed at the alter of spreadsheet fiscal policy!

#43

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 8:21:43 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 8:39:29 PM
Time Spent: 00:17:46
IP Address: 163.182.203.98

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I like that you are wanting to add to more activity space for other sports at the arena

Q2

Was there anything missing?

I feel it is a bad idea to remove the second baseball Dimond it will make it much harder to host ball tournaments there. Why not put the other sporting courts elsewhere on the property? Also it doesn't make pile of sense why you wouldn't offer over night or weekend camping if the campgrounds have to be kept up for ball tournament and threshers anyway. I feel this is an asset to our community that is poorly managed buy north Huron. Everyone that I have talked to that have trued to book a site has had nothing but aggravation so they just give up. You would be better off with a donation box then the setup that you have now.

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I feel it is a bad idea to remove the second baseball Dimond it will make it much harder to host ball tournaments there. Why not put the other sporting courts elsewhere on the property? Also it doesn't make pile of sense why you wouldn't offer over night or weekend camping if the campgrounds have to be kept up for ball tournament and threshers anyway. I feel this is an asset to our community that is poorly managed buy north Huron. Everyone that I have talked to that have trued to book a site has had nothing but aggravation so they just give up. You would be better off with a donation box then the setup that you have now.

#44

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 8:16:36 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 9:01:28 PM
Time Spent: 00:44:52
IP Address: 206.130.209.125

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I am most excited about the plan for the redevelopment of one of the ball diamonds in Blyth. It brings a welcome variety of rec options.

Q2

Respondent skipped this question

Was there anything missing?

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I find it difficult to understand the logic behind ceasing to offer camping at the Blyth Campground. We would still cut the grass. How much money could possibly be saved by not offering camping?

North Huron should continue to support the G2G trail org. We are incredibly fortunate that this runs through our community, and it attracts dozens of families every weekend.

It should go without saying that when developing a Cultural Master Plan, the Blyth Festival should be consulted.

I think a splash pad is an excellent idea, but I'm afraid that it offers services to fewer people than the existing pool.

#45

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 25, 2021 8:34:48 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 25, 2021 9:01:28 PM
Time Spent: 00:26:40
IP Address: 206.130.209.125

Page 1: Feedback Form

Q1

What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

Playgrounds in Blyth, more recreation activities, ways to get involved. More in Blyth means more community involvement and more tourism!!!

Q2

Was there anything missing?

Slower speed signs need to be added on the main street in Blyth. A cross walk should be added by the G2G as this is a high traffic area and between the tractors in the summer and the daily transport trucks, its a dangerous and busy road to cross there. Most people do not follow the speed limit signs. Way more needs to be done by the G2G to make it safer for residents as well as tourists visiting or coming through Blyth.

Younger equipment for kids to play on (the Blyth playground is quite high for toddlers).

Q3

Feel free to provide any additional comments.

The wading pool is the only option we have in Blyth without having to drive to Wingham, Vanastra, Clinton etc., I would hate to lose the wading pool as it is fun for young toddlers but also young kids to enjoy. As we don't have a nice pool for kids to take lessons and be active throughout the year, I think having a splash pad as well would be fantastic and maybe this is something that can be incorporated into the extra ball diamond space, rather than various courts. Have a multi purpose court and then a splash pad/activity hub.

Need more variety for sports teams.

The Blyth campground is a wonderful space to enjoy in Blyth. There would still need to be maintenance regardless of whether people were camping there or not, so why would we lose having a few people camp once in awhile? COVID-19 has affected a lot of how things have run over the past 2 years, but it can pick up again. There needs to be more trees planted there, bushes, landscaping (rather than just open fields) more activities for campers to do (ie. splash pad, wading pool, pickleball/basketball/tennis/ball hockey), we are headed in the right direction in making it an activity hub in Blyth, so we shouldn't lose the campground just yet. We need to implement these new ideas first and then talk about the campground later.

Blyth is a tourist town and we want to bring more people in. Also the demographic is changing. There are a ton of new young families filling the streets with strollers just in the last year. We need to have more opportunities for our kids NOW before they have to look elsewhere for recreation activities. I.e. we already have to travel a distance for a pool, so getting rid of the splash pad wouldn't be the best option.



Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Feedback Form

RECEIVED
NOV 25 2021
TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON

The Township of North Huron has completed a **Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan** to direct services over the next 10 years. Guided by public input, research, and other strategic documents, the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan will assist the Township and stakeholders in making strategic investments to address community priorities and improve the quality of life for residents.

