



TOWNSHIP
OF WILMOT

Township of Wilmot January 2017

PARKS, FACILITIES, AND RECREATION SERVICES master plan



mbpc

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Township of Wilmot

Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan

January 2017



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Parks and Recreation Matters

There are a number of factors that can be used to measure a community's quality of life, of which the availability and accessibility of parks and recreation services are one consideration that people contemplate when selecting where to establish roots or raise a family. Parks and recreation contributes significant physical, mental, social, economic, and environmental benefits to individuals, households and communities, and as a result the importance of these services cannot be understated. As a community characterized by urban and rural settlements, diverse economic characteristics, and a growing number of newcomers to Canada, the Township of Wilmot strives to ensure that its residents have appropriate access to parks and recreation opportunities through sound planning and balanced decision-making.

Guided by strategic documents such as the Recreation Facility Needs Study (2002 and 2007 Addendum) and Indoor Arena Ice Usage and Needs Analysis (2013), the Township has demonstrated its commitment to enhancing recreation opportunities in Wilmot to enrich the quality of life of its residents. Several achievements have resulted from these documents, one of the more notable examples being the construction of Wilmot Recreation Complex (W.R.C.) that now offers many high quality recreation opportunities for local residents and regional visitors.

In the continued support of developing parks and recreation opportunities, the Township initiated the development of this Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan (herein referred to as "Master Plan") to establish a strategic document to guide the future planning and development of parks, facilities, and recreation services in Wilmot for the next 10 years.

1.2 Methodology

The Master Plan was based on several inputs and prepared through a three step process, beginning with the preparation of this Planning Context Report that summarized:

- the socio-demographic profile of Wilmot;
- relevant findings from existing documents prepared by the Township;
- national, provincial and regional trends in the parks and recreation sector;
- the results of the public engagement strategy;
- the state of existing leisure facilities and programs offered by the Township and community partners; and
- a draft Mission Statement and Guiding Principles to direct the delivery of parks, facilities, and recreation services.

Phase 2 built upon the Planning Context Report and evolved into a Draft Master Plan. Recommendations for facilities, programs, services, and staffing are articulated together with a

supporting implementation plan. Testing recommendations with Township staff, Council, and the public occurred in the third phase, prior to being finalized the Master Plan (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Project Methodology



1.3 Aligning with Corporate Frameworks

Several background documents have been reviewed to establish the planning context associated with this Master Plan. These documents are broad in scope, affecting Wilmot's growth, land use patterns, facilities, programs, and other municipal elements that have been taken into account during the preparation of this Plan.

For the Master Plan to be effective, it must align with the Township's strategic objectives and be synergistic with land use policies, including the Strategic Plan, Official Plan, and related recreation studies that were completed by the Township. Information contained within these documents are used to provide baseline content for the Master Plan, while integrating and/or reinforcing appropriate findings that support the provision of facilities, programs, and services. Background documents that have been reviewed as part of the planning process include (but are not limited to) the following. A high level summary of these documents is contained in **Appendix A**.

Strategic Policy Documents

- Township of Wilmot Official Plan and Strategic Plan
- Region of Waterloo Official Plan

Parks, Recreation, and Culture Documents

- Township of Wilmot Trails Master Plan
- Township of Wilmot Recreation Facility Needs Study (2002 and 2007 Addendum)
- Indoor Arena Ice Usage & Needs Analysis
- Recreation Guide 2015-2016

Other Supporting Documents

- Accessibility Plan 2016 – 2020
- Development Charges Background Study
- Capital Forecast 2016-2025
- Schedule 'A' of Fees and Charges

1.4 Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

Parks, facilities, and recreation services are provided by the Township's Facilities and Recreation Services Department. A mission statement is used to articulate the role and responsibility of the Department, and to ensure that it is responsive to residents of the Township of Wilmot. The following mission statement is recommended, describing the purpose of the Facilities and Recreation Services Department along with the need that it fulfills.

The Facilities and Recreation Services Department works with community partners to engage residents in active and passive leisure activities by providing a broad range of high quality parks, facilities, and recreation program opportunities that are safe, affordable, and inclusive of all residents.

This Mission Statement is supported by guiding principles, which are high level, directional statements articulating the overall context for what the Master Plan intends to accomplish with respect to parks, facilities, and recreation services. Guiding principles are ideals that the Township of Wilmot and the community should strive to achieve over the life of this Master Plan and beyond. The following guiding principles are proposed and are largely complementary – no one principle takes priority over another – and should be read and interpreted as a set.

- 1. Building Healthy Communities:** Encourage healthy and active lifestyles among residents of all ages and strengthen community cohesion through parks, recreation, and culture.
- 2. Capacity & Partnership Building:** Support and collaborate with volunteers and partners through the coordinated delivery of community-driven parks and recreational initiatives, activities, and events.
- 3. Accessibility & Equity:** Enhance participation and accessibility by encouraging a range of affordable and locally-responsive parks and recreational opportunities, ideally close to where people live.
- 4. Resilient & Responsive Infrastructure:** Maintain a safe and appropriate supply of parks and recreational facilities in order to meet the demonstrated needs of both long-time and new residents.
- 5. Marketing and Promotion:** Raise awareness of local opportunities and solicit public input through a variety of community engagement initiatives and techniques including traditional and modern mediums.
- 6. Excellence in Service Delivery:** Maintain public trust by upholding consistently high standards in customer service, recreation program delivery, policies and practices, and facility maintenance.
- 7. Financial Sustainability:** Show accountability to customers and taxpayers through the efficient use of resources, balanced application of user fees, sound decision making, and pursuit of non-municipal funding sources such as fundraising and grants.

2.0 Key Research Inputs

This section provides a broad overview of trends related to the parks and recreation sector. Broad trends observed at the national level are identified along with their implications in the local context, which is supported by the Township's socio-demographic profile (based on data drawn from Statistics Canada and the Township of Wilmot) and secondary research methods.

Figure 2: Summary of Key Research Inputs

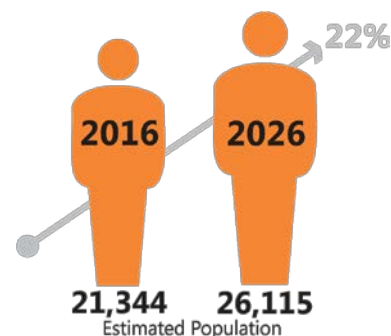


2.1 Implications of Population Growth

Wilmot has experienced strong growth over the past ten years and it is expected that this trend will continue over the foreseeable future. Statistics Canada reported a population of 19,225 persons through the 2011 Census, representing 32% growth since 2001. The Town's 2015 Community Profile¹ articulates a population of 20,900 in Wilmot along with a projected 2031 population of 28,500 that is derived from the Region of Waterloo Official Plan.

To establish the population forecasts to be used in this Master Plan, a straight-line extrapolation has been used for each Census year within the planning period (see Figure 3). On this basis, the current 2016 baseline population estimate is 21,344 persons while the projected population at the end of the ten year master planning period is 26,115 persons.

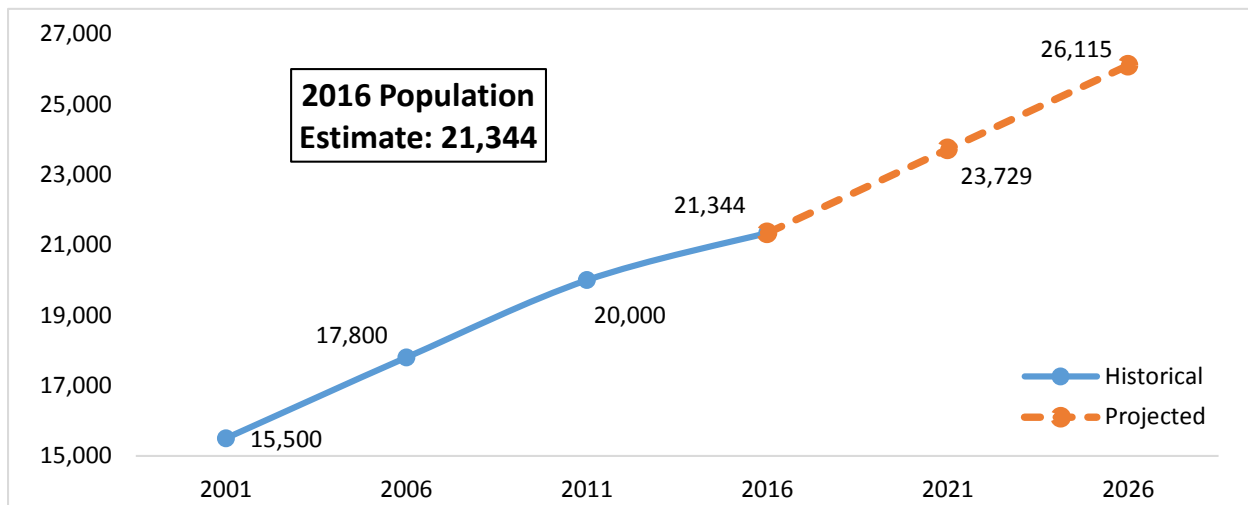
As this Master Plan guides the development of Township parks, facilities, and recreation services over the next 10 years, applying the uniform growth rate method suggests that Wilmot will be home to 26,115 residents by the end of the master planning period (22% growth). It is expected that much of this growth will take place during the second half of this planning period given that growth is currently limited due to sewage plant capacity, which is not expected to be alleviated until the Township's sewage plant is expanded during 2018-2019. A summary of historical and projected population growth is illustrated in Figure 3.



¹ Township of Wilmot. 2015 Community Profile. Prepared by Andrew Martin, Planner/Economic Development Officer. Retrieved from <http://www.wilmot.ca>.

The Township's geography is largely rural, boasting several pockets of urban settlements scattered throughout the countryside. The Township's largest urban settlement areas are New Hamburg and Baden, which collectively accommodate nearly two-thirds of Wilmot's population with 8,340 and 4,940 residents, respectively. Based on the Township's Official Plan and 2014 Development Charges Background Study, the majority of population growth is anticipated to occur within these two settlement areas. This population growth drives the need to ensure that high quality facilities, programs, and services are available to serve existing and future residents. Regardless of where population growth is expected, it is essential that a balanced parks and recreation system is provided throughout the Township in order to maximize opportunities available to residents.

Figure 3: Historical and Projected Population Growth, Township of Wilmot

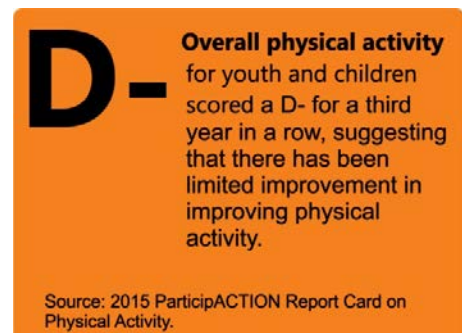


Sources: Statistics Canada Census, 2001-2011; Township of Wilmot 2015 Community Profile; and Region of Waterloo Official Plan, 2015 (pg. 11, Table 1).

Notes: All population figures adjusted to include 4% Census undercount while 2016 to 2026 estimates derived using a straight-line extrapolation between 2015 and 2031 forecasts.

2.2 Lack of Free Time and Physical Inactivity

Research reveals growing rates of physical inactivity and sedentary behaviours. ParticipACTION's 2015 Report Card on Physical Activity for youth and children graded overall physical levels at D- for the third year in a row, suggesting that there has been limited progress in improving physical activity at the national level. This demise of physical activity can be linked to sedentary activities dominating leisure times through activities such as browsing the internet, socializing, gaming, using personal devices, and watching television. Over protection of children and youth by keeping them indoors is also a factor. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute has also found that physical activity among adults decline with age, which is driven by factors such as increasingly busy lifestyles of Canadians that are centered on vehicular transportation and an increasing variety of passive choices for leisure.



Communities are often faced with the challenge of overcoming the lack of free time barrier from a service delivery perspective as it is a societal issue that municipalities have little ability to directly influence. There are, however, solutions that can be implemented to mitigate impacts of the “time crunch” and competition from sedentary activities. Some communities have practiced extended hours of operation to allow residents to participate at times that are most suited to their needs.

Providing more unstructured programs may facilitate opportunities to participate as casual drop-in activities are often highly desirable. People with busy schedules are increasingly seeking spontaneous, non-programmed forms of activity that fit into their schedule. The Township and its partners have explored strategies to increase levels of physical activity by offering a range of recreational swimming and skate programs that do not require registration or long term commitments to allow users to participate at their convenience. A number of Wilmot’s community program providers also offer drop-in programs and services.

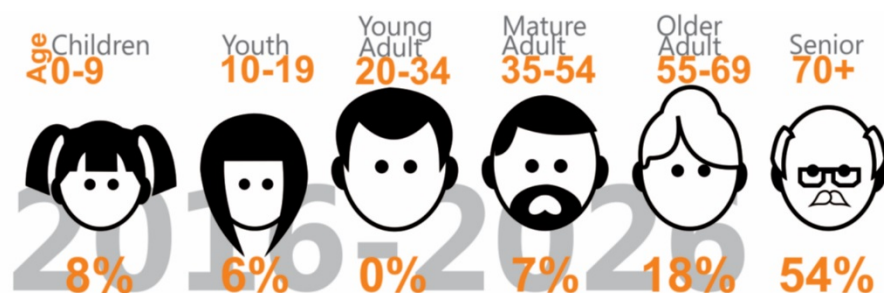
2.3 Recreation Preferences among Age Groups

Analyzing a community’s age structure provides insights into the types of leisure facilities and programs that are in demand or should be provided. For example, a large market of children and youth tends to bolster minor sports such as soccer, hockey, and figure skating. On the other end of the spectrum, older adults and seniors may have greater interest in cultural activities and low impact recreation pursuits geared towards social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

The 2011 Census recorded Wilmot’s median age at 40.4 years, on par with the Province but above that of Waterloo Region (37.7 years). Since the 2006 Census, the Township’s median age increased by one year, suggesting that Wilmot’s population is aging as a whole. A review of demographic trends in Wilmot’s age cohorts between the 2006 and 2011 Census periods reveals additional evidence of an aging community. The number of children and youth increased by 8% (representing 385 residents) while, by contrast, the number of older adults and seniors over the age of 55 grew by nearly 20% (adding 1,115 persons).

The aging trend is consistent with trends observed across Canada, driven in part by the Baby Boom generation continuing to move into the 55+ age cohorts. It is expected that the overall aging trend will continue in Wilmot throughout the foreseeable future. Age-specific forecasts are presently not available for the Township; however, forecasts specific to the Region of Waterloo (prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Finance) indicate that all age groups are projected to experience varying levels of growth between 2016 and 2026. Seniors over the age of 70 are expected to experience the most growth during this period, growing by more than half by 2026. All other age groups are expected to grow modestly, with the exception of adults between the ages of 20 and 34, which will remain largely unchanged (Figure 4). Growth in all age groups during this planning period will drive the provision of leisure opportunities at all life stages.

Figure 4: Projected Population Growth by Age Group, Region of Waterloo 2016-2026

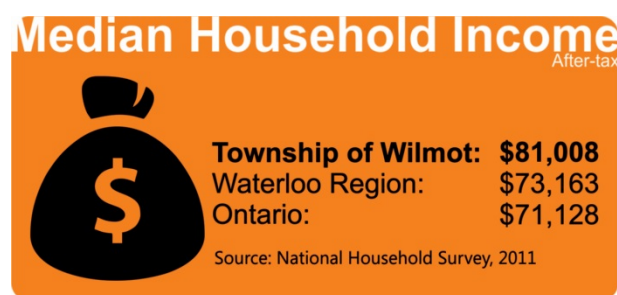


Source: Ministry of Finance Ontario Population Projections Update: 2013-2041

It must be noted that Wilmot's proportional growth by age group will be different than the Regional projections shown above. For example, the Regional projections may over-represent growth in younger age cohorts and under-represent older age cohorts given that rural areas tend to have higher median ages compared to their urban counterparts. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Finance projections for Waterloo Region are considered to be appropriate for the purposes of this Master Plan (given the lack of an alternative source of age-specific data).

2.4 Overcoming Financial Barriers to Participation

Generally speaking, participation in leisure activities is proportional to a household's income, particularly for competitive athletics and personal training due to the high cost to participate. Across Canada, 62% of individuals living in households with incomes of less than \$20,000 were considered inactive.² The 2014 Active Healthy Kids Report Card found that 85% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 engaged in sport participation, whereas 58% of children were involved in these pursuits in households earning less than \$40,000.³



According to Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (N.H.S.), the median after-tax income for Wilmot households was \$81,002 in 2010 (the average income was \$88,801). On the basis of income alone, this suggests that Wilmot residents may be slightly more active compared to the rest of the Region (median household income of \$73,163) and the Province (\$71,128).

Statistics Canada also reported that approximately 6% of Wilmot residents are living in low income households; lower compared to the Region (12%) and Province (14%). Nevertheless, with nearly 1,200 persons living in low income households, there remains a need to ensure that affordable leisure opportunities are available in Wilmot.

² Act Now BC. (2011). Why don't people participate? Physical activity strategy. Retrieved from http://www.physicalactivitystrategy.ca/pdfs/Why_Dont_People_Participate.pdf.

³ Active Healthy Kids Canada. (2014). Is Canada in the Running? The 2014 Active Healthy Kids Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Toronto: Active Healthy Kids Canada.

The Township has a strong belief in removing financial barriers so residents and community organizations can participate fully in all leisure opportunities found in Wilmot. The Township's financial assistance program provides credit to local children under the age of 14 towards municipal recreation and cultural programs, as well as affiliated minor sports and arts programs that are offered in Wilmot. Funding data provided by the Township indicates that in 2015, the program benefited 19 children, who collectively received a total of \$1,325 towards municipal programs, which is more than twice the number of participants and amount funded in 2011 (Table 1). In addition, there are other organizations that provide financial assistance for leisure such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart.