The Master Plan explores several areas including:

- Recreation and cultural facilities;
- Programs, activities, and events;
- Parks, open spaces and trails; and
- Service delivery policies and practices.

Please visit the Township's website to review a summary of the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan and provide your feedback below. The deadline for submitting feedback is November 25, 2021. You can also submit your feedback by [e-mail](#).

1. What did you like most about the Draft Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Summary?

I do like the possibility of further park trails in the town of Wingham. Extending the trail behind properties on Park Drive would give access to the beauty of our river area and perhaps somehow loop up with the trails near the Maitland River Elementary School. I like the the point of mentioning inclusion of all community members.

2. Was there anything missing?

3. Feel free to provide any additional comments.

I do not believe the Westcast Community Complex should be considered to house the library. The library is in a central location, easily accessible by foot. This allows children to access same without relying on someone to drive them there. Also, many people enjoy walking and our library is within easy walking distance for most residents of the Town of Wingham.

I also wonder about removal of the concession booth at the Complex. Has Wingham Minor Hockey been approached to see if they are agreeable to operating the booth as they did at the old arena?

Taking away the indoor sports courts seems like a small effort at saving money. If the hope is to save money, why not close the pool? When the complex was built it was understood that the pool would operate at a deficit. The town of Listowel decided that they would not add a pool to their new recreational facilities as the area did not have a large enough area to draw from. Wingham has far less and yet we continue to spend money on the pool. It is a large area that perhaps could be converted to some other use. An outdoor pool would be a welcome addition to our town's park area.

I also am against developing a Child Care Centre in Blyth. This would mean the addition of more employees to our Township and I don't think we have the funds to take this on.

I totally agree with closing the trailer park in Blyth. The Council stated in 2020 that they were not in the business of running trailer parks when they closed the small Wingham Trailer Park. If this applies to Wingham, I believe it should apply to Blyth. Councillor Falconer recently suggested returning the land to the Huron County Pioneer Thresher and Hobby Association and I believe this should be looked into as part of the Master Plan.

Done



Dennis Kwan

From: Denise Lockie
Sent: November-24-21 10:53 AM
To: Dennis Kwan
Cc: 'Todd Brown'; Vicky Luttenberger
Subject: FW: North Huron Master Plan

Good morning Dennis,
Please see the following email to be recorded with the feedback.
Thanks,
Denise



Denise Lockie

Marketing/Promotions Assistant
Township of North Huron
519.357.1208 x.335
dlockie@northhuron.ca
www.northhuron.ca



From:
Sent: November 24, 2021 8:51 AM
To: Denise Lockie
Subject: North Huron Master Plan

Denise Lockie

Thanks for the opportunity to offer our opinions! It is great to know our council is taking a look many of our facilities justifying their existences! Before much is done, I am hoping council has looked at each facility to measure the positive/negative on each community, for eg, West cast pool must be horrible on ROI but must have a big upside for the community for health and fitness, ball diamonds, child care and parks must fall into the same category! If looking at dollars for each of these facilities I suspect all ball diamonds, arena's libraries, parks will be gone and build into homes or factories!!

In the plan it speaks, cease offering short term over night camping: this is a huge surprise to read, not privy to the ROI but there was money put into the camp site spring of 2021 surprised this is already a bust according to the plan!

Camp sites are hard to find in Ontario, hard to believe these sites are not utilized or have potential to be utilized. Has this campsite been advertised to let people know Blyth has a hidden gem in their back yard? Similar to the field of dreams movie, you build it they will come, maybe we need to give it a chance!! . My opinion, these sites are an assets to our village, along the G2G trail which is just opening up to an amazing tourist opportunities since 2020 resurfacing of the G2G was completed! This G2G trail is just in the early stages for people to realize the potential, all kinds of bed and breakfast AirBnB in the small towns along the trail, you should check the availability of these, they are booming!! Not

knowing how you measure the value of camping, does this need to be a return on investment or breakeven? If this brings in people to the community helps local business with tourism have to think there needs to be a longer term study on the impact!

Ball diamonds, hard to imagine money will be spent to repurpose one, how are these diamonds measured a value or burden to the community? I know baseball in the past years has dropped in popularity but understand it has a slow resurgence! A town with 2 diamonds side by side is unique and attractive for tournaments, shame to take one away! Has all avenues been exhausted how to make these diamonds used?

Thanks again for the opportunity to share our opinions!



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BLYTH LIONS CLUB

SERVING BLYTH & AREA SINCE 1945
CLUB PRESIDENT – LION STEVE HOWSON
P.O. BOX 383, BLYTH, ONTARIO, N0M 1H0

November 24, 2021

Township of North Huron
274 Josephine Street
Wingham, Ontario
N0G 2W0

Recreation Master Plan

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the thirty-six members of the Blyth Lions Club we wish to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Township of North Huron Recreation Master Plan as prepared by Monteith Brown, Planning Consultants.

The members of the Blyth Lions Club reviewed the Master Plan at its general meeting held November 18, 2021. The members raised several concerns with certain Key Directions outlined in the Master Plan.

- 2 *Engage the Blyth Lions Club to investigate potential opportunities to convert the existing outdoor wading pool to a splash pad.*

Five years ago the Blyth Lions Club did investigate the possibility of converting the wading pool to a splash pad. While the conversion would have been expensive (approximately \$90,000.) the Club had every intention of proceeding until we surveyed the users of the wading pool. We received a resounding 'NO' from parents, grandparents, as well as other individuals in the community. Not one person came forward in favour of the idea. As a result an upgrade was completed on the wading pool and summer usage continues to remain at a high level.

4. *Ensure that playgrounds are located within 800 metres of residential areas, unobstructed by physical barriers and address playground gaps in Hutton Heights and the east side of Blyth. Playgrounds should be renewed at the end of their life expectancy (e.g., 20 years) to ensure that they are safe for users. New and redeveloped playgrounds should incorporate barrier free components with consideration given to natural and adventure play components.*

Given that Blyth has a population of approximately 1000 citizens we do not believe it is practical nor feasible to develop other playgrounds within the Village limits. While the Blyth Lions Park is situated in the south-west corner of the Village, it is easily accessible and the recently installed sidewalks and crosswalk provides additional safety. All children's programs are welcomed at the Lions Park free of charge. We do agree that barrier free components should be incorporated with the redevelopment of our playground.

- 5 (b) i. *Prepare a parkland redevelopment plan to re-purpose one surplus ball diamond to include a skateboard park, tennis and pickleball courts (2) and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey.*

The Blyth Lions Club is strongly opposed to the elimination of one of the ball diamonds. While there has been reduced activity on the ball diamonds in recent years we do not believe the elimination of one of the ball diamonds is the appropriate approach. Operating with one diamond eliminates the possibility of ever again holding fastball or slo-pitch tournaments in Blyth. The tournaments that were held this past summer brought many young adults to the community which resulted in increased use of the Campgrounds and increased revenue for local businesses. The combination of two ball diamonds, community centre and campgrounds all located on the same grounds creates an ideal set-up for tournaments and is one of very few communities across southwestern Ontario that can claim this convenience. It should also be noted that the Radford Ball Diamond was constructed with funds raised in the community and by a large volunteer labour force as a memorial to George and Lila Radford in recognition to their commitment to youth activities in the community.

The Blyth Lions Club owns a large section of property ideally located for the development of tennis and pickle balls courts and a multi-use pad for basketball and ball hockey. Development of the Lions property has been discussed over the years. The drawback has been funding. We do not believe that we can finance these projects entirely through fundraising. We are, however, very much in favour of working with government, private enterprise and community minded individuals towards a successful outcome.

5 (b) ii *Cease offering overnight/short-term camping at the Blyth Campground as there is insufficient evidence to continue offering this service; the grounds should continue to be used for event camping such as for the Huron Pioneer Thresher & Hobby Association Reunion and other special events, as long as they continue to be successful.*

The Blyth Lions Club opposes this recommendation. The use of the Campgrounds greatly increased this past summer. We believe that the use of the Campgrounds will continue to increase with the implementation of the outdoor theatre on the grounds. The Campgrounds is used by individuals and families attending activities such as family reunions, wedding receptions and birthday parties at the Lions Park. Several users indicated that they were unaware of the existence of the Campgrounds until they commenced booking activities at the Theatre, Lions Park or elsewhere in the community.

10 *Address the needs of key age groups, form a Youth Advisory Council and Seniors Advisory Committee, pursue Youth Friendly designation, and create an Age Friendly Strategy.*

The Blyth Lions Club previously discussed the possibility of forming a Youth Advisory Council to assist the Club with the development of new programs and guide the Club through the construction of the infrastructure and scheduling of activities in respect to improvements at the Lions Park.