Table 1: Township of Wilmot Financial Assistance Program, 2011 - 2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of Recipients	8	2	21	13	19
Amount Funded (\$)	\$536	\$120	\$1,644	\$853	\$1,325

Source: Township of Wilmot

2.5 Recreation Subsidies

The availability of funding can be a challenge for community groups that rely on local donations in order to operate, and to provide programs and services. Other organizations, such as minor sports groups, impose user fees to cover the cost of renting space and other requirements, although there is a fine balance between recovering costs and maintaining affordable recreation opportunities. Municipalities may provide financial subsidies to offset these costs; how these subsidies are offered varies in each community. Municipalities may offer use of a community space free of charge once a month and minor sports groups may receive an annual subsidy to reduce the cost of renting ice or sports fields. In 2015, the amount of free and/or subsidized facilities provided to the community was equivalent to \$492,989 in facility rental fees. The Township also provides financial support to a number of community organizations through the Municipal Grants Program. For 2016, the Township awarded 12 organizations with funding totalling \$42,312. Other programs are available from non-municipal sources such as the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, which provides funding to groups for new programs and other needs.

2.6 Engaging Persons with Disabilities

The Canadian Survey on Disability reported that approximately 3.8 million Canadians were living with a disability in 2012, representing 13.7% of Canadians and 15.4% of Ontarians.⁴ While the number of persons with disabilities in Wilmot is not quantified, applying this provincial rate to the Township's population leads to an assumption that nearly 3,000 local residents could have



⁴ Statistics Canada. (2013). Canadian survey on disability 2012. Catalogue no. 89-654-X, Ottawa. Retrieved from <http://mieux-etre.edsc.gc.ca/misme-iowb/indicator.jsp?&indicatorid=40>

some form of disability. Given these statistics, it is crucial for parks and recreation services to integrate universal design and barrier-free elements wherever possible.

Municipalities across the Province have embraced principles of inclusivity through facility design and service delivery. This practice is guided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.), 2005, which requires municipalities to remove all barriers within municipal facilities by 2025. In doing so, municipalities are required to form Accessibility Committees and adopt accessibility plans, which identify, develop, and prioritize solutions to remove barriers from municipal facilities.

Moreover, amendments were recently made to the Ontario Building Code through Ontario Regulation 336/13 to enhance accessibility in buildings. A number of new standards and requirements were added to support barrier-free design within new construction and buildings requiring extensive renovations, including barrier-free washrooms, pool areas, visual fire safety devices, and more. As a local example, the Wilmot Recreation Complex was designed to be barrier-free to ensure accessibility for all users. Some of these features include automated doors, an elevator, accessible ramp, designated wheelchair viewing areas, barrier free washrooms and change rooms, signage for the visually impaired using Braille, and accessible parking.

The Township's Accessibility Plan highlights the achievements from 2011-2015 in making Wilmot more accessible in addition to outlining future accessibility projects over the next five years (2016-2020). Planned action items that address key municipal areas centre upon information and communication, employment, transportation, and built environment. No new accessibility projects are identified to remove barriers from municipal facilities; however, the Accessibility Plan (and Trails Master Plan) maintains that the construction of trails will consider the A.O.D.A.'s Built Environment Standards. The Township also requires that the construction of all new facilities or major renovations be designed to meet A.O.D.A. requirements.

2.7 Growing Culture in Wilmot

Influences of Cultural Diversity

The 2011 N.H.S. found one-in-five Canadians are immigrants, particularly from Asia, and a vast majority of whom choose to live in larger urban centres with established cultural ties such as the Greater Toronto Area.⁵ The N.H.S. reported that about one out of every five Wilmot residents (12%) was born outside of Canada. The majority (74%) of Wilmot's immigrants arrived prior to 1990, suggesting that most are well established in Canadian culture. The N.H.S. found that the majority of the Township's population are from European countries, and similar to other communities in Waterloo Region, Wilmot is home to a large German population. Locally, the influx of immigrants from non-European countries has not been significantly experienced in the Township and approximately 3% of the population represents visible minorities (primarily from

⁵ Statistics Canada. 2015. Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada (99-010-X). Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm>.

South Asian and Filipino backgrounds). However, national immigration trends would suggest that the proportion of visible minorities in Wilmot will grow over time.

Although growth in the visible minor population is expected to be minimal, there will be a need to ensure that the appropriate opportunities are available for all groups, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds. Some of the strategies municipalities have implemented to engage cultural groups include equipment rentals (e.g., ice skates and helmets), publishing literature in multiple languages, and educating newcomers about sport safety and the benefits of physical activity. A number of services are available to new residents in Wilmot, which are offered by the Township's community organizations such as the Welcome Wagon.

Emphasis on Arts and Culture

The presence of arts and cultural opportunities are highly desirable in a community as they play a prominent role in creating vibrant and livable communities, contribute to knowledge building, and bolster the local economy. Arts and culture includes a broad spectrum of activities including visual and creative arts (e.g., dance and music), special events and festivals, and natural heritage and environmental appreciation. Broadly speaking, research conducted by the Ontario Arts Council found that visits to historical sites were the most popular arts and cultural activity, followed by visits to museums/art galleries, art performances, festivals, and fairs.

Several Ontario communities recognize the importance of promoting local cultural opportunities and capacity building through cultural planning. The Township does not currently have a Cultural Plan in place, however, there are a number of regional examples in place. The Waterloo Cultural Plan guides local cultural development to engage residents and visitors in an experience to explore and celebrate arts and culture year-round. The City of Kitchener's Culture Plan I and II champion the benefits of investing in cultural assets to enhance quality of life and civic identity.

Several arts and culture opportunities are available in Wilmot, many of which are promoted through the Township's Recreation Leisure Guide. The Township offers a limited selection of arts programs at the W.R.C. such as painting and drawing. There are also a number of non-municipal organizations that offer arts and cultural activities such as religious institutions, libraries, theatre companies, art galleries, and more. The Township benefits from a number of local organizations that are dedicated to providing special events, with a couple of notable examples being the Wilmot Agricultural Society, who host the New Hamburg Fall Fair, the Optimist Club of New Hamburg, St. Agatha Lions Club, New Dundee Optimist Club, and the Baden Community Association, who put on many events (there are many others in the local arts and cultural sector). The Wilmot Senior's Woodworking & Crafts Club in Baden also provides seniors with an opportunity to engage in a range of arts and crafts projects. A high level inventory of arts and cultural offerings in the Township can be found in **Appendix B**.

2.8 Trends in Facility Design

Aging Infrastructure

In 2006, Parks and Recreation Ontario estimated that between 30% and 50% of recreation facilities were nearing the end of their useful lifecycle. Most recently, the 2016 Canadian Infrastructure

Report Card rated Canada's overall sports and recreation facilities as "Fair", which was the lowest ranking out of all municipal assets that were evaluated. This ranking suggests that municipal facilities require attention, show signs of deterioration, with deteriorating facility components. On average, the Report Card found that community/recreation centres, pools, and skate parks, and sports fields were generally in good condition, while indoor curling rinks, arenas, seniors' centres, and tennis courts were fair, and youth centres were considered in poor condition. The deteriorating condition of municipal sports and recreation facilities can be attributed to a number of factors such as competing municipal priorities resulting in deferred maintenance and replacement, and old age.⁶

Many recreation facilities were built between 1956 and 1980, with a number of them constructed to celebrate Canada's Centennial year in 1967. Since this period, infrastructure province-wide has been underfunded, though these pressures have been somewhat alleviated through recent provincial and federal economic stimulus programs. Locally, the Township benefited from the 2009 Recreation Infrastructure Canada (RIInC) program that secured \$497,132 in financial support towards improvements to the St. Agatha Community Centre and enhancements to New Dundee Park (including the expansion).⁷ The Township has also benefited from other federal grant programs including the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Fund that contributed \$150,000 towards trail construction at the W.R.C. The Township also received \$4,000,000 from the Build Canada Fund for Phase II of the W.R.C., and received \$130,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the W.R.C. splash pad.

Environmentally Friendly Design

Environmental concerns are often a top of mind issue among many Canadians as there is an increasing need to maximize the efficient use of resources. Many municipalities have demonstrated environmentally conscious awareness in the design of new facilities that utilize state-of-the-art technologies to enhance environmental efficiency. The design of environmentally friendly facilities is promoted by the Canadian Green Building Council, which governs the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system in Canada. To obtain LEED certification, a facility must meet rating standards in sustainable development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials, and indoor environmental quality. Green Globes and BOMA Best are other national sustainability certification programs designed to assess environmental performance and management of existing and newly constructed buildings.

The Township does not have any LEED certified facilities, although the Wilmot Recreation Complex was designed and constructed to meet LEED Silver certification. The design of the structure utilized a steel convex building design with insulated walls and roof that provides significant energy savings to the Township. The Township has taken steps that re-enforces its commitment to environmental sustainability through the following methods:

⁶ Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (2016).

⁷ The total cost of the project was 745,700.

- The Township's Sustainability Committee aims to advance sustainability initiatives within the Township and to explore cost-effective opportunities to protect Wilmot's natural environment.
- The Township's Capital Budget Forecast has allocated over \$800,000 towards retrofitting streetlights and ice pad lighting to energy-efficient LEDs.
- The Township's Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan (2015 – 2020) provides strategies for reducing municipal energy consumption.
- The Township is involved in Sustainable Waterloo Region, an organization dedicated to promoting environmental initiatives in Waterloo Region.

2.9 Trends in Service Delivery

Partnerships

Community partners, service clubs, private organizations, school boards, and related agencies are critical pillars of the Township's leisure system. The Township of Wilmot collaborates with others in a number of ways to provide high quality leisure opportunities, through informal relationships with local organizations and formal partnerships with community-based service providers.

There are many advantages of a collaborative service delivery approach including the efficient allocation of community resources, gaining a competitive advantage in having programs and services delivered by specialized community groups, and the sharing of vital 'state of being' data among different stakeholders to help identify emerging challenges and opportunities. Across Ontario, many municipalities are seeking ways to collaborate with outside organizations in funding facility projects and/or managing facility components. In exchange, private/community partners may receive benefits in the form of increased access to high quality facilities, support from local residents, and other economic benefits (e.g., from increased tourism and facility space rental).

Engaging private and community partners to provide leisure opportunities can generate partnership opportunities with private sector businesses through sponsorships, project funding, donations, and volunteerism. The most successful partnerships are derived from common objectives (e.g., environmental conservation, community improvement, physical activity, etc.), utilizing the skills and strengths of each party in delivering access, sharing responsibilities and minimizing risks (e.g., cost and liabilities).

Volunteerism

Volunteers are essential components of the parks and recreation sector, and they are particularly vital in smaller municipalities where resources are often limited. Wilmot is no exception to this trend as the municipality is responsible for providing a range of major and minor facilities and programs, including swimming and skating, and thus the Township relies heavily on dedicated volunteers from local organizations and service clubs to provide the balance of community-run programs and services.

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (2010) indicated that volunteerism is rising slightly, particularly among youth ages 15 to 24.⁸ Older adults continue to represent the most active volunteer group, although it is anticipated that this group will soon move on from the volunteer pool, resulting in greater pressures on the delivery of services and impacting programming capacity. This gap in the volunteer base will create opportunities to attract new volunteers, particularly among youth. Effective utilization of technologies will be an important factor in Wilmot's youth volunteer recruitment strategy.

Online Presence and Customer Service

Building on the significance of leveraging new technologies, Wilmot may also benefit from modernizing its existing leisure system; it has already done so to some extent in its recently updated website. The benefits include the creation of a more streamlined process to distribute information, pay bills, and register for programs, among other uses. With the number of households with high-speed internet access steadily increasing, municipalities are able to provide a wealth of pertinent information on the municipal website. Social media has also played a key role in engaging residents. The Township's Twitter page boasts over 1,600 followers. As most age groups today are capable of navigating the internet (to a varying degree), a strong online presence is increasingly valuable from an information dissemination and customer service standpoint.

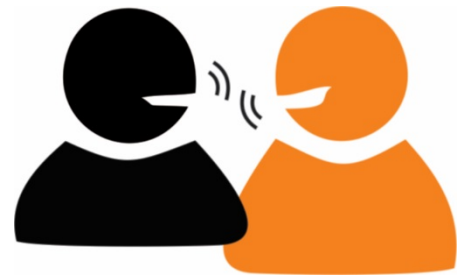


⁸ Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resource Management. Retrieved from <http://www.cjvrm.org/past-issues/22-2-engaging-youth-7/>

3.0 Community Engagement Inputs

Community engagement is integral to the master planning process by allowing the public to provide input and critical insights relating to the provision of parks and recreational opportunities. At the project's initiation, a community engagement strategy was created that established consultation tools that were subsequently undertaken at key points during the master planning process. Each engagement tool was designed to maximize community involvement and was tailored to respond to a variety of audiences in Wilmot including members of the public, local stakeholder groups, and Township Staff and Council. The engagement tools utilized for this Master Plan include:

- Community Launch Event
- Online Community Survey
- Stakeholder Group Survey
- Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews
- Township Staff Workshops
- Council Interviews
- Public Meeting/Open House
- Council Presentation
- Regular Meetings with the Steering Committee
- Write-in E-Mails from Residents
- Public Information Centre
- Council Presentation



This Master Plan considered input provided from all these engagement tools, together with feedback from the project Steering Committee, to ensure that the final Master Plan is representative of community needs and is consistent with other municipal documents.

The following sections summarize the key themes emerging from each community engagement. It is important to note that **the information and suggestions presented in this section do not represent recommendations, nor has the public input been altered** even in instances where the comments incorrectly reflect the Township's actual policies, practices, or level of provision.

3.1 Summary of Community Engagement Themes

A broad range of comments were expressed throughout the community engagement sessions held in the first phase of this project. Table 2 summarizes the most common themes that were heard based on the opinions, preferences, and priorities of residents, stakeholder groups, staff, and Council. These themes, which are listed in no particular order of importance or priority, will be used to inform the second phase of the project together with the other inputs considered in this Master Plan.

Table 2: Summary of Key Themes from Phase 1 Community Consultations

Key Themes (in no particular order)	Community Launch Event	Online Community Survey	Stakeholder Group Survey	Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews	Township Staff Workshops
The Township does a great job in providing parks, recreation, and culture opportunities.	•	•	•	•	•
The Wilmot Recreation Complex is a highly valued asset in the community to provide a location to participate in activities, particularly the indoor aquatics centre and cooling station.	•	•		•	•
The provision of trails and other active transportation facilities in Wilmot are highly desirable.	•	•		•	•
There is a need to consider a third ice pad to accommodate growing ice organizations and requests for additional ice time.	•	•	•	•	•
Playgrounds are aging and are in need of replacement.	•	•		•	
There needs to be less emphasis on organized sports and more program opportunities for casual and drop-in activities .	•	•		•	•
Clear and consistent communication between the Township, community stakeholders, and the public is vital to ensure that there is an awareness of the opportunities that are available and that they are responsive to the community.	•	•		•	•
Arts and culture should be celebrated in the Township.	•	•		•	•

3.2 Master Plan Community Launch Event

A Community Launch Event was held on March 9, 2016 at the Wilmot Recreation Complex to formally introduce the Master Plan and allow residents to contribute ideas. The Launch Event kicked off with a presentation describing the purpose and process of developing the Master Plan, the benefits of parks and recreation services, key trends, and an overview of the other public consultation opportunities. Following the presentation, attendees were asked to respond to

questions regarding a broad range of topics related to parks and recreation services. Thirty residents were in attendance, in addition to the Mayor and members of Council, the Steering Committee, and Township Staff. Responses received during this event are summarized below while a transcript of feedback received from the event is found in **Appendix C**.

Community values

The importance of community and security emerged as top priorities for participants and why the Township is an enjoyable place to live and play. Participants indicated that community events in Wilmot were one of the most highly valued aspects of living in the Township. Other values included friendly residents, safety, the W.R.C. (e.g., pool), volunteering opportunities, and walkability of the Township. The Township's responsiveness to emerging needs, the splash pad, summer camps, and Youth Action Council were also mentioned.



Improving Indoor Recreation Facilities

Many suggestions focused on maximizing use of existing facilities and providing a wider range of activities out of them, offering more recreational activities beyond competitive sports, and lowering arena user fees. Using plants to improve the interior of facilities was also suggested. The desire for new facilities was also suggested with notable examples being a gymnasium, indoor turf, more arena ice, and youth friendly spaces.

Improving Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Some participants identified a need for more ball diamonds, including a high quality ball diamond (with a clay dirt infield) while the focus of some others pertained to safety upgrades for playgrounds and outdoor recreation equipment. Other suggestions focused on outdoor facility features for youth such as unstructured play spaces and hang out areas, particularly in Petersburg and St. Agatha. Additional outdoor facilities that were suggested included basketball courts, volleyball courts, batting cages, a community garden, and a dog park.



Improving Parks and Open Spaces

The creation of an interconnected trail system that connects destinations within the Township was a high priority for several participants. Other participants built upon this idea and indicated that cycling routes in the Township should be improved. Participants also expressed concerns with park maintenance, particularly enforcing dog waste cleanup rules, providing more recycling and garbage bins, and general park clean-up.

Other park improvements suggested by participants included more natural areas, providing bathrooms in parks, hosting community events in parks, providing locations for community gardens, more tree planting, opening the gates at Scott Park during winter months to allow for cross-country skiing, and vegetation management along the river.



Improving Recreation Programs and Activities

Participants placed a high priority on youth-focused programming, volunteer and employment opportunities, and casual drop-in spaces. The need for children's and seniors' programs were also identified, particularly in Baden and New Hamburg through Interfaith and Wilmot Family Resource Centre. Suggestions for programs included craft classes, drop-in sports, gardening, reducing littering, soapbox races, trails, and more general recreation programs.

Promoting and Improving Cultural Facilities, Programs, and Special Events

Participants expressed a number of ideas for promoting cultural facilities, programs, and special events. Social media was frequently mentioned as a marketing tool, however, ideas extended far beyond online promotion. Attendees felt that the awareness of cultural programs and events could be improved by partnering with local businesses, promoting information at schools, advertising in high visibility areas, and installing a digital sign at the W.R.C. Providing a public art studio that hosted art classes was also suggested as a way to improve cultural offerings in the Township.

Supporting Local Community Organizations

Facilitating communication and collaboration among user groups was a common theme expressed by participants to improve support between the Township and community partners. Participants also suggested that the Township should create a database of organizations in the community, support fundraisers, and offer grants. It was identified that the Township could provide refugee support, share information about local community organizations on social media, continually improve recreation facilities, and to further support the Youth Action Council.

3.3 Online Community Survey

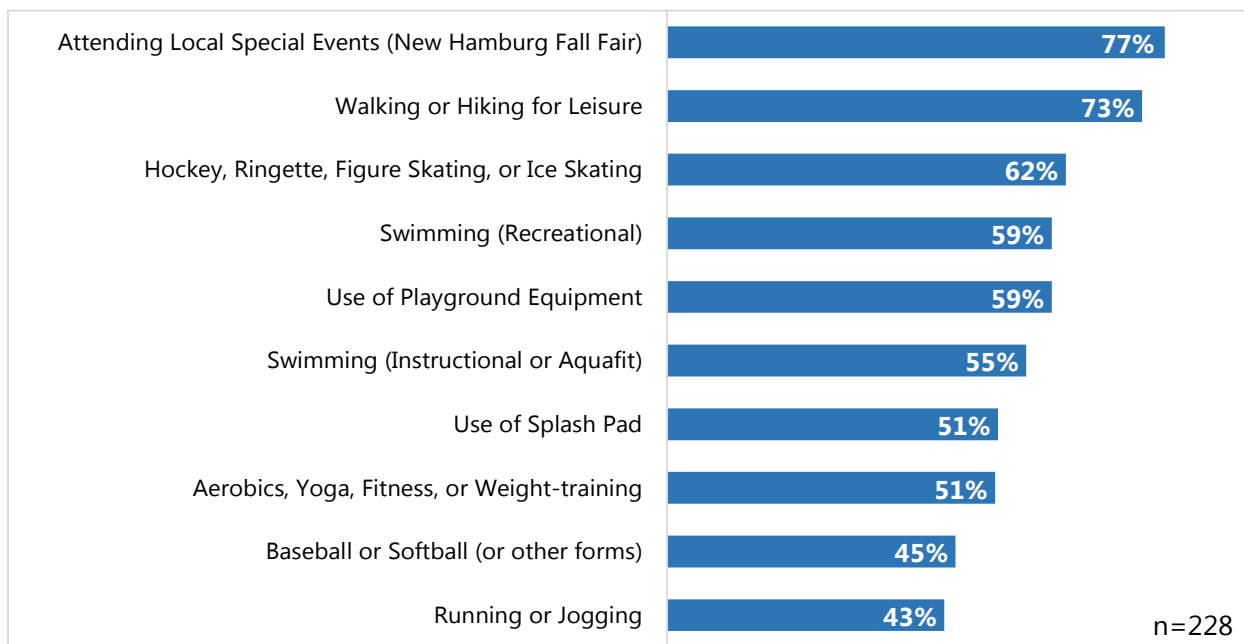
The Township's online community survey was active from February 12 to March 23, 2016, collecting resident feedback on a variety of topics related to parks, recreation, and culture. A broad range of input was received to understand local participation and usage patterns, opinions, and priorities in leisure pursuits. The survey was promoted through several avenues including the project webpage, e-mails, social media, posters, and word of mouth. Residents without access to a computer were provided with hardcopies of the survey.

A total of 228 surveys were completed and analyzed. The median age of survey respondent was 41 years, slightly above the median age recorded in the 2011 Census (40.4 years). The average size of participating households recorded at 4.0 persons and approximately 80% of respondents resided in New Hamburg and Baden. This section summarizes the key findings of the survey and excludes 'Don't Know', and 'No Responses', with a greater level of detail found in **Appendix D**. It is important to note that this was a self-administered, non-random survey and thus the results cannot be considered statistically significant or representative of the opinions of all residents. As with other consultation tools, the survey findings should not be considered in isolation, but instead factored within the context of other community input and assessment methodologies.

Participation in Parks, Recreation, and Culture Activities

Congruent with broader participation trends observed across the Province, respondents clearly had a preference for passive and informal recreation opportunities that could be self-scheduled. Seven of the top ten most popular activities undertaken over the past 12 months were unstructured pursuits, which included attending local events, walking for leisure, swimming, and using playgrounds. The three most popular organized sports and recreational activities were hockey/skating, instructional swimming, and baseball/softball (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Top Ten Most Popular Recreation Activities Participated in, Past 12 Months



Survey respondents indicated that they participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities at various locations, with the most popular location being a public park or facility in the Township of Wilmot (85%). Participating in these activities at home (32%) or at a park or facility outside of the Township (19%) were also popular locations (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Top Three Locations for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Activities, Past 12 Months

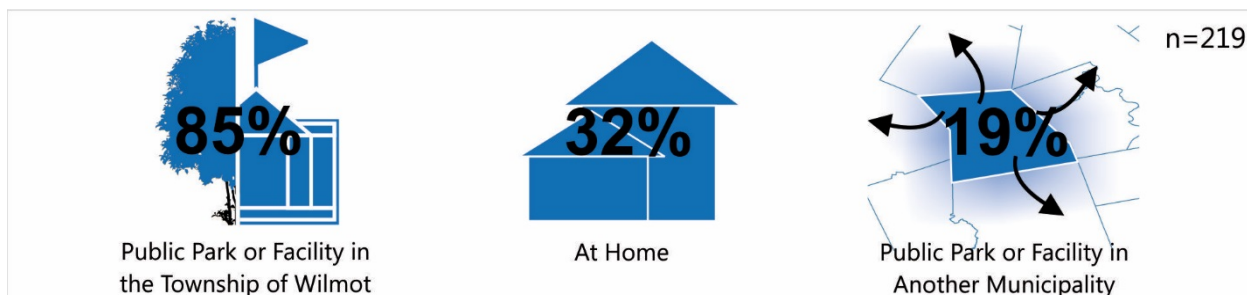
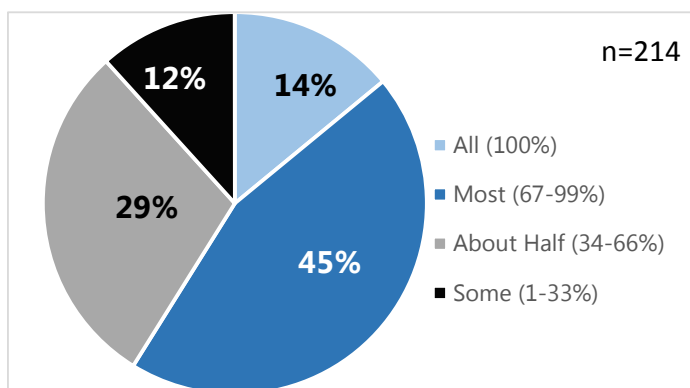


Figure 7: Proportion of Parks, Recreation and Culture Needs Met in the Township



In total, 59% of survey respondents stated that 'all' or 'most' of their parks, recreation, and culture needs are met within Wilmot, thereby indicating a strong connection to local services. Of respondents that travel outside of the Township (for all or some of their activities), the most common reason cited was that their desired facility or program is not available in Wilmot or that the quality of the facility or program is

superior. This is somewhat expected given the Township's small size and proximity to larger municipalities that may offer a more diverse range of facilities and activities. Respondents indicated that they travel to other communities for a variety of recreation activities, the most common being hockey, followed by walking, hiking, and cycling, arts and cultural events, fitness programs, and gymnastics. The majority of respondents travelling outside of Wilmot for these types of activities use facilities within the Region of Waterloo.

Respondents were also asked to identify the types of activities they would like to see offered in the Township. A broad range of suggestions were put forward ranging from competitive sports, passive activities, and arts and culture offerings. Improving trails and paths was the most common suggestion received with respondents desiring more connections between communities, better active transportation options, and bike and pedestrian access to the W.R.C. Other suggestions were more ice time for hockey and figure skating, fitness centres, dog parks, gymnastics, basketball, skateboarding, curling, and arts and culture activities (e.g. concerts, theatre, and art exhibitions).

Barriers to Participation

More than one third (36%) of respondents indicated that they are not able to participate in active recreation pursuits as often as they would like. The primary barrier that prevented respondents from fully participating in recreation opportunities was the lack of desired facilities or programs (52%), which was closely followed by the lack of personal time (44%). The lack of desired facilities or programs suggests that there may be gaps in recreation opportunities in the Township; however, the lack of personal time is a common participation barrier and a trend observed in many communities. Programs not being offered at a convenient time also posed barriers. Similarly, one third of respondents (35%) indicated that they were unable to participate in arts and cultural activities as often as they would like, reporting similar barriers such as the lack of time (60%) and the lack of desired facilities or programs (30%). The lack of information and lack of awareness of opportunities available were also barriers to 26% of persons unable to participate (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Figure 8: Top Three Barriers to Active Recreation Pursuits

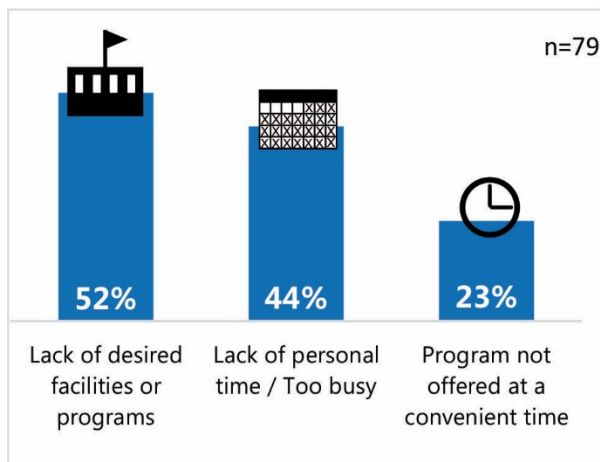
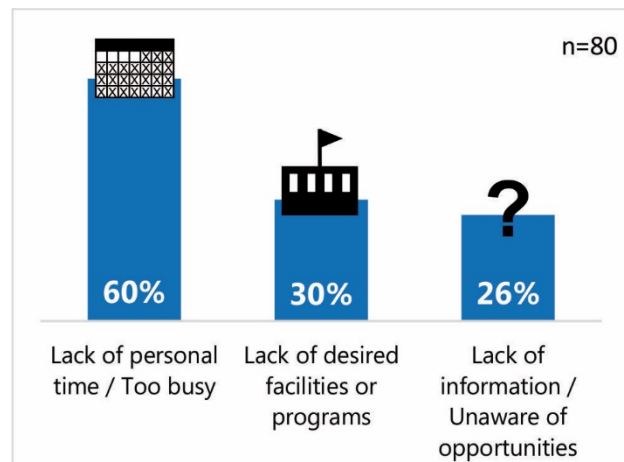


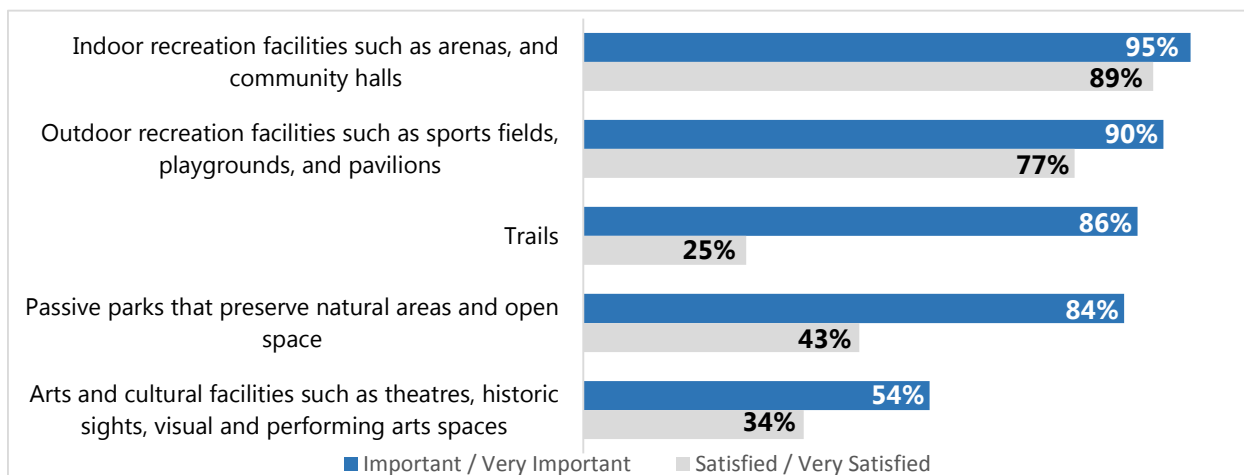
Figure 9: Top Three Barriers to Arts and Cultural Pursuits



Importance, Satisfaction, and Priorities

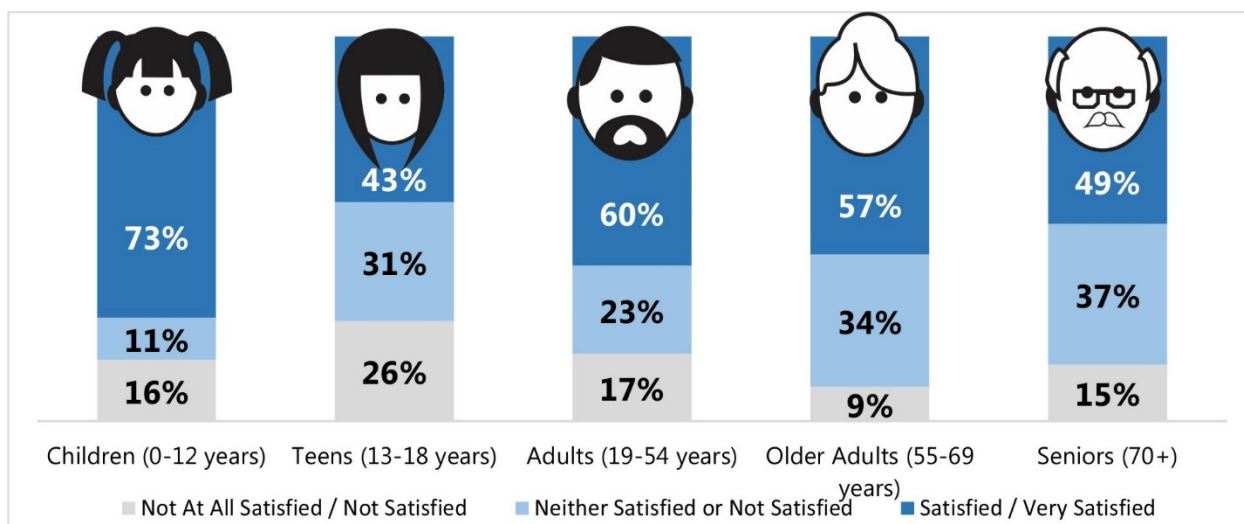
It was clear that survey respondents felt strongly about indoor recreation facilities as 95% felt that they were important or very important facilities in the Township. This was followed by outdoor recreation facilities (90%), trails (86%), passive parks (84%), and arts and cultural facilities (54%). As illustrated in Figure 10, lower levels of satisfaction were reported for each facility type, which provides an indication that expectations are currently not being met. These findings suggest that trails are most in need of improvement, although this facility type is not directly considered in this Master Plan given that the provision of trails have been explored through other municipal initiatives but does highlight the importance to the community.

Figure 10: Importance and Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation, and Culture Facilities



Survey respondents were most satisfied with the availability of parks, recreation, and culture opportunities in Wilmot for children under the age of 12 with a 73% satisfaction rating. Moderate levels of satisfaction were expressed for the remaining age groups, with the lowest levels of satisfaction reported for teens (43%). These findings should be interpreted with caution given that the median age of the survey respondent was 41 years and thus there is the possibility that older survey respondents may not be fully aware of the opportunities that are available for the younger age groups.

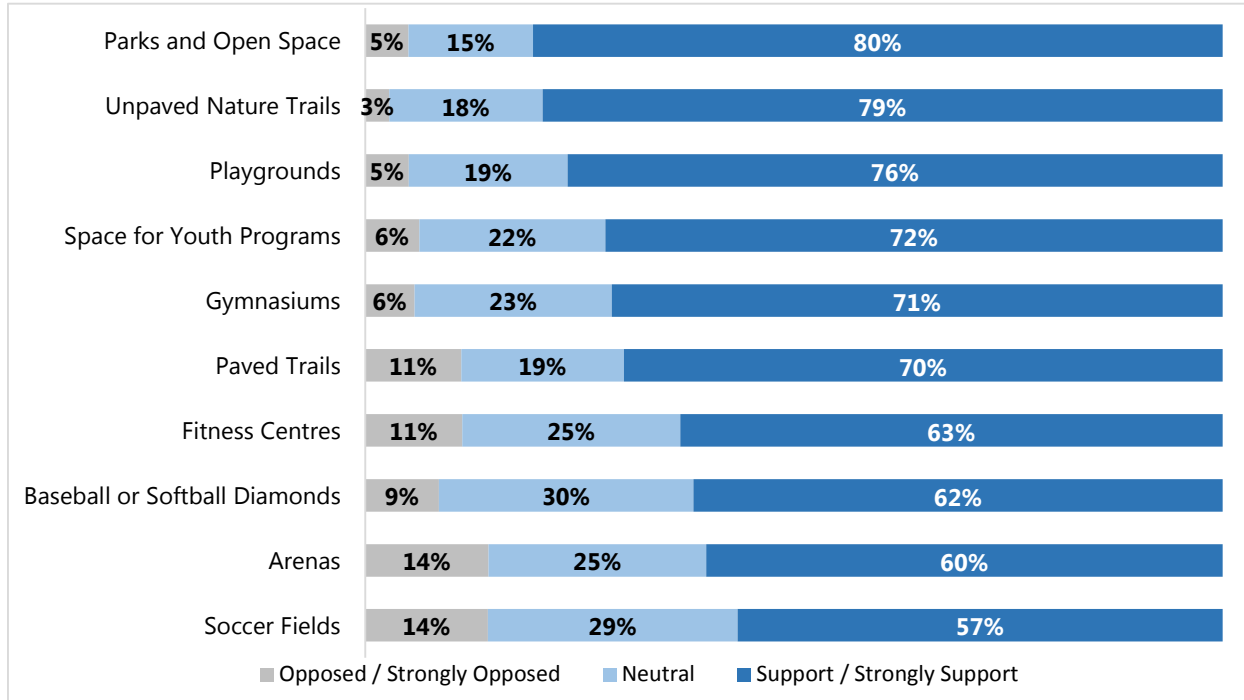
Figure 11: Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation, and Culture Opportunities by Age Group



When respondents were asked to rate their level of support for spending additional public funds on various municipal facilities, the strongest level of support was placed upon parks and open spaces (80%). Other facilities supported by respondents were nature trails (79%), playgrounds (76%), space for youth programs (72%), and gymnasiums (71%). The top facility priorities centred upon informal and unstructured activities that can be self-scheduled, aligning to broader

provincial trends. Facilities that ranked lower in support included sports and aquatic facilities, and visual and performing arts spaces, among others.

Figure 12: Top Ten Spending Support for Parks, Recreation, and Culture Facilities



General Comments

Respondents also had an opportunity to provide general comments to be considered in this Master Plan. Generally speaking, respondents spoke positively about the parks, recreation, and culture opportunities that are available in the Township, although a number of areas to improve were identified. The three most common themes that emerged from this portion of the survey is described below.

I think the community does a great job. We have much better facilities, and access to those facilities, than those in more highly populated areas.

- Testimonial From Survey Respondent

The Need for Additional Ice Time

Many respondents were passionate about hockey and figure skating and the survey revealed that ice sports are important in the Township and a number of requests were expressed for additional ice time. Respondents indicated that a lack of ice time was having a negative impact on minor hockey, with a number of comments focused on the limited capacity for growth in girls' hockey due to the lack of available ice in the Township.

Trails and Active Transportation Options

The need for trails was prominent in responses throughout the survey and trails are one of the major reasons that residents travel to other areas for their recreation needs. Respondents

frequently reported that it was difficult to move between communities without a car and that a trail system would provide improved recreation opportunities for biking, hiking, and walking. Respondents also indicated that the lack of path or trail to the W.R.C. was a barrier to accessing that facility and that the current options for using active transportation were unsafe.

Park and Facility Improvements

Respondents highlighted the need to improve maintenance at parks and facilities throughout the Township such as at arenas and playgrounds. Respondents expressed the need to provide safe environments that draw in users. A broad range of suggestions were also expressed to improve parks and facilities in the Township including park amenities (seating and gazeboes), new outdoor recreation facilities (e.g., skate park, pickleball court, etc.), preserving natural areas, and more.

3.4 Focus Groups

A series of focus group were held on April 4, 13, and 14, 2016 with a wide range of representatives of community organizations and age-specific cohorts to obtain specific insights into facility and program demands/needs, current pressures, and other key topics impacting the delivery of parks, recreation, and culture opportunities in the Township. These sessions also provided an opportunity for participants to network with each other through which the expression of creative ideas was encouraged.

A total of 71 participants attended eight separate focus groups, which were held with youth, older adults and seniors', families, indoor and outdoor sports, service clubs, agencies, and organizations in arts, culture, heritage, and special events. **Appendix E** contains a list of groups who participated in each focus group together with a high level summary of the key themes that emerged from each session. In addition, **Appendix F** contains a summary of input from each organization that submitted a stakeholder group survey. It should be recognized that **the input received from the focus groups do not represent recommendations, nor has the public input been altered even in instances where the comments incorrectly reflect the Township's actual policies, practices, or level of provision.** Below is a high level summary of the key themes that emerged from the focus group sessions.

- A number of participants expressed that the Township is fortunate to have the W.R.C. as it facilitates a wealth of leisure opportunities and draws users and visitors to Wilmot.
- Participants also spoke highly of the Township's dedicated staff team and the quality of a number of facilities.
- Suggested areas for improvement included: providing clear and consistent communication between the Township, user groups, and the public; explore new programming opportunities; and the update aging facilities.
- There was a desire for new indoor recreation facilities such as a third ice pad, indoor sports field, and flexible program spaces.
- Requests were made for more time at existing outdoor recreation sports fields. Suggestions included lighting existing sports fields or developing new fields.

3.5 Interviews with Mayor and Council

One-on-one interviews were held on April 4, 2016 with the Mayor and Councillors to establish an understanding of their expectations for the Master Plan and to understand their perspective on parks, facilities, and recreation services. Engaging members of Council also provided an opportunity to discuss key issues that they may be aware of from their interaction with the public. Due to the confidential nature of these interviews, statements attributable to specific Councillors are not reproduced, however, the following common themes occurred from the discussions:

- From a recreational perspective, the W.R.C. is the Township's greatest success, with particular references to its components including the pool and splash pad.
- Councillors were excited about the new active transportation system that is currently being implemented, although providing trails on private property will be a challenge.
- There needs to be less emphasis on organized sports and a greater focus on unstructured activities, and arts and culture.
- Key facilities that need to be assessed for this Master Plan included arena needs, the future of the Wilmot Community Pool, and community hall and playground renewal.
- Future priorities for the Township includes the need for a third ice pad, an artificial turf field (and the potential for a running track), implementing the Trails Master Plan, and responding to the evolving needs of residents.

3.6 Township Staff Workshop

To ensure that Township staff were engaged in the preparation of this Master Plan, two separate roundtable discussions were held with Township staff on April 4, 2016. This workshop engaged staff at all levels from managers and supervisors to frontline operations, administration and programming staff. Discussions centered on community strengths, needs, priorities, challenges, and opportunities with respect to the provision and delivery of parks, facilities, and recreation services. The details of these workshops are not presented in this document; however, the following broad themes emerged from the discussions:

- As the Township continues to expand, there is a need to continue growing Township resources to maintain the high level of service expected by residents.
- Township facilities that are underutilized should be considered for repurposing to maximize existing assets before investing in new ones.
- In becoming a high performance department, staff value effective communication and training so that they can deliver services effectively, efficiently, and responsively.
- Succession planning needs to be considered to ensure that the existing foundation of expertise is not lost as current employees retire or move on.
- While the Township has been successful in providing and maintaining its own infrastructure (e.g., recreation facilities), emphasis should be placed on building capacity internally for municipal services (e.g., programming).

3.7 Public Information Centre and Draft Master Plan Comments

A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held on December 8, 2016 at the Wilmot Recreation Complex to present the Draft Master Plan. The meeting was attended by residents, Township Staff and members of Council. A presentation walked attendees through the master plan process and highlighted a number of key recommendations. Attendees were invited to ask questions, provide comments, and to submit their feedback at the end of the presentation. Residents who were unable to attend the PIC were invited to review the Draft Master Plan online and to submit their comments through an e-mail link. During the two week comment period, the draft plan received a number of comments from the public that have been considered in finalizing the Plan.



4.0 Parkland

This section explores the Township's current supply of parkland and reviews existing parkland policies established in the Ontario *Planning Act* and the Township's Official Plan. The Township's parks system facilitates a number of outdoor recreational opportunities and it is essential that these amenities are preserved and enhanced to extend the quality of life for current and future generations. These spaces can take many different forms, ranging from manicured parkettes and open spaces to large naturalized tracts of ecologically valuable areas. Primary considerations for the parks system include, but are not limited to:

- Planning the appropriate function and use for each park;
- Achieving a satisfactory distribution of parkland to ensure that they are easily accessible and maintain the integrity of natural heritage systems; and
- Maintaining a high degree of walkability and connectivity among parks through active transportation infrastructure, key linkages, etc.



4.1 Parkland Classification System

A parkland classification system (or parkland hierarchy) is used to guide the development of the parks system by directing usage, size, form, function, and/or level of amenity found within different types of parks. The classification of parks may also allow the community to understand what a new park might include and can position parks to be compatible with neighbouring land uses. The Township's current parkland hierarchy is referenced in the Township's 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study, which classifies parks into three categories – Neighbourhood, Community, and Regional Parks. These parkland descriptions continue to be valid as the form and function of each park type have generally remained unchanged over the past 14 years, although there is merit in fine tuning these descriptions to align with current park uses and best practices from other municipalities and to ensure that the Township has a robust classification system to serve the needs of current and future residents. To reduce potential confusion over Township of Wilmot and Region of Waterloo property ownership, minor changes to parkland classification headings are recommended. Table 3 contains the Recommended Parkland Hierarchy that the Township should utilize to guide the development and redevelopment of parkland. The parkland hierarchy should also be incorporated into the Official Plan at the time of its next review.

Recommendations

1. Utilize the parkland classification hierarchy to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.
2. Incorporate a parkland classification system into the Official Plan at the time of its next review, using Table 4 contained within this Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan as a point of departure.

Table 3: Recommended Parkland Hierarchy System, Township of Wilmot

Township Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to serve all Township residents, with a secondary function of potentially attracting visitors from other municipalities. • Generally drive-to parks that are accessible by car or public transit. • May include unique natural and physical features, including (but not limited to) significant historical or cultural amenities, extensive trail networks, special events or staging areas, or a grouping of multiple major recreation facilities (e.g., indoor recreational complex, sports field complex, etc.). • Supported by park amenities including (but not limited to) parking, trail connections, washrooms, concessions, seating, pavilions, or other ancillary features. • Varies in size depending on its intended function. The land area is typically much larger than a Settlement Park, although often much smaller if a cenotaph is the main focus.

Settlement Park

- Intended to serve the entire settlement area and should be developed so that they are accessible to a wide segment of the population.
- Drive-to parks, but can also be accessed by walking or cycling.
- Should be located on generally level land in order to support a combination of active recreation facilities including sports fields, hard surface courts, community centres, and playgrounds, as well as unstructured green space and natural areas.
- Supported by park amenities including (but not limited to) parking, trail connections, pavilions, civic features, seating, and other ancillary features.
- The preferred size for a Settlement Park is 4.0 to 8.0 hectares although in lesser populated settlement/hamlet areas, 2.0 to 4.0 hectares may be considered.

Neighbourhood Park

- Intended to serve local residential areas within a larger settlement
- Should be located within about 800 metres (about a 10 minute walking distance) from the residential area being served, without crossing major barriers, preferably on the corner of two intersecting local roads.
- Includes existing undersized neighbourhood parkettes, as well as linear linkages to other neighbourhoods.
- Facilitates spontaneous recreation and leisure activities, providing a limited range of active facilities including playground equipment.
- Supported by seating, trail connections, pavilions, and other small-scale features.
- The preferred size for a Neighbourhood Park is 1.0 to 2.0 hectares
- Undersized Neighbourhood Parks less than 0.5 ha should be discouraged, except in instances that may be advantageous to the Township to reconcile gap areas and to address shortfalls in parkland.

4.2 Parkland Supply and Distribution

The Township's parkland inventory identifies 91 hectares (225 acres) of active parkland located at 32 municipal sites across Wilmot, as shown in Table 4. These parks contain a broad range of recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, shade shelters, seating areas, trails, and passive spaces that facilitate informal gatherings or activities.

Residents also have access to Township woodlots and other naturalized municipal lands, over and above the 91 hectares, which bolster local conservation/naturalization efforts and support Township of Wilmot Official Plan policies. In addition to the Township's parks supply, residents can enjoy many open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities located at local schools and non-municipal providers. Woodlots owned by the Region and Province are also found throughout Wilmot, in addition to lands owned by the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Table 4: Parkland Supply, Township of Wilmot

Name	Area (Ha)	Name	Area (Ha)
Township Park			
Administration Office Greenspace (East & West Lawn)	2.5	Norm S. Hill Park	8.9
Heritage Park	3.3	Oasis-in-the-Centre	0.2
Kirkpatrick Park	1.2	Scott Park	9.1
Linear Park Loop (Township East Lawn)	0.9	Wilmot Arboretum	2.4
Livingston Square	0.4	Wilmot Recreation Complex	26.3
		Sub-Total – Township Park	55.2
Settlement Park			
Centennial Parkette (Fountain)	0.01	Norm S. Hill Flats	1.6
Doug Fischer Memorial Park	4.1	Petersburg Community Park	5.4
Haysville Community Park	1.8	Sir Adam Beck Park	5.0
Mannheim Community Park	4.0	St. Agatha Lions Community Park	2.7
New Dundee Community Park	2.4	Sub-Total – Settlement Park	27.0
Neighbourhood Park			
Anna Tuerr Park	1.8	Linear Park	0.4
Brenneman Park	0.1	New Dundee Optimist Parkette	0.1
Captain MacCallum Park	0.5	Optimist Youth & Spahr Park	0.7
Catherine Street Park / Constitution Park	1.4	Riverside Park	1.0
Foundry Street Park	0.4	Sararas Park	0.6
Goldschmidt Park	0.9	Schneller Park	0.6
Greenwood Park	0.01	Shantz Park	1.1
		Sub-Total – Neighbourhood Park	9.6
Total Parkland – All Typologies			91.8

Note: Supply excludes 3.2 hectares of unnamed, naturalized open spaces in Mannheim. For the purposes of this Master Plan, the Linear Park has been re-classified from Township Park to Neighbourhood Park given its limited functionality and area it serves.

Based on the current parkland supply, **the Township is achieving an overall parkland service level of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents.** This is a stronger level of service than the 3.5 hectares per 1,000 target originally established through the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study, but is largely a result of developing the W.R.C., which is the Township's largest park (at 26 hectares) and functions as a major hub for recreation.

The recreation facility assessments undertaken in Section 5 of this Master Plan are not anticipated to generate considerable demands for a large quantum of new parkland nor would they require the assembly of very large park parcels similar in nature to a Norm S. Hill Park or the W.R.C. Further, the original park service level target of 3.5 hectares per 1,000 continues to be relevant and falls within the average service level range found in a number of municipalities across Ontario (generally between 3.0 and 4.0 hectares per 1,000).

On this basis, the Township of Wilmot should **continue to target its parkland service level at a rate of 3.5 hectares per 1,000 residents** throughout the master planning period. Utilizing this service level target means that the Township would require a total supply 91.4 hectares of parkland by the year 2026, which is the same level of parkland currently being provided. While the 3.5 hectare per 1,000 target provides a general indication of overall park needs, it is also important to look at service level targets for each classification of parkland to guide planning in terms of the types of parkland required. The 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study's targeted level of service was a result of Township Parks being targeted at 1.0 hectares per 1,000, Settlement Parks at 2.0 hectares per 1,000, and Neighbourhood Parks at 0.5 hectares per 1,000 (which collectively sum to the 3.5 hectares per 1,000 overall target).

Table 5: Parkland Service Level, 2016

Parkland Classification	Total Area	Current Service Level	Projected 2026 Service Level	Existing Service Level Target*
Township Parks	55.2 hectares	2.6 hectares per 1,000	2.1 hectares per 1,000	1.0 hectares per 1,000
Settlement Parks	27.0 hectares	1.3 hectares per 1,000	1.0 hectares per 1,000	2.0 hectares per 1,000
Neighbourhood Parks	9.6 hectares	0.4 hectares per 1,000	0.36 hectares per 1,000	0.5 hectares per 1,000
Total	91.8 hectares	4.3 hectares per 1,000	3.5 hectares per 1,000	3.5 hectares per 1,000

Note: Current service level based on a 2016 population of 21,344. Projected service level based on a population of 26,115. Lands exclude woodlots and other naturalized open spaces.

*Existing provision target based on the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study.

Table 5 illustrates the following key points to consider over the master planning period:

- The Township is exceeding its targeted level of service for **Township Parkland** and will continue to do so over the next ten years at over twice the targeted rate. This is attributable to the W.R.C. as this 26 hectare park on its own accounts for 1.2 hectares per 1,000 of the total level of service.
- Although **Settlement Parkland** is presently falling short of the targeted level of service, this is less of a concern when recognizing the W.R.C – although classified as a Township Park – provides many similar recreational and sporting functions as would a Settlement Park. The higher level of service of Township Parks offsets the lower level of service for Settlement Parks and looking at them collectively results in the Township achieving 3.9 hectares per 1,000 for these two higher-order classifications and remaining above the combined service level target for both typologies over the next ten years.
- The Township is achieving a slightly lower level of service than targeted for **Neighbourhood Parkland**.

As a result, parkland requirements for Township and Settlement Parkland are generally satisfactory during the master planning period and again reinforced by the fact that facility assessments do not yield the need for any large park types. The focus of future acquisition should thus be placed on augmenting the supply of Neighbourhood Parks, particularly as new residential areas are developed and can be serviced by parkland within reasonable walking distance of new homes. Applying the Neighbourhood Park target would necessitate the acquisition of up to 4 hectares of new Neighbourhood Parkland to achieve its 0.5 hectare per 1,000 target and attain a total Neighbourhood Park supply of 13 hectares by the year 2026. Note that this requirement for 4 hectares over and above the current supply is slightly higher than the quantum of new parkland that would be required when applying the overall park service target expressed in the preceding paragraphs.

In determining where to develop the 4 hectares of new neighbourhood-serving parkland, there are two primary factors to consider:

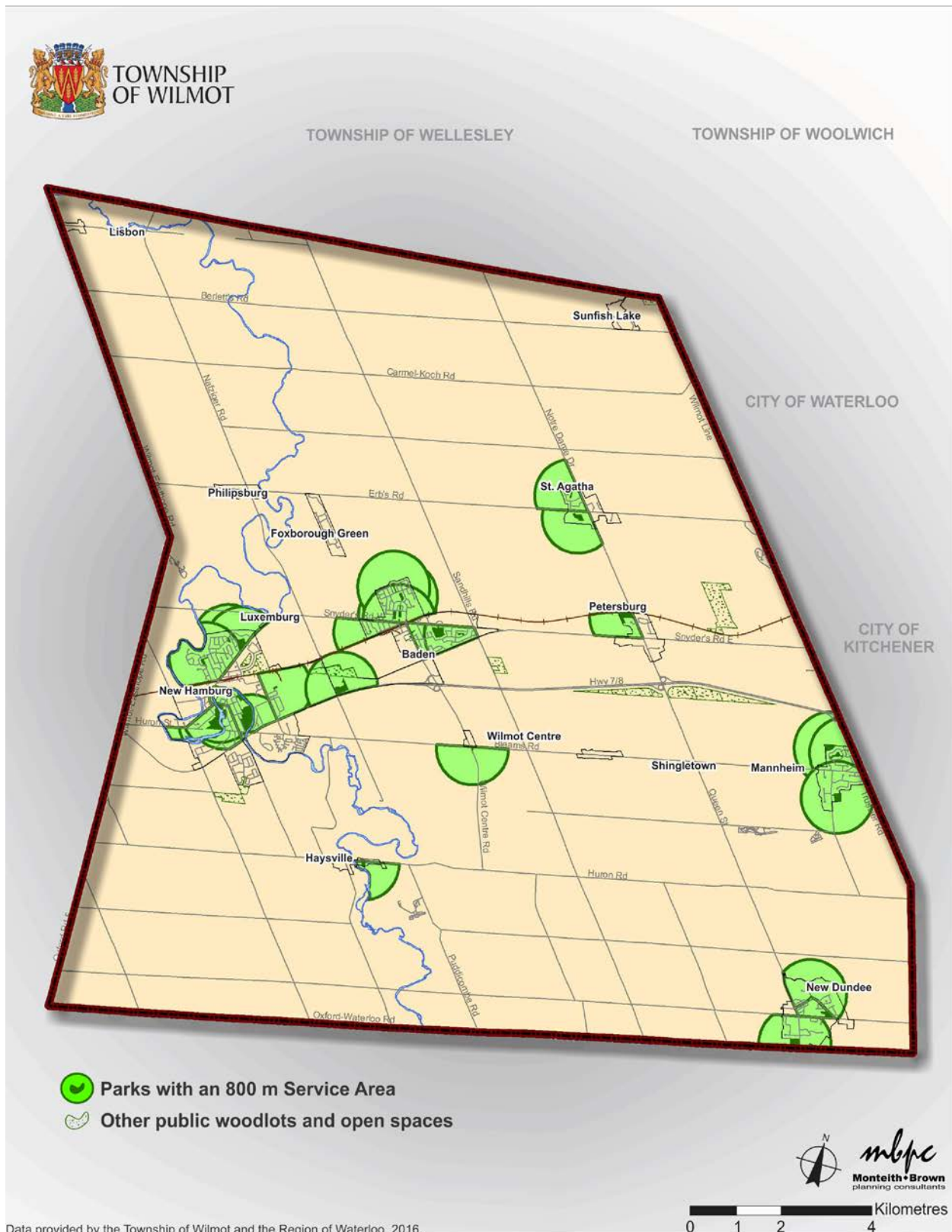
- 1) **Where the majority of new population growth will occur** - New Hamburg and Baden are expected to accommodate the vast majority of Wilmot's future residential growth.
- 2) **The geographic distribution of existing parks**, notably whether any major gaps exist - Figure 13 illustrates the distribution of parkland in Wilmot based upon an 800 metre service area applied to each park, and reflecting major pedestrian barriers (e.g., major roads, railway, waterbody, etc.) to show the level of accessibility from residential areas.

The high level examination of park distribution reveals that most major residential areas within urban settlements are served with some form of parkland, the notable exception being south of Highway 7/8 in New Hamburg (gap analysis among rural settlements suggest most illustrated gaps are associated with commercial, institutional or estate residential lands where low population densities do not necessarily warrant additional parkland).





Figure 13: Distribution of Parkland, Township of Wilmot



Therefore, it is recommended that the Township focus its efforts on securing new neighbourhood-level parks within new major residential areas located within urban settlements, implying that New Hamburg and Baden should receive the majority of the 4 hectare allocation with parkland provided with a secondary focus, where necessary, in the rural settlements if/where sufficient residential concentrations warrant new parkland as well.

Recommendations

3. Over the long term, actively pursue parkland acquisition and development to provide approximately 4.0 hectares of Neighbourhood Parkland to meet the Township's year 2026 parkland provision target, with a focus on providing parkland in the Township's main growth areas – New Hamburg and Baden.
4. On an opportunity basis, pursue opportunities to rectify any parkland gaps that may exist in the Township's smaller, built-up settlement areas, utilizing the parkland development strategies identified in this Master Plan, in addition to continuing to work with the Grand River Conservation Authority, Region of Waterloo, and local school boards to maintain access to a wider range of active and passive open spaces.
5. Strive to maintain a parkland service area of 800 metres from all neighbourhoods in settlement areas, unobstructed by major barriers such as major roads, railways, etc.

4.3 Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland, with the Ontario *Planning Act* and the Township of Wilmot Official Plan being the primary policy tools.

The *Planning Act* establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives to the dedication of land for parks and recreation purposes. Parkland policies contained in Official Plans – approved pursuant to the *Planning Act* – enable municipalities to require parkland dedication as a condition of land development or redevelopment, identify criteria by which this land is assessed, and factors to be considered when seeking cash-in-lieu of parkland. The *Planning Act* requires that parkland dedication conveyed to the Township (or purchased by the Township using cash-in-lieu monies) must be used for 'park or other recreational purposes', which includes land acquisition, as well as the erection or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery. The *Planning Act* also enables municipalities to require the dedication of lands for pedestrian and bicycle pathways as a condition of development approval over and above lands to be conveyed for parkland.

Overall direction guiding Wilmot's parks and open spaces is contained in Section 6.11 of the Township of Wilmot Official Plan, which maintains that:

“The Township will provide and maintain sufficient space for both active and recreational pursuits by combining the provision of parkland, sports fields, community facilities, and natural areas to satisfy the recreational needs of all ages and lifestyles, in a manner that reflects the Township's growth and financial priorities.”

Policies guiding parkland and open space acquisition are contained in Section 6.11.2 of the Wilmot Official Plan, which indicates that the Township may require up to 5% of lands for park purposes for all residential development and 2% of land for all non-residential development (e.g., commercial or industrial). Alternatively, the Township may accept cash-in-lieu of parkland where:

- the required dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size, or location for development of public parkland;
- the required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development;
- it is determined that existing park and recreational facilities in the immediate area of the proposed development are adequate to serve the projected increase in population; and
- funds are required to acquire, upgrade, or expand land, parks, and recreational facilities elsewhere in the Township to meet the needs of the projected population.

Woodlots and environmentally sensitive areas are excluded from parkland dedication, although the Township may assume these lands (over and above) for the purposes of protecting natural areas for passive recreation and educational uses.

Based on this criteria, municipal parkland development shall be of an appropriate size and configuration to effectively utilize municipal resources and facilitate meaningful recreation activities. Site visits to Township parks reveals that there are examples (such as Greenwood Park) that are undersized and offer limited recreational value. The Township must carefully scrutinize the type of land it acquires for future parkland.

Future parkland development should concentrate on providing neighbourhood level amenities. As recommended in the parkland hierarchy contained in Table 4, the provision of undersized Neighbourhood Parks less than 0.5 hectares is discouraged unless there is a need to reconcile gap areas and/or address parkland shortfalls. In cases where development is too small to result in a meaningful park parcel or where the immediate area already has suitable and unimpeded access to sufficient parkland, then the Township should consider accepting cash-in-lieu.

Should there be a need to supplement parkland supplies beyond the mechanisms permitted by the Official Plan and Planning Act, there are a number of other park acquisition strategies that the Township may pursue, such as (but not limited to):

- Municipal land purchase or lease;
- Land exchanges or swaps, particularly if development is to occur in natural areas highly valued by the community;
- Off-site conveyance of parkland;
- Establishment of a Parks Foundation (e.g., community, corporate, or municipal donations towards parkland acquisition);
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use; and/or
- Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners.

Recommendations

6. Avoid accepting or developing active parkland parcels of less than 0.5 hectares in size unless the Township has determined that there is a need to fill a gap in parkland and other options are inadequate.
7. Continue to employ alternative acquisition tools, as necessary, to supplement parkland dedications and enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.

4.4 Parkland Renewal and Design Guidelines

As the Township acquires or redevelops parkland, there are a number of key design features that should be considered to ensure that they are effective and functional. Emphasis should be placed on developing parks as vibrant destinations where residents and visitors can engage in meaningful experiences. This can be achieved through incorporating unique park designs that facilitate traditional activities and are flexible in accommodating informal and emerging pursuits.

Parkland Renewal

While most of Wilmot's parks are generally in good condition, improvements and enhancements to certain parks may be considered in response to anticipated growth pressures, evolving neighbourhood demographics (such as aging), the age of parks, availability of funding, volunteer initiatives, etc. Parkland redevelopment opportunities can also be used to improve the recreational benefit offered to residents living in the Township's more isolated or rural settlement areas. The possibilities for parkland renewal activities are endless but may include enhanced landscaping, rejuvenation of circulation areas, provision of shade structures and other comfort amenities, outdoor facility upgrades, and more. The Township should consider undertaking strategic parkland renewal and redevelopment projects, which may be accompanied by area-specific consultation, park-specific master plans, facility fit diagrams, and business planning, to receive sufficient feedback from local residents, better understand opportunities and constraints, and obtain accurate costing associated with any conceptual designs. The timing of potential actions is

subject to the Township's discretion, based upon needs determined through consultation, community demographics, and the availability of funding.

Inclusive Park Design

Ensuring that parks are inclusive and barrier free is also crucial to achieving the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. Other design features should be considered such as seating, shade areas, parking, connections to key destinations, and safety. In certain instances, environmental protection and naturalization should be sought to preserve sensitive spaces. The Township has already taken strides in a number of these areas such as developing an accessible splash pad at the W.R.C. and providing shade pavilions in its parks.

Enhanced Park Signage

Signage is also an essential design feature that plays an important role in establishing a visual identity and communicating what amenities are available in the community. The Township has erected signage at some of the Township's park and facilities, but they are inconsistent with the Township's branding and offer limited information (name of the park and facility only). The Township has a standardized, branded signage design and it is recommended that this template be implemented at all indoor and outdoor municipal facilities. By having consistent signage throughout the Township, a number of benefits are achieved, including:

Figure 14: Variation of Signage in Wilmot Township



- Serving as an indicator of the quality of the local parks system as a whole. As a first impression, a high quality sign can lead people to perceive that the park is of high quality.
- Communicating the corporate brand, carrying consistency throughout the Township, and promoting tourism.
- Promoting awareness among all residents that are part of the larger Township, in addition to non-residents from other municipalities.
- Informing residents and visitors of the location of public property, thereby avoiding confusion regarding access.
- Developing a sense of place to create unique park experiences and foster aesthetic development, while improving wayfinding among residents and visitors.
- Providing interpretive information connecting users to the park and encourage them to take an interest in their surroundings.

A good sign is attractive, clearly designed with contrast colours to enhance visual recognition, and has regard for its context and local surroundings. Signs should clearly state the name of the park or facility, provide an address for emergency purposes, and/or state the name of the local organization that assisted with the development of the facility. The installation of new signage should also be consistent with trailheads located in the Township, to remain consistent with the Township's Trails Master Plan.

Recommendations

8. Undertake strategic parkland renewal and redevelopment projects to ensure that parks effectively service their intended populations. Where appropriate, potential projects should be supported by area-specific consultation, park-specific master plans, facility fit diagrams, and business planning. The timing of potential actions is subject to the Township's discretion, based upon needs determined through consultation, community demographics, and the availability of funding.
9. Continue to maintain commitment to accessibility, safety, and comfort within the Township's parks system through compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (A.O.D.A.) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D.) principles.
10. Implement the Township's standardized, branded signage design template and install at all municipal parks and recreation facilities, and trailheads.

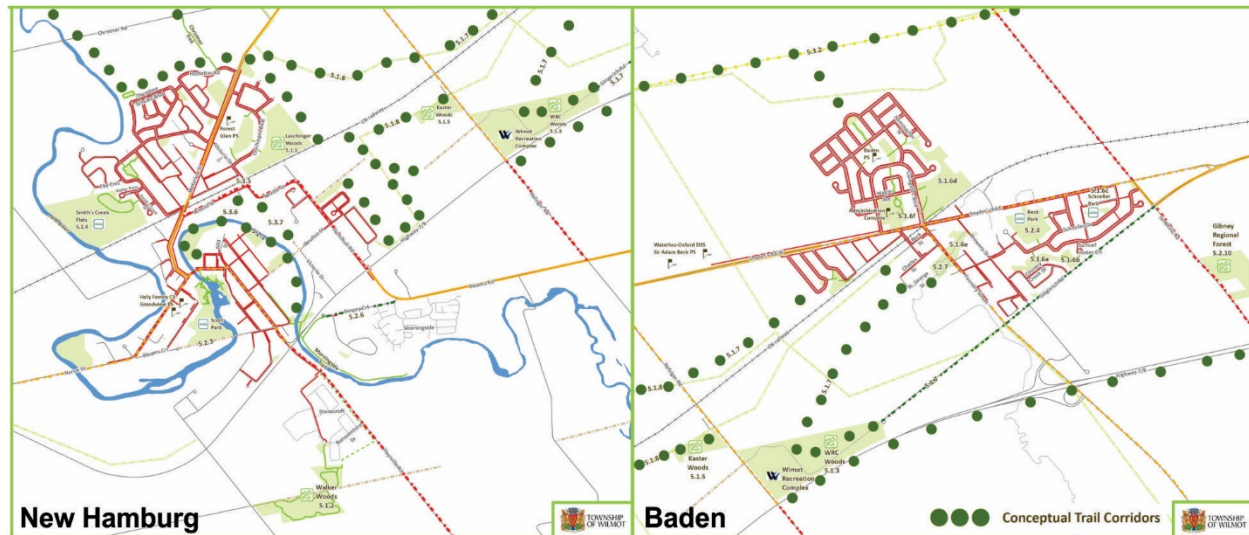
4.5 Active Transportation Opportunities in Wilmot

The provision of trails and other active transportation options in the Township is beyond the scope of this Master Plan, although it was clear throughout the background and consultation phase that the availability of trails and related active transportation infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks) are highly desired amenities that a number of residents feel is lacking in Wilmot. The Township recognizes these demands and has been actively pursuing trail development opportunities through ongoing implementation of the Township of Wilmot Trails Master Plan.

Completed in 2013, the Trails Master Plan establishes a long-term vision for trail development in the Township. Figure 15 contains an excerpt of the conceptual trail network for New Hamburg and Baden. There are a number of existing major trail routes located within established woodlands, environmental areas, and other publicly-owned lands throughout Wilmot including the Petersburg Regional Forest, Walker Woods, Petersburg Crown Lands, Avon Trail, Christner Trail, and Morningside Trail. In addition, unopened road allowances and cycling routes are available to trail users. General design guidelines are also articulated. The Trails Master Plan identifies a number of trail connections throughout the Township, which will be considered in the development of this Master Plan to enhance connectivity and opportunities to each park.

The Township is currently acting on recommendations advanced through the Trails Master Plan, including the Schmidt Woods/W.R.C. trail system, which recently received \$150,000 in funding through the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program. As the recommended trail network continues to be implemented, it is essential that the Township establishes trail connections to existing parks and consideration be given to linkages to future parkland to enhance connectivity and ensure that active transportation opportunities are available to accommodate residents without access to a vehicle.

Figure 15: Excerpt of Trails Master Plan Conceptual Trail Corridors, New Hamburg and Baden



Source: Township of Wilmot Trails Master Plan, 2013.

Recommendations

11. Continue to implement the Township's Trails Master Plan and Implementation Strategy with a priority of connecting of existing parks and recreation facilities, as well as future park development opportunities, to enhance connectivity and linkages throughout the Township.

5.0 Recreation Facilities

This section explores the state of the Township's existing portfolio of recreation facilities and the implications that may influence the future provision of facilities, services, and programs in Wilmot. An inventory of the Township's recreation facilities is contained in this section and where appropriate, supporting mapping is provided to illustrate the distribution of facilities and appropriate service coverage. General facility observations are articulated, together with general market trends, public input, facility assessments and recommendations.

5.1 Overview of Recreation Facilities

Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities owned by the Township of Wilmot are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Recreation Facilities, Township of Wilmot

Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)
Ice Pads	2	Wilmot Recreation Complex Note: the decommissioned ice pad at New Hamburg Arena is excluded from the supply.
Indoor Pools	1	Wilmot Recreation Complex (lap tank and leisure tank) Note: the decommissioned Wilmot Community Pool is excluded from the supply.
Fitness Spaces	1	Wilmot Recreation Complex
Gymnasiums	0	-
Community Halls	6	Haysville Community Centre Hall, Mannheim Community Centre Hall, New Dundee Community Centre Hall, New Hamburg Community Centre Hall, St. Agatha Community Centre Hall, Wilmot Recreation Complex Community Hall
Multi-Purpose Program & Meeting Rooms	14	Administration Complex (3), 121 Huron Street Building, New Dundee Community Centre (2), New Hamburg Arena (2), St. Agatha Community Centre, Wilmot Recreation Complex (5)
Youth Space	1	Wilmot Recreation Complex Youth Room
Older Adult Space	2	W.R.C. Active Living Centre, Wilmot Seniors' Woodworking & Craft Club
Sport Fields	14	Full: Wilmot Recreation Complex (3) Intermediate: Mannheim Community Park, Shantz Park Mini / Micro: Scott Park (6 mini), Wilmot Recreation Complex (2 mini, 1 micro)
Full	3	
Intermediate	2	
Mini / Micro	9	

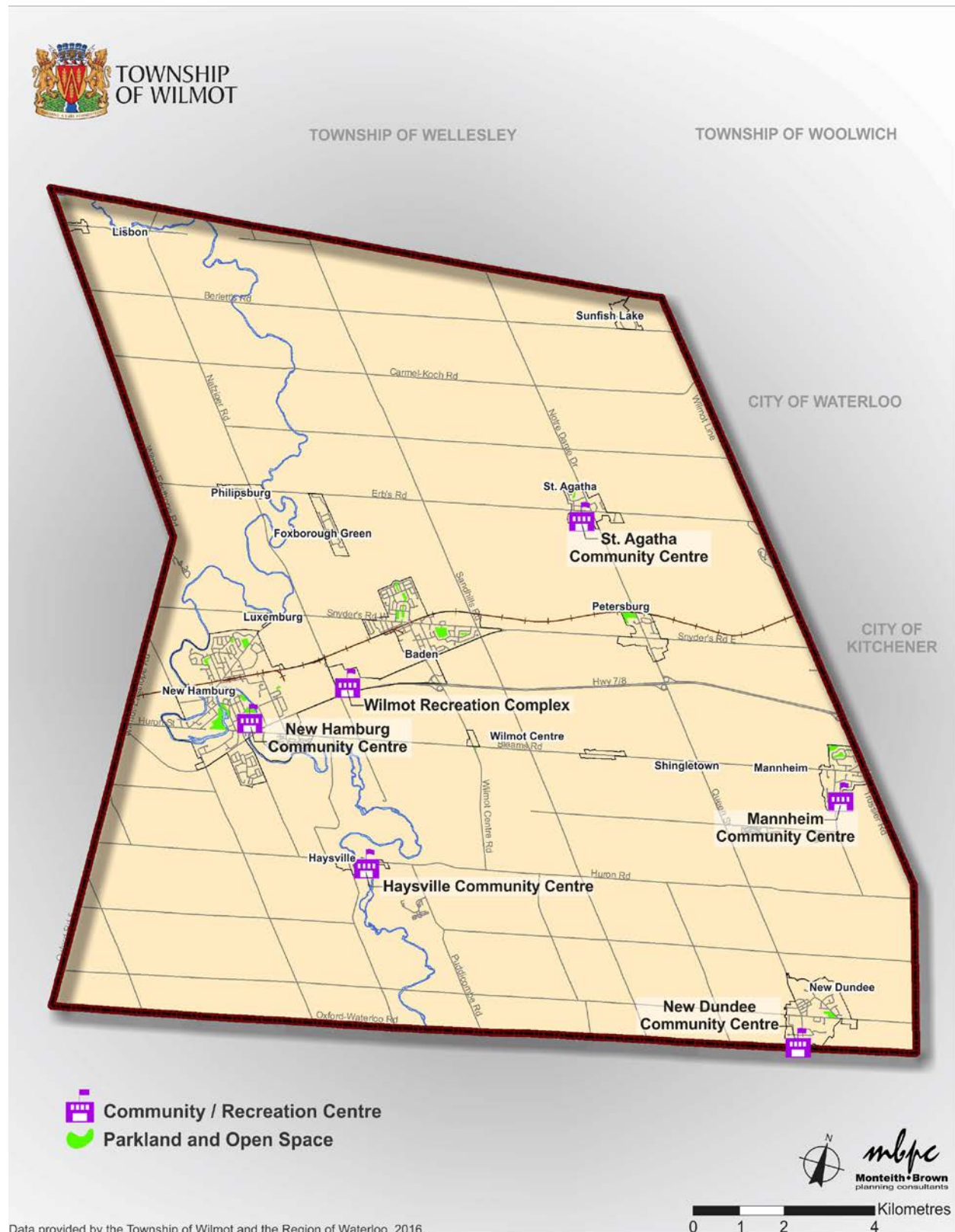


Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)
Ball Diamonds	11	Lit: Doug Fischer Memorial Park (2), Norm S. Hill Park (2), Petersburg Community Park, Sir Adam Beck Park (2), St. Agatha Lions Community Park Unlit: Mannheim Community Park, Norm S. Hill Park, Petersburg Community Park,
Lit	8	
Unlit	3	
Tennis Courts	5	Sir Adam Beck Park (2), New Dundee Community Park (2), Scott Park (1)
Lit	5	
Multi-Purpose Courts	4	New Dundee Community Park, Petersburg Community Park, Sararas Park, Scott Park
Skateboard Parks	1	Sir Adam Beck Park
Splash Pads	1	Wilmot Recreation Complex
Playgrounds	19	Various Park Locations





Figure 16: Distribution of Municipal Community and Recreation Facilities, Township of Wilmot



5.2 Ice Pads

Supply and Distribution

Two NHL sized ice pads are available at the Wilmot Recreation Complex (W.R.C.) that opened in 2007. Each ice pad is supported by six change rooms as well as seating for 750 and 350 spectators. The arena is centrally located between New Hamburg and Baden, drawing residents throughout the Township as well as adjacent municipalities.



An arena is also located at the New Hamburg Community Centre, which was built in 1948 and recently underwent a lobby renovation to update the entryway. However, the arena itself is no longer used for ice purposes stemming from the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study that determined a total of two ice pads were required to serve the Township, and recommended that the New Hamburg Arena be decommissioned following the opening of the W.R.C. The New Hamburg Arena dry floor is currently being used for rentals and youth programming by the Wilmot Family Resource Centre, the Community Players Theatre, and special events.

The Township's Capital Budget Forecast does not identify any major future projects to the Township's existing arena apart from replacing the roof at the New Hamburg Community Centre in 2019 (\$120,000). Some budgeting was put in place for a third ice pad for 2018-2019 (\$2,500,000) following the recommendation contained in the 2007 Recreation Facility Needs Study Addendum.

Community Engagement

The community engagement process revealed that the ice pads at the W.R.C. are highly valued assets in the Township; however, many stakeholders expressed the need for additional ice time to support current and projected user group needs. The online community survey found 62% of respondents participated in ice sports such as hockey, ringette, figure and ice skating over the past 12 months, which was the third most popular activity overall and the most popular organized recreational pursuit. Ice sports were also identified as the most popular activity undertaken outside of the Township and the second most desired facility type. However, the provision of arenas ranked ninth when respondents were asked to rank their support for spending additional funds on improving or developing facilities, suggesting that survey participants have more pressing priorities in the Township.

Input received through the focus groups suggests a demand for additional prime time ice, particularly during the weekdays, as arena user groups identified that they are constrained by the availability of ice time. As a result, user groups have indicated that they are unable to grow their program offerings and accept additional participants; some groups have indicated that they have a waitlist of individuals. To compensate for the limited ice time available in the Township, user groups have identified that they are traveling to neighbouring municipalities such as Tavistock, Plattsville, and Wellesley, where there is ice available. For example, New Hamburg Minor Hockey

reported using 15 hours of prime ice time per week in Wellesley and Plattsville. Some groups have expressed the need to reopen New Hamburg Arena, although this will require capital investment to renovate and upgrade the facility to an acceptable standard (e.g., mechanical equipment, accessibility requirements, etc.), in addition to building and fire code requirements, although it is recognized that the Township recently completed an update to the lobby area.

Market Trends

Historically, hockey has been a staple in Canadian winter sports; however, national participation rates in organized hockey have been declining since peaking in 2008 largely driven by escalating costs of equipment and travel, greater concerns over safety, aging populations and immigration from non-hockey playing regions. Recent research suggests that increases in female hockey participation has helped to sustain demand; however, trends suggests that participation rates have stabilized and overall registration is unlikely to increase at historical rates.

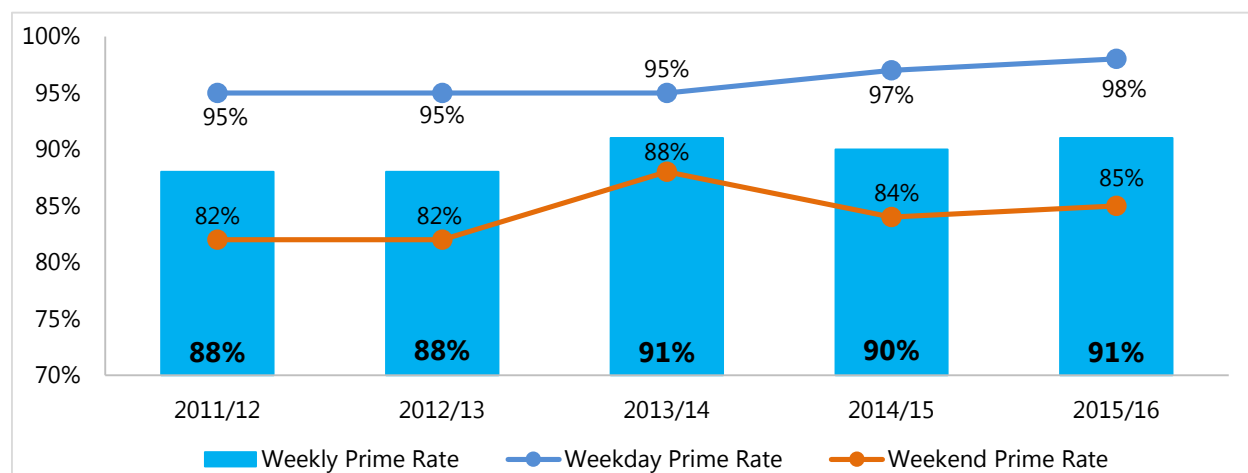
Utilization

A review of arena utilization data over the past five skating seasons reveals that during a typical week at the W.R.C., prime time ice usage has consistently been very strong⁹. As illustrated in Figure 17, the weekly prime utilization rate for the 2015/16 season was 91%, which is an increase from the 2011/12 season (88%). According to the Township, all booked prime time ice is being used by groups. This trend suggests that the ice pads at the W.R.C. are operating at full capacity given that it is generally uncommon for ice pads to operate at 100% utilization as it is often difficult to sell early hours during the weekend or late hours during the weekday. Given that the prime hours are nearly fully booked, the ice schedules indicated that some groups are utilizing early morning ice during the week (6 – 7 am) as well as shoulder hours (4:30 pm to 5 pm) to accommodate their ice needs. It is noted that there is some capacity to accommodate additional prime time rentals during the weekend given a utilization rate of 85%, although the available time slots may be more appropriate for older youth and adult play. One ice pad is also open during the summer to accommodate programming needs, although this data is not analyzed given that it is outside of the typical ice season.

The New Hamburg Minor Hockey Association is the Township's largest ice user, booking on average 57 hours per week during the 2015/16 season which is up from the 50.5 hours booked four years ago. The Wilmot Girls Hockey Association and New Hamburg Skating Club also experienced varying levels of growth in ice usage, while the number of hours used by the New Hamburg Firebirds generally remained unchanged. In order to accommodate the needs of child and youth-focused arena groups in the Township, arena schedules reveal that prime time usage for adults has declined by eight hours per week (to 15 hours per week) over the past five seasons. It is also recognized that minor ice groups also utilize early morning hours and shoulder prime hours, in addition to prime ice in adjacent municipalities.

⁹ Prime time is defined as 5 pm – 11 pm during the week and 6 am to 12 am during the weekend.

Figure 17: Prime Ice Utilization Rate, W.R.C., 2011-2016



Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016. Data reflects prime time usage between September and March.

In addition to rentals to organized arena users, the Township provides a limited range of free drop-in recreational skating programs at the W.R.C., including public skating, shinny, and more. These programs typically take place during non-prime hours where the ice is generally not booked for user group rentals, although it is recognized that on each Sunday, two hours are booked for public skating. As illustrated in Table 7, participation in drop-in programs have nearly doubled over the past five years due to varying levels of growth in each skating program. Much of this growth was driven by Parent and Tot skates and Adult Shinny Hockey, which have increased by four fold and two fold, respectively. The growth in Parent and Tot skates may be due to the growing number of young families in the Township, particularly in Baden. The Township does not offer any registered skating programs.

Table 7: Participation in Drop-in Recreational Skating, 2011 – 2015

Year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Growth (2011-2015)
Public Skating	1,625	1,809	2,317	2,333	2,403	48%
Parent and Tot	290	580	870	1,160	1,475	409%
Adult Skate	870	928	986	1,040	1,276	47%
Adult Shinny Hockey	290	450	580	696	870	200%
PD Day and March Break Skate	275	276	270	280	288	5%
Total	3,350	4,043	5,023	5,509	6,312	88%

Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Needs Analysis

Ice pad needs have been closely monitored in recent years as it has been suggested that a third ice pad may be required over the foreseeable future in order to accommodate existing demand

and to support future growth. The 2007 Addendum to the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study and the 2013 Indoor Ice Usage and Needs Analysis examined the future need for ice surfaces in Wilmot and revealed the need for a third ice pad during this planning period, although it was recommended that further studies were required to determine strategies for delivering a third ice surface to complement the Township's existing arena supply. Proposed locations included expanding the W.R.C., rehabilitating the New Hamburg Arena, or new construction at an alternative facility.

The W.R.C.'s two ice pads serve as valuable assets in the provision of municipal recreation opportunities that benefit local and neighbouring residents, allowing for cross-programming and are ideal for tournaments. Over the past five years, the Township has done an excellent job in accommodating ice users during prime time hours. Notwithstanding this, population growth over the past decade has translated into increasing registration for most arena groups, resulting in increasing pressures for additional prime hours. As the utilization analysis has revealed, arena usage at the W.R.C. has been at near full capacity over the past five seasons. While there are certain periods of prime time and shoulder ice available, these times are generally undesirable for most groups.

In order to accommodate the existing ice needs, arena groups are travelling between 15 to 30 minutes to arenas in adjacent municipalities including Tavistock, Plattsville, and Wellesley, where there is available prime time ice. This is generally considered to be a reasonable driving distance given that participants in this sport are expected to travel to access ice. Having access to regional ice pads is highly beneficial to residents within smaller, rural, and geographically dispersed communities such as Wilmot since a regional supply alleviates the financial burden placed on any one individual municipality and draws from a larger population base to create the critical mass necessary for sustainable arena operations. It also reduces the need for a single municipality to undertake a multi-million dollar investment to construct a new arena and subsidize its operations for decades, and in turn minimizes the municipality's exposure to risk particularly at a time where arena participation rates are trending downwards and leading many to question whether current levels of demand can be sustained over the long-term.

To determine current and future ice pad requirements, a market-specific service level target is applied because it is able to consider the impact of participation trends, accepted standards of play, population growth, and demographic factors. The 2013 Indoor Ice Usage and Needs Analysis recommended a provision target of one ice pad for every 450 minor participants. Adult participants were excluded from the provision target due to a number of factors such as having greater mobility and the fact that the majority of prime ice in the Township is utilized by minor groups. Given that trends in utilization, local participation, and future growth potential have generally remained unchanged since the previous study, it is recommended that the existing provision target be maintained. While utilization of this standard would suggest that the Township currently has a slight deficit of 0.3 ice pads, it is recognized that there is currently time available during prime time on weekends that suggests some additional unused capacity exists.

Table 8: Projected Ice Pad Requirements

Year	2016	2026
Projected Population (estimated child/youth population based on the proportional representation from the 2011 Census)	21,344 (4,280)	26,115 (5,237)
Estimated Number of Minor Participants (Assumes a minor penetration rate of 24%)	1,019	1,246
Ice Pad Requirements (One ice pad per 450 minor participants)	2.3	2.7
- Deficit / Surplus Capacity Based on a supply of 2 ice pads	-0.3	-0.7

Minor ice user groups indicated a collective registration of 1,097 participants for 2016, the majority of whom (1,019 participants) were reported as Wilmot residents. With an estimated youth population (age 5 – 19) of 4,313 for 2016, the number of local participants translates into a penetration rate of 24%. Assuming that the penetration rate remains stable during this planning period, it is projected that there will be approximately 1,246 minor hockey participants by the end of the study period.

Based on the recommended provision target, the Township will require 0.7 ice pads by 2026, which generally aligns with the findings from previous arena studies. However, unforeseen circumstances have arisen since the completion of these previous study that were not apparent at the time, most notably:

- The New Hamburg water treatment plant has almost reached its capacity, which will limit future development until expansion upgrades are completed sometime between now and 2020 as per the Township's Capital Budget Forecast.
- National trends in hockey suggest that participation in the sport peaked in 2008 and as a result, long term participation trends is uncertain.

Based on such considerations as well as population growth of under 1,000 children and youth, penetration rates and player registrations among local minor hockey organizations are anticipated to remain fairly stable over the master planning period. Furthermore, leveraging the existing capacity available in arenas that are operated by area municipalities has benefited arena groups and municipalities throughout Waterloo Region given that each community shares a common goal to maximize the use and efficiencies of existing facilities prior to constructing new ones (and partially offsets any inconvenience of traveling outside of municipal borders).

Township Staff have reached out to area municipalities to quantify the degree of capacity available among arenas that are within a reasonable driving distance of Wilmot. Should any of the area municipalities decide to pursue the construction of a new arena(s) with capacity already available, it runs the risk of eroding utilization and financial performance of the regional supply as a whole

since it would largely pull away shoulder hour and weekend rentals from other rinks, thereby reducing their respective revenue streams (and cost recovery ratios, which in turn could lead to higher prime time rental rates).

For the next five years, it is unlikely that sufficient demand for a third ice pad will be generated based upon the fact that:

- the majority of population growth will not occur until after the New Hamburg Water Treatment Plant is expanded; and
- penetration rates in ice sports are expected to remain stable as a best case scenario (or decline, in line with national and provincial trends, as a worst case scenario);
- it is assumed capacity will continue to be available regionally in arenas operated by area municipalities, and that Wilmot residents will continue to be able to access these ice pads at a similar or lower rental rate than what is levied at the W.R.C.; and
- capacity calculations suggesting that between 10 and 15 hours of prime time ice are not being presently accommodated through the W.R.C., and recognizing these hours are likely being absorbed by ice pads in area municipalities.

After five years have elapsed, the Township should once again re-evaluate the need for a third ice pad based on the results of ongoing monitoring efforts focused on registration and utilization rates, and other market conditions at that time including population growth. Should the five-year review reveal that a third ice pad can be rationalized in a fiscally responsible manner, there are three options to explore at that time to do so, recognizing that each offers its own pros and cons:

- 1) Reopen the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre to ice sports;
- 2) Construct a third ice pad at the Wilmot Recreation Complex; or
- 3) Construct a single pad arena on a new site.

Table 9: Potential Options for Constructing a New Ice Pad

Option	Pros	Cons
1) Re-open the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical and sentimental value • Centrally located in New Hamburg • Facility and land is owned by the municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs required to bring the facility up to code, modernize, and expand • Single pad arenas are functionally and operationally less efficient compared to multi-pad arenas • May displace existing facility users • Parking lot is undersized
2) Construct a third ice pad at the Wilmot Recreation Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economies of scale in operation to be gained and potential to recover a greater percentage of operating costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to add an ice pad to the existing facility • Availability of space on the existing site

Option	Pros	Cons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other facility components (pool, dryland training space, etc.) benefits players and spectators • High appeal for tournaments • Centrally located in Wilmot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption of existing site layout and traffic flow • Cost to upgrade refrigeration equipment and relocate underground utilities
3) Construct a new single pad arena at an alternative site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers an opportunity to build a brand new building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely the most expensive option (especially if the Township must assemble new lands) • Single pad arenas are functionally and operationally less efficient compared to multi-pad arenas

During the interim, it is recommended that the Township undertake an engineering study to assess the costs associated with re-opening the arena at New Hamburg Community Centre, which will assist the Township in selecting the most appropriate option should a third ice pad be rationalized in the future. In the event that another location is selected for arena development, this study should also identify the costs associated with converting the floor pad into a warm building to address demands for active indoor sports. As articulated in the gymnasium facility assessment, a municipal gymnasium is not currently available and it is recommended that the Township explore securing access to school gymnasiums. Conversion of the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre into a gymnasium may accommodate this need, although this would be subject to the outcome of architectural and engineering studies.

The Township should also continue to work with ice users to maximize use of the available ice time at the W.R.C. and work with adjacent municipalities to investigate opportunities to accommodate additional capacity for Wilmot user groups. The allocation of ice is currently accomplished through an annual meeting between the Township, minor ice groups, and other local arena organizations. The development of an Ice Allocation Policy recommended in previous studies continues to be supported given that it provides the Township and its user groups with the tools to ensure that the allocation of ice time is distributed efficiently and equitably.

Recommendations

12. Re-evaluate the need for a third ice pad in 2020 following the expansion of the New Hamburg treatment plant. The Township should monitor participation and utilization trends during this time to ensure that the demand for ice is sustained during this period. This exercise should also confirm the size of the children/youth population once the 2016 Census for population by age cohort has been released, seek to determine if national hockey participation trends (declining participation) are affecting Wilmot, undertake consultation with arena groups, and investigate opportunities in adjacent communities to

Recommendations

accommodate additional capacity within their respective arenas to accommodate Wilmot residents.

If a third ice pad is determined to be required, undertake a site selection process, which should include the following options: a) re-opening the New Hamburg Community Centre for ice, b) expansion of the Wilmot Recreation Complex, and c) any other site(s) deemed appropriate for consideration.

13. Undertake an engineering study to assess the costs associated with re-opening the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre to assist with identifying the location for a third ice pad should demand exist in the future. This study should also identify the costs associated with converting the floor pad into a warm building, in the event that another option for a third ice pad is selected.
14. Develop an ice allocation policy to ensure that the allocation of ice time is distributed efficiently and equitably.

5.3 Indoor Pools

Supply and Distribution

The Township offers an indoor pool at the W.R.C. featuring two pool tanks, both of which contains accessible features. The 25 metre, 8 lane rectangular tank is maintained at 25 degrees Celsius and features a diving board, making it suitable for lap swims, competitive swims and meets, and general aquatic programming. The separate warm water leisure pool measures 20 metres by 20 metres and is kept at 31 degrees Celsius and offers an easy entry, toddler slide, bubble and spray area, swirl pool, and fourteen jets. This smaller pool accommodates younger swimmers, older adults, and specialty programs.



A former municipal indoor pool is located adjacent to the Forest Glen Public School in New Hamburg. Known as the Wilmot Community Pool, this facility ceased operations once aquatic programming was shifted to the W.R.C in 2012. There are also a number of privately owned and maintained swimming pools throughout Wilmot including an indoor swimming pool at Foxboro Green, Morningside, and Stonecroft adult lifestyle communities while outdoor pools are located at all five of the Township's campgrounds including County Gardens RV Park, Holiday Park, Landings Campground, Nith River Campground, Alpine Country Trailer Park. It should be noted that privately operated pools are not available for use by the general public.

Community Engagement

Participants throughout the community engagement process expressed positive input regarding W.R.C, with specific reference to the pool. In each focus group that was conducted for this Master Plan, the indoor pool was identified as one of the most highly valued assets in the Township.

The online community survey found that 60% of respondents swam in the past 12 months, ranking fourth among all activities. Participation in swimming is generally a popular activity given that it can be pursued by a broad spectrum of residents. The fact that the Master Plan's community engagements did not identify any improvements with respect to the indoor aquatics facility suggests that residents are generally satisfied with the existing facility. This is further supported when survey respondents were asked to rate their support for spending additional public funds on various facility types as indoor aquatics centres ranked 13th out of 22 facility types, which suggests that there are other facility priorities. Comments were also received from residents regarding the need to ensure that swim programs remain affordable and suggestions to convert the closed indoor pool at the Forest Glen Public School into an outdoor pool or another use, particularly given that this location is within walking distance of many residents in New Hamburg.

Market Trends

Indoor pools are among the most sought after public facilities due to their ability to accommodate a wide range of ages, interests, and abilities. Learning to swim is an essential life skill that all residents can benefit from. While private backyard pools can provide similar recreation experiences, public indoor and outdoor pools offer a broad range of aquatic programming and also serve as a venue for residents to gather and form community ties. Despite these benefits, municipal indoor aquatic facilities are one of the most expensive recreational facilities to operate especially in communities with smaller tax bases. The Township is fortunate to offer an indoor aquatics centre to meet the needs of both local residents and benefits from attracting users in adjacent municipalities to optimize utilization.

Utilization

The Township offers a broad range of aquatic swimming opportunities on a program or drop-in basis. With respect to registered programs, the Township provides swimming lessons ranging from preschool to adult swim classes. Users may also drop-in to open swim programs subject to availability of capacity. In addition, private and semi-private swim lessons are offered. Based on registration data provided by the Township (Table 10), participation in swimming programs have been on the rise over the past four years. The program fill rate for 2015 was 86%, which is an increase of 16% from 2012. This increase is primarily driven by the popularity in aquatic programs for preschool and children. The growing popularity of drop-in recreational swim programs also contributed to this growth, supporting trends that suggest a preference for drop-in programs for increasingly time-constrained lifestyles. Furthermore, the program capacity for accommodating users were increased each year to accommodate aquatic demand.

Table 10: Participation in Registered Swim Programs by Program Type, 2012 – 2015

Year	2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Regstr	Cap	Regstr	Cap	Regstr	Cap	Regstr	Cap
Preschool	1,277	1,987	1,572	1,858	1,789	2,154	1,807	2,156
Children	1,161	1,694	1,246	1,858	1,370	1,558	1,391	1,886
Teens	16	36	27	36	13	24	8	24
Adult	16	36	8	12	5	12	1	6
Drop-in	166	-	309	-	255	-	302	-
Total	2,636	3,753	3,162	3,764	3,432	3,748	3,509	4,072
Fill Rate	70%		84%		92%		86%	

Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Participation in drop-in recreational swimming also experienced considerable growth over the past five years. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of participants in drop-in recreational swimming increased by 9% (2,505 participants), strengthening participation trends that suggests a preference for drop-in recreation pursuits. As illustrated in Table 11, open swim is the most popular program, while adult/senior swim experienced the most growth between 2012 and 2015.

Table 11: Participation in Drop-in Recreational Swim, 2012 - 2015

	2012	2013	2014	2015	Growth (2012-2015)
Length / Lap Swim	5,287	5,518	5,013	5,030	-5%
Adult / Senior Swim	234	705	699	634	171%
Family Swim	6,660	6,094	7,762	6,692	0%
Open Swim	9,393	9,480	10,981	10,425	11%
Aquafit	5,467	6,295	6,292	6,765	24%
Total	27,041	28,092	30,747	29,546	9%

Note: Aquafit includes Aquafit, Easy Does It Aquafit, and Aqua Fun.

Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Needs Analysis

Throughout the Master Planning process, the indoor pool at the W.R.C. was cited as one of the most highly valued facilities in the Township. Residents are fortunate to have access to a facility of this calibre given that it is uncommon for communities with fewer than 30,000 population to offer a municipal aquatics centre. Historically, the Township had been served by the Wilmot Community Pool at the Forest Glen Public School since 1973 and through previous studies, it was identified that a replacement facility was required due to building constraints and inefficiencies at the former location. The previous study recommended that a new aquatics facility be integrated

as a part of the second phase of the W.R.C. Although aquatics centres are often one of the most costly facilities to provide (from both capital and operational perspectives), the Township had established a strong understanding of the costs involved and residents have grown accustomed to having this type of facility, continuing to offer this service made sense, particularly when efficiencies could be achieved being co-located at a multi-use recreation complex.

A population-based service target of one indoor aquatics centre for every 30,000 to 40,000 residents is typically applied to identify needs. The Township has enjoyed a higher level of service over the past four decades and is currently providing a service level of one indoor aquatic centre for every 21,344 residents. At the end of the master planning period when the service level will be roughly one indoor pool per 26,000, it is fully expected that the W.R.C. will be able to meet the needs of Wilmot residents and thus no new indoor aquatic centres need to be constructed over the next ten years.

As it is clear that only one indoor aquatic centre is required to serve the Township over the foreseeable future, the Wilmot Community Pool is redundant and no longer required from a recreational perspective. In order to avoid costs associated with maintaining this facility, the Township should remove this building from their inventory of recreation facility assets and divest of the property possibly through a negotiated agreement with the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Recommendations

15. As a part of a cost avoidance strategy, the Township should remove the former Wilmot Community Pool from its inventory of recreation facility assets and divest of the property. Staff should continue discussions with Waterloo Region District School Board to determine if there is an interest in acquiring the property for use by Forest Glen Public School.

5.4 Fitness Spaces

Supply and Distribution

The Township does not offer equipment-based fitness facilities given the number of private fitness providers located in Wilmot and area municipalities. Instead, the Township utilizes a specialized space to deliver a variety of studio-based fitness programming at the W.R.C. Known as the Dryland Training Room, this multi-purpose space serves a number of functions as it can also be utilized by arena and aquatic user groups to advance their training opportunities. This space is complemented by an indoor running track. In addition, the Township also offers fitness programs in W.R.C. multi-purpose rooms.



Community Engagement

Half of the online community survey respondents (50%) participated in fitness programs (aerobics, weight-lifting, yoga, etc.) within the past 12 months, making these the eighth most popular activity. Participation in fitness was the fourth most popular activity undertaken outside of the Township, which is expected given the fitness offerings available in Wilmot. Some respondents expressed the desire for a fitness centre and more programs to be offered locally, and support for public investment in fitness centres ranked 7th out of 22 facility types, suggesting that this facility type may be a priority in the Township. A number of participants indicated that they currently have memberships to private fitness providers in neighbouring municipalities (e.g., Kitchener), although there was not a strong desire for a municipally-provided fitness centre in the Township.

Some focus group participants also expressed the need for a larger fitness studio that would support a broader range of programming. It was suggested that the existing fitness studio space is undersized and lacked sufficient equipment storage space. The need for higher ceilings was also mentioned.

Market Trends

The emphasis being placed on personal health is resulting in growing participation across Ontario for physical fitness activities. This is translating into increasing use of private and public sector fitness services including active living programming centred on general health and wellness, cardiovascular training and stretching activities (e.g., aerobics, yoga, Pilates, etc.). Group fitness programming is one of the fastest growing segments of the sector, more so than traditional weight-training, given that these programs are designed to be fun, social activities ('Zumba' is a notable example). Locally, the Township and Community Care Concepts offers active living pursuits in municipal facilities, while equipment-based fitness centres are operated by local private sector establishments (e.g., Goodlife, Curves, Anytime Fitness, Absolute Fitness, CORE, etc.) in the Township, as well as in area municipalities including Waterloo and Kitchener.

Utilization

Although the Township does not offer an equipment-based fitness centre, a limited range of municipal active living programs are available at the W.R.C. Such programs include, but are not limited to yoga, bootcamp, body pump, and sport ball. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of participants registered in fitness programs grew by nearly 100 participants. During this time, total program capacity increased by 208. Given that growth in program capacity has outpaced registration, the program fill rate declined by 18% to 80% over the past three years (Table 12). Township staff indicated that there is a waitlist for some programs, which suggests that while there may be new programs (or time slots) offered each year, there may be other programs that are in demand. In addition, these fitness programs are augmented by the fitness programs offered by community partners within municipal facilities.

Table 12: Participation in Registered Fitness Programs, 2013 – 2015

Year	2013		2014		2015	
	Registered	Capacity	Registered	Capacity	Registered	Capacity
Fitness Programs	399	409	569	635	496	617
Fill Rate	98%		90%		80%	

Note: Programs include yoga, bootcamp, body pump, youth yoga, sport ball, and other municipal fitness programs offered by the Township. Programs offered by community providers are excluded.

Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Needs Analysis

Equipment-based fitness facilities are traditionally provided by the private sector given their ability to provide a premium level of service and high quality facilities. For these reasons, smaller municipalities often elect not to enter this market than face competition from for-profit entities that can expend greater resources on the latest fitness equipment and offer a more cohesive fitness experience. Those municipalities that decide to enter the market tend to provide basic fitness equipment and offer a more entry-level fitness experience, often in a turnkey environment. The provision of this type of facility is more affordable compared to the private sector, although a membership fee is typically imposed to assist with offsetting capital and operating costs.

Although the Township does not currently offer an equipment-based fitness facility, there are a number of private fitness centres located in Wilmot and within driving distance in Kitchener and Waterloo. The Township also provides limited fitness programs at the W.R.C. and other municipal community centres in Wilmot, which is augmented by fitness programs offered by local community partners.

Given the presence of local and regional fitness centres and the fact that the Township has elected to focus on providing studio-based activating living programs, entry into full-service fitness is not required. The most fiscally sustainable approach would be for the Township to retain its focus on promoting and facilitating active living and fitness programs at existing municipal facilities with its community partners. Given that there are also a number of community-based fitness program

providers, the Township should continue to support these groups and encourage the use of existing municipal spaces to deliver these programs given that there are a number of municipal multi-purpose and meeting spaces that are underutilized. To assist with bolstering these underutilized spaces, the Township should continually re-evaluate their program offerings to focus on providing higher demand programs, while reducing the number of programs with lower participation rates to improve overall programming performance (fill rates).

There is also a need to ensure that these spaces are designed appropriately to meet the needs of each user group and the programs that take place within these spaces, something that is advanced through Recommendation 18 in the Multi-Purpose Space Assessments. This may require undertaking necessary upgrades to ensure that these spaces are flexible to adapt to a broad range of uses.

Recommendations

16. Continue to focus on promoting and facilitating active living and fitness programs, offered by the Township and community-based providers, at existing municipal facilities.
17. Continually re-evaluate program offerings to focus on providing higher demand programs, while reducing the number of programs with lower participation rates to improve overall programming performance (fill rates).

5.5 Gymnasiums

Supply and Distribution

The Township does not provide a municipal gymnasium. It is common for similarly sized municipalities to rely upon multi-purpose space to deliver wellness or group fitness programming, such as the Dryland Training Room at the W.R.C.

Municipalities may also enter into a formal agreement with the local school board to access school facilities (e.g., gymnasia). There are presently no formal agreements between the Township and local school boards to utilize school gymnasiums in Wilmot, although school gyms are available for use by local community groups as well as for private rentals by residents. The Wilmot Family Resource Centre, for example, offers a Gym Night at the Forest Glen Public School in New Hamburg for youth between Grade 6 and 9.

Community Engagement

The need for a municipal gymnasium was expressed a number of times throughout the community engagement process. In the online community survey, a limited number of respondents participated in activities that take place within gymnasiums. Over the past 12 months, 14% and 12% of respondents participated in basketball and volleyball, respectively, while 7% of respondents participated in gymnastics. When respondents were asked to rate their support for spending additional public funds towards improving or developing new facilities, gymnasiums

ranked fifth out of 22 facility types, which suggests that the provision of gymnasiums may be a priority.

There were a number of focus group participants who expressed the desire for a gymnasium to provide an opportunity for a broad range of indoor sports and other court-based activities. Given that there are currently a number of underutilized community halls located throughout the Township, several participants indicated that consideration should be given to repurposing one of these locations for this purpose. The St. Agatha Community Centre was the most commonly suggested location to be repurposed into a gymnasium given its large size and high ceiling in comparison with the other community halls.

Market Trends

Gymnasiums provide a venue to facilitate a wide variety of indoor sports and recreation opportunities that require a hard surface and a large open space. Gymnasium support both formal and drop-in active activities including basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, general fitness, and other active programs. A variety of non-recreational activities may also take place in these facilities such as trade shows, large gatherings, and other events, although it is sometimes felt that non-recreational activities should be restricted from gymnasium facilities as they may interfere with other recreational bookings and are not compatible with certain floor types.

Needs Analysis

Across the province, gymnasium sports continue to exhibit high levels of demand among youth and younger adults. Gymnasiums provide flexible space where a variety of activities can be scheduled. Most often, gymnasiums are used for active sports such as basketball, volleyball, and ball hockey, and the fastest growing sport of pickleball, which is popular among older adults. In addition, gymnasiums can also be used for active living programs such as aerobics/fitness, and dance. In communities that do not have gymnasiums, some of these types of programs can be accommodated in multi-purpose spaces.



The Township and its community partners offer a number of recreation activities within its existing multi-purpose spaces, as well as at the New Hamburg Arena pad. Generally speaking, the Township has been successful in accommodating most indoor recreation programming within these spaces, but as residents continue to request a broader range of activities in a dedicated gymnasium space, improving access to gymnasium space is needed to ensure that the Township's needs are met during this planning period.

During the initial phase of this Master Plan, there were some suggestions that the community hall at the St. Agatha Community Centre could be utilized for gymnasium-based activities as it is generally underutilized and offers a large open space with high ceilings and storage. Although this facility may offer some potential as a gymnasium, such facilities tend to be geared towards the youth demographic and as a result, they should be easily accessible and located close to youth. With population data suggesting that most of Wilmot's youth residing in New Hamburg and Baden, it would be challenging for many youth in Wilmot to find regular and convenient means of transportation to reach St. Agatha and thus may not realize its full potential as a gym.

While the consultation process received some requests for a gymnasium and indoor recreation activities, there is currently insufficient demand to warrant the development of a municipally-operated gymnasium, particularly given that there are no major indoor recreation facilities proposed through this Master Plan that could be co-located with a gymnasium, and stand-alone recreation facilities are not recommended. A high level scan of existing community facilities suggests that there are no suitable opportunities to construct a gymnasium add-on, although it may be feasible to convert the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre, should it be determined that a new location be selected for a third ice pad.

Of the seven schools in the Township with gymnasium space, four can be leveraged to enhance indoor active sports and recreation programs. These spaces can be utilized during weekday evenings and all day during the weekends during the school season. Access during the summer is restricted to during the daytime and usage during P.D. days is limited. Table 13 demonstrates that there are nearly 186 hours of available gymnasium time per week at local schools in the Township. It is recognized that the bulk of available hours is during the weekend, which may not be suitable to accommodate most residents; however, a scan of hours available during the weekday evenings range between one and four-hour time slots, which is ample time to run a municipal program or activity.

Through the Community Use of Schools initiative, residents of Wilmot can access school gymnasiums for a fee; however, there are a number of limitations involved such as consistent access to the gymnasium. Although there is a cost associated with accessing school gymnasiums, it is outweighed by the benefits of maximizing existing space that is presently available, particularly given that the capital and operating investment required to construct a new municipal gymnasium is far greater. The Township is currently working towards formalizing an agreement with the Waterloo Region District School Board to ensure regular access to school gymnasiums to augment municipal and community-based indoor recreation programming. The Waterloo Catholic District School Board should also be engaged to maximize access to gymnasium space in the Township. To ensure that school gymnasium space is used efficiently, consideration should be given to locating programs and activities that do not require gymnasium space to the various community halls and multi-purpose spaces in Wilmot, given that these spaces are currently underutilized. Increasing use of the Township's community facilities can be further enhanced with the introduction of activities such as pickleball, badminton, ping pong, and other in demand pursuits. The Town does not currently permit the use of its community centres for active sports. In order to accommodate a broader range of uses to enhance utilization, the Town will be required

to revisit the purpose of how these spaces are used and amend its policy on facility usage to permit gymnasium-based programs.

Table 13: Number of Hours Available per Week at Local Schools, Township of Wilmot

School Name	Hours Available per Week	
	Weekday	Weekends
Forest Glen Public School	14	29
Sir Adam Beck Public School	9.5	29
Baden Public School	6	29
Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School*	11	58
Sub-Total Hours	40.5	145
Total Hours Available	185.5	

* Hours represent single gymnasium equivalents due to the ability to partition the double gymnasium at the W.O.D.S.S.

Source: Waterloo Region District School Board and Township of Wilmot.

Recommendations

18. Maximize opportunities for gym-based recreation opportunities in the Township by working with school boards to optimize access through Community Use of Schools and, where appropriate, introduce activities (especially during daytime hours – e.g., pickleball, badminton, ping pong, etc.) into the Township’s community centres in order to increase utilization and meet demands for such space. This may require an amendment to the Township’s policy on facility usage to permit active gymnasium-based programs.

5.6 Multi-Purpose Program Spaces

Supply and Distribution

The Township offers 20 multi-use venues that can accommodate a broad range of activities including, but not limited to, meetings, birthdays, social gatherings weddings, banquets, and other special events. The Township’s supply consists of 14 multi-purpose rooms that are integrated as part of a larger facility plus six stand-alone community halls.

Each multi-purpose space is equipped with a number of amenities and features to accommodate a range of uses. Many of the Township’s community halls, for example, boast full kitchens and bars, while the integrated multi-purpose space and meeting rooms complete with storage, seating, tables, and more. The Township generally achieves a balanced distribution of multi-purpose spaces across Wilmot, with a minimum of one multi-purpose space within or a short driving distance to each settlement area.

Multi-Purpose Space / Meeting Rooms	
Baden Administration Complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor's Gallery • Swartzentruber Room • Wilmot Community Room New Dundee Community Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaac Room • Jutzi Room New Hamburg Municipal Building (121 Huron) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ernie Ritz Meeting Room 	New Hamburg Community Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Room • Multi-Purpose Room St. Agatha Community Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors Room Wilmot Recreation Complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities Room • Dryland Training Room • Program Room • Wayne Roth Room • Wilmot Meeting Room
Community Centre Halls	
Haysville Community Centre Hall Mannheim Community Centre Hall New Dundee Community Centre Hall	New Hamburg Community Centre Hall St. Agatha Community Centre Hall W.R.C. Community Hall

Community Engagement

Additional investment in community halls and multi-purpose rooms ranked 17th out of 22 facility types in the online survey and thus suggests that these are a lower priority among respondents relative to other facilities. Input was received from the public regarding the need to make multi-purpose rooms more affordable to improve usage. Specific comments were also received which expressed the need to undertake improvements to the aging St. Agatha Community Centre, while some focus group participants suggested that this facility should be converted into gymnasium space.

Market Trends

Historically, stand-alone community spaces were provided as small single-purpose facilities for passive activities (such as social gatherings and meetings). Community halls that are equipped with kitchen facilities may also be used for large weddings and banquets. Co-locating these types of community spaces with complementary facilities can be desirable in some cases, thus functioning as multi-purpose spaces that accommodate a broader range of uses including community programs to supplement rental revenues. The program rooms at the W.R.C. are an example of co-locating multiple recreation facility components to facilitate cross programming opportunities, while achieving economies of scale in facility construction and efficiencies in maintenance/management.

Utilization

A review of booking data provided by the Township reveals that the multi-purpose spaces and community halls are not used often. Township-wide, these spaces are booked approximately 12,200 hours annually between 2013 and 2015, which translated into a utilization rate of 14%. In total, the Township's multi-purpose and community spaces may accommodate an additional 75,000 hours of use during their normal hours of operation.

Looking strictly at community halls, these facilities are moderately used. Over the past three years, utilization of the Township's halls have declined slightly from 24% to 21% (-1,000 hours). The community hall at the W.R.C. was most frequently used, although bookings at the facility declined over the past three years from 2,700 hours to 2,100 hours in 2015. The community halls at the New Hamburg Community Centre and Mannheim Community Centre were also used often, each booking approximately 1,300 hours or more per year. By contrast, the community halls at St. Agatha Community Centre and Haysville Community Centre are least used with 500 hours or less booked per year.

The Township's multi-purpose and meeting rooms also revealed low levels of utilization. A number of the Township's meeting rooms are underutilized, booking less than 260 hours per year. This is commonly observed in other municipalities that have older stand-alone community centres that are aging and have limited programming opportunities. By contrast, the multi-purpose and meeting spaces that are located at recreation facilities are used more often, particularly at the W.R.C., where rooms are booked between 400 and 1,000 hours per year. The multi-purpose space at the New Hamburg Community Centre usually books around 600 hours per year.



Needs Analysis

The Township has benefited from having a well distributed supply of multi-purpose and meeting spaces as it provides residents with affordable, conveniently located facilities that can support a variety of social gatherings. These spaces also provide a broader community benefit as they function as locations to deliver community programs such as the Healthy Kids Community

Challenge. Historically, these spaces often serve as hubs for community activity, offering abilities to deliver programs and services to residents that do not reside in larger urban areas.

There is no data that suggests additional multi-purpose and meeting spaces are warranted during this planning period, particularly since ample time is available at existing facilities and no major indoor recreation facilities have been proposed that would warrant the co-location of new multi-purpose or meeting spaces. As a result, the preferred approach is to maximize use of existing spaces, which may require undertaking facility upgrades to modernize facility space to ensure that they are suitable for the intended uses, while maximizing opportunities to accommodate a broad range of uses such as meetings, social gatherings, active living programs, youth and senior programs, and more. From a programming perspective, the Township should seek to expand successful program offerings that are in high demand through outreach at multi-use spaces throughout the Township to bolster facility utilization, given that there is currently ample space available to accommodate additional uses. These program offerings could be provided directly by the Township, in partnership with other organizations/agencies, facilitated by the Township through not-for-profit organizations/groups or a combination of these. With respect to existing facilities, multi-purpose rooms integrated within broader municipal facilities will continue to play a role in addressing rental needs for meetings and other uses – no change is proposed to the supply of integrated space, particularly since room rentals have been increasing over the past three years. On the other hand, many of the stand-alone community halls are aging and while they provide affordable rental rates, they lack modern appeal which has made them susceptible to competition from the abundance of golf courses, private hall and banquet facilities, etc. that found across Waterloo Region, especially for higher revenue rentals such as weddings, receptions, and other formal gatherings. Over the past three years, the Township has lost nearly 1,300 hours at the W.R.C., St. Agatha and New Hamburg Community Centre halls along with the rental revenues (if applicable).

There are also capital renewal costs that are required to maintain the community halls in a good state of repair. Over the next 10 years, the Township's long term capital forecast allocates over \$725,000 towards the community halls to cover upgrades to mechanical equipment, flooring and roofing renewal, parking lot resurfacing, and kitchen renovations (Table 14).

Table 14: Identified Community Facility Improvements, 2016 - 2026

New Hamburg Community Centre Kitchen Upgrades \$18,500 (2017) Parking Lot Expansion \$146,000 (2018) Refinish Flooring \$16,000 (2018) <u>Replace/Resurface Arena Roof \$120,000 (2019)</u> Total \$300,500	Haysville Community Centre Resurface Parking Lot \$25,000 (2019) <u>Review/Upgrade Septic System \$25,000 (2020)</u> Total \$50,000
New Dundee Community Centre Replace HVAC \$38,000 (2016) Backup Power Supply \$99,750 (2017) Review/Upgrade Septic System \$25,000 (2020) <u>Kitchen Renovation \$30,000 (2021)</u> Total \$192,750	St. Agatha Community Centre Backup Power Supply \$83,500 (2017) Replace Flooring \$35,000 (2018) <u>Review/Upgrade Septic System \$25,000 (2020)</u> Total \$143,500
Mannheim Community Centre Subfloor/VCT Replacement \$15,000 (2017) <u>Review/Upgrade Septic System \$25,000 (2020)</u> Total \$40,000	

Source: Township of Wilmot 10 Year Capital Budget Forecast

For the next ten years, it is recommended that the Township continue to maintain its supply of six community halls recognizing that the geographic distribution of these facilities lends itself well to the needs of the urban-rural population and isolated settlements in particular have historically benefited from these halls as they have become important community hubs. Although the capital renewal costs are significant over the ten year period, it is important to note the following:

- The **New Dundee and Mannheim Community Centres** have over \$230,000 allocated between them but can be considered to be justifiable in the context that these two halls were the only ones that have experienced rental growth over the past three years. Items identified in the Capital Budget, along with any other strategic improvements identified could in fact yield a greater return on investment should rental bookings (and associated revenues) continue to increase.
- The **New Hamburg Community** accounts for nearly half of all of the hall-related expenditures contained in the Capital Budget. The \$300,000 expenditure must be considered as an arena-related item for the parking lot expansion and structural roof replacement, as just \$34,500 has been identified for the hall. Further, any capital allocation is most likely contingent upon whether the Township restarts arena operations following

a five year review of arena needs versus repurposing the facility to a different use altogether.

- The Township should explore ways in which to reverse the trend of declining rentals at the **St. Agatha Community Centre** (-250 rental hours over the past three years), potentially by encouraging gymnasium-type programming such as pickleball and badminton that are oriented more towards adults who have the ability to drive to this settlement area. Should utilization rates increase due to greater programming efforts, additional capital investment could be rationalized through a cost-benefit exercise but again noting that any improvements geared to attracting formal events at this (or any hall) is a risky endeavour considering the private supply of hall and banquet facilities.
- The **Haysville Community Centre** does not have a large capital allocation through the Capital Budget but it has historically been the least-used community hall. Although the Township could also try to encourage greater programming at this facility, however, this hall is fairly limited in what it can accommodate due to its low ceilings, narrow room dimensions, and an outdated décor. If there was a community hall that the Township could consider repurposing, Haysville Community Centre would likely be the most logical choice due to its proximity to New Hamburg Community Centre and W.R.C.

Whether an integrated multi-purpose room or a stand-alone hall, the Township should explore some lower-cost improvements through renovations, accessibility improvements, and ways to broaden the types of use that can occur within the spaces (e.g. adding mirrors for dance or group fitness programs, sinks and cupboards for arts and cultural activities, new furniture for lounge areas to reposition halls as de facto youth and seniors centers, storage space, etc.). To most effectively determine what types of improvements to consider, the Township should engage community groups and organizations who are the primary users of these facilities to monitor demand and ensure that any improvements are designed to respond to their needs.

Prior to any investment in existing facilities, however, the Township will need to assess the costs of carrying out any improvements and rationalize this expense through a cost-benefit evaluation and consideration of private sector competition (e.g. for formal events). For example, certain spaces could be used for a greater degree of outreach programming delivered by community organizations (e.g., Wilmot Family Resource Centre and Community Care Concepts programing, active living opportunities, etc.). Other spaces may be suitable for accommodating large social gatherings and banquets, therefore requiring appropriate storage space and amenities (e.g., full or commercial-size kitchen). As such, there is a need to ensure that these spaces are multi-purpose, yet actively programmable, is an important part of evaluations undertaken to upgrade.

Recommendations

19. Continue to monitor, promote, and encourage use of the Township's multi-purpose and meeting spaces to facilitate a broad range of uses such as meetings, social gatherings, active living programs, youth and senior programs, and more.

Recommendations

20. In consultation with local community partners and user groups, identify and prioritize improvements to the Township's multi-purpose and meeting spaces, which must be rationalized through a cost-benefit analysis, to modernize municipal facilities and ensure that they are flexibly designed to accommodate a broad range of uses.
21. Expand successful program offerings that are in high demand through outreach at multi-use spaces throughout the Township to bolster facility utilization.

5.7 Dedicated Youth Space

Supply and Distribution

The Township provides one dedicated youth space at the W.R.C, which is known as the Optimists' Youth Centre. This drop-in space that is operated by the Township in partnership with the Wilmot Family Resource Centre. With approximately 2,000 square feet of dedicated space, the Youth Centre offers a safe environment to gather, socialize, and engage in a range of activities. Amenities available at the Youth Centre includes a pool table, air hockey table, TV, and video game consoles. Wilmot Family Resource Centre also operates youth drop-in programs at the New Hamburg Community Centre.

In addition to these municipal spaces, there are also a number of community partners and organizations that offer age-specific programs and gatherings at non-municipal facilities such as at religious institutions and schools.

Community Engagement

The need for youth friendly spaces was a common theme throughout the community engagement process to ensure that youth have a place to gather in safe and positive spaces to participate in a broad range of activities. The online community survey did not collect respondent data regarding usage of the Township's youth spaces or drop-in programs; however, the survey found that over the past 12 months, 29% of respondents participated in various organized youth programs. The survey results also found relatively strong support for spending additional public funds towards improving or developing additional youth spaces. 72% of respondents supported additional spending on space for youth programs, ranking fourth among 22 facility types. General comments were received regarding the need for more youth programs and activities within Baden and New Hamburg, and at more convenient times, particularly given that many activities are held at the W.R.C., which is not accessible for many youth.

Market Trends

The provision of dedicated community space for specific age groups offers a number of benefits for youth, particularly given that they are often considered as under-represented segments of the population. These age groups also have specific needs and desires, resulting in the need to ensure that these spaces are designed to respond each age group appropriately. Research has revealed that youth between the ages of 10-19 prefer unorganized and self-structured activities, prompting

the emergence of drop-in youth spaces that allow users to engage in their desired activities on their own schedule. As previously identified, these spaces also serve as functions as a safe environment to facilitate positive reinforcement to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health among youth.

Needs Analysis

The Optimists' Youth Centre at the W.R.C. has been well used as it offers youth a safe place to gather, socialize, and engage in various activities. This space also functions as a meeting space for the Youth Action Council (and Junior Council), a group run by the Township that is dedicated to improving the community from a youth perspective. Other community centres in the Township can also be utilized for youth activities, such as for the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, a pilot project offered by the Township in partnership with the Wilmot Family Resource Centre.

The Township's Youth Action Council is complemented by drop-in youth programs that are offered by the Wilmot Family Resource Centre, which utilizes the youth space at the W.R.C. and other community spaces in the Township. It is recognized that the Township's recently added Recreation Programmer is actively exploring program opportunities for youth (and older adults). This delivery model is common in smaller municipalities where resources are limited and as a result, maintaining strong relationships between the Township and community organizations is vital to the success of local youth opportunities.

There is no accepted provision standard for the development of dedicated youth spaces as these facilities are typically provided based on qualitative factors such as need and the ability to be co-located with other facilities that offer cross-programming opportunities. Given that the Township currently offers a dedicated youth space at the W.R.C., which is supported by dedicated youth activities at other municipal facilities, no new youth spaces are recommended during this Master Plan. Instead, it is recommended at the Township continue to develop new youth opportunities that are complementary to the programs and services that are offered by local organizations (Wilmot Family Resource Centre), bolstering the Township as a youth friendly community, and continuing to explore outreach opportunities to serve the Township's youth population through drop-in program offerings at community hall locations.

The Township's Recreation Guide suggests that there is a broad range of youth opportunities available. It is essential to ensure that youth are aware of these opportunities and that they are geographically accessible to them. As the Township's population continues to increase, the growing youth demographic will also become an increasingly important market to serve. It is vital to ensure that the opportunities that meet the needs of this dynamic group and as a result, it is recommended that the Township maintain regular dialogue with local youth to ensure that their voice is being heard and that needs are being met, such as establishing an annual youth forum, spearheaded by the Youth Action Council.

Recommendations

22. No new dedicated youth spaces are required during this planning period.

Recommendations

23. Continue to offer programs that are complementary to those provided by community partners (e.g., Wilmot Family Resource Centre) to bolster the Township's status as a "Youth Friendly" community.
24. The Township's Youth Action Council should continue to work closely with community organizations