The Blyth Lions Club believes that it is imperative we promote the recreation facilities we already have and the development of additional recreation facilities will enhance what we have in place. Music Festivals, Homecomings, School Reunions, Softball Canada, Slo-Pitch Canada, Firefighters Convention, Campvention, the Rodeo, etc. all are potential attractions.

In closing, we again wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and we trust that serious consideration shall be given to the abovementioned items.

Should you have any questions or require additional information please feel free to contact the undersigned at (519) 525-0025 or jwstewart@ezlink.on.ca

Yours truly

John Stewart

On behalf of the Blyth Lions Club

Blyth Community Betterment
Blyth, Ontario
N0M 1H0

Mission Statement:

Blyth Community Betterment is a service organization which executes special projects and festivals for the village of Blyth. BCB is passionate about cultivating strong ties between village residents while welcoming visitors and tourists to our village. These initiatives are made possible through collaborating with existing service clubs within the village but do not compete with, or duplicate events/initiatives that are already happening in the community.

North Huron Council;

The Blyth Community Betterment Committee would like to address the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan as purposed to residents last week. Having read this document and The Citizen newspaper a few things have come up that we need clarification on.

Is it your belief that the Blyth Campground should be sold as a North Huron property? What advantage is this to our village? We believe with updated and more frequent advertising this campground can be more popular. The last couple of years with COVID closing many town events like Huron Pioneer Threshers, Blyth Festival and local gatherings, the campground could not be utilized to it's potential. Even with that at any given day during the summer months at least one or two trailers could be found using such facility. After driving through the sites during Walton TransCan, many campers were staying there and travelling to Walton. Described as "*a hidden gem*" by one family. They appreciated the use of water and electricity with just a short distance to travel to the races. Many racers come from all over Canada and the United States with their families and recreational vehicles, so campsites are important. Another couple who are retired and just enjoying time off, mentioned that "*Blyth Campground is in the middle of nowhere and twenty minutes from everything*". Blyth has wonderful eateries, bake shop, arts programs, live shows, brewery, stores for all needs, uptown lodging and G2G Trail. With a campground within walking distance all these facilities prosper.

Another draw to our town is the capability to host baseball tournaments with two diamonds on the same property. Again we feel with proper marketing we can draw such tournaments. Bringing families or just adults, they need somewhere to stay and why not the campground. All is within walking distance, to both facilities and uptown. Families will appreciate the wading pool and updated playground at the Lions' Park or the already established skate park just west of the ball diamonds. Keeping all ages busy or just relaxing is easy in Blyth at just this one location.

We understand the issues of spending tax dollars wisely and feel this was not accomplished when updating the campground. A local business offered 25 free tire rims to use as fire pits and yet a lot of money was spent on a fancier model. As much as it looks nice at night, most campgrounds use tire rims and really, campers do not care as long as

they can toast their marshmallows.

Blyth already has a nice library in the heart of main street. Mention of childcare facilities may be beneficial. With a mean age average of 43 years, these families probably do not require daycare, so how busy would it be? Talking with local facilities and finding out where their kids come from may assist with this decision. Supporting in-home daycare in the village may be another option. Looking at the other end of the spectrum, with aging baby boomers, a combination destination for early and late years may be beneficial. Like a one stop shop for reading, playing and visiting for all ages.

Sports, live shows, brewery tours or G2G travels, Blyth makes a wonderful destination and with all these options, even just one change can put a hole in our already strong village. Our volunteer committee alone, in the last few years, have brought back the Santa Claus Parade, Hometown Holiday Weekend and Rutabaga Festival. In 2020 our group gave away free rutabagas to every door step on Mother's Day and a large selection at Blyth Food Market, also complimentary. For Easter we joined with our local firefighters to gather food for the food bank. All while abiding by COVID protocols. Using local resources, imagination and lots of volunteer hours, Blyth is very self reliant. With the backing of you, our local government, we can put our passions together and continue in the right direction.

Remember ALL of us before large changes are made.

Thank you for your time,

Theresa Kolkman

Theresa Kolkman, Secretary
On behalf of Blyth Community Betterment Committee

Dennis Kwan

From: Vicky Luttenberger <VLuttenberger@northhuron.ca>
Sent: November-30-21 4:23 PM
To: Dennis Kwan; 'Todd Brown'
Subject: FW: BBIA Feedback to the Rec & Culture Master Plan

From: Denise Lockie
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 1:36 PM
To: Vicky Luttenberger <VLuttenberger@northhuron.ca>
Subject: FW: BBIA Feedback to the Rec & Culture Master Plan

Please see the below email.
Denise



Denise Lockie

Marketing/Promotions Assistant
Township of North Huron
519.357.1208 x.335
dlockie@northhuron.ca
www.northhuron.ca



From: Rachael King <rking@blythfestival.com>
Sent: November 24, 2021 1:19 PM
To: Denise Lockie <DLockie@northhuron.ca>
Cc: <chair@blythnow.ca>, Shane Yerema <vicechair@blythnow.ca> <chair@blythnow.ca>
Subject: BBIA Feedback to the Rec & Culture Master Plan

Good afternoon Denise,
I hope this finds you well.

Per the feedback process for the Township's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, please find below feedback on behalf of the Blyth BIA.

Blyth & District Community Centre

- **Parkland re-development.** As a BIA, having a proper skateboard park would be great. The skateboarders currently use the courtyard and retaining walls of Memorial Hall as a skateboarding venue, evidenced by the marked up concrete on the courtyard flower beds. A fulsome, well maintained skateboard park would give the skateboarders a proper park to use as a venue, rather than our main street.

- **Campground.** In 2021, efforts were made to improve the overnight camping experience at the Blyth Campground. That said, the season started late because of COVID, and marketing materials developed by the BIA were not approved by the Township until September, when the season was all but over. Blyth Festival has added a theatre space to the campground, but due to construction, that season only began in August of 2021. 2021 results are not representative of what a full season would look like
- **Campground.** The BIA would like to work with the Township to be involved with trying to attract more event-based camping to the campground.
- **Campground.** “. . . as long as they continue to be successful.” Can ‘successful’ please be defined? It is unclear what that measurement would be and through what lens or perspective success would be measured.
- **Campground.** If short term camping is no longer being permitted, what is the plan to address the financial shortfall of the existing park?
- **Childcare Centre.** Having a childcare centre in Blyth would be very beneficial to the families and businesses of Blyth. It would assist in the recruitment of staff.
- **Library Space.** Moving the library would increase the viability of the community centre. The existing library was not consulted for this report. In considering this move, the BBIA strongly encourages township staff to consult with library staff to understand the needs of the library and what is required to properly provide services.

Blyth Community Market

- Currently, the Township waives the annual vendor permit for the Blyth Community Market. Clarification of details of the current support and the vision of what future support looks like is requested.

Technology Plan

- The BBIA requests that the Township assist the business community to ensure that Blyth, Ontario appears properly on Google search engines. To date, the Township has not taken action on this issue and it is a significant detriment to businesses and entrepreneurs in the township.

Trails Master Plan

- The G2G Trail has been excluded from this Key Direction. The G2G runs through North Huron and has been growing exponentially in popularity and use throughout the pandemic. It is used by both local and tourist populations, is one of the busiest trails in the county, and an economic driver for the village of Blyth. The BBIA requests that the G2G trail be added to this Master Plan.

- The BBIA encourages partnering with the G2G Trail organization to encourage use of the trail, similar to the MVCA partnership indicated in the plan summary

Thanks,
Rachael

--

[Rachael King, General Manager](#)

Blyth Festival

P: [\(519\) 523.9300](tel:(519)523.9300) x 204

T: [1.877.862.5984](tel:1.877.862.5984)

blythfestival.com

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Appendix C: Summary of Community Organizations

Table 16: Summary of Community Organizations

| Recreation and Sport Organizations | Arts and Cultural Organizations |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blyth Adult Broomball • Blyth Brussels Minor Hockey • Blyth Junior Broomball • Blyth Minor Ball • Original 6 • Pickleball • Wingham Golf & Curling Club • Wingham Ironmen Junior C Team • Wingham Minor Hockey • Wingham Skating Club • Wingham Smokies Baseball | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barn Dance Historical Society • Belgrave Kinsmen • Blyth Festival Art Gallery • Blyth Festival Theatre • Blyth United Church • Dance Factory Studio • Fashion Arts & Creative Textiles Studio • Maitland River Community Church • Maple and Moose • Stitches with a Twist • Wild Goose Studio • Wingham & District Horticultural Society • Wonky Frog |
| Community Organizations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Cadets • Blyth BIA • Blyth Community Betterment • Blyth Legion • Blyth Lions Club • Friends of the Village of Blyth • Girl Guides of Canada • Huron County Library • Huron Pioneer Threshers & Hobby Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legion Ladies Auxiliary • Scouts Canada • Wingham BIA • Wingham Columbus Centre • Wingham Community Connectors • Wingham Legion • Wingham Lions Club • Wingham Trail Committee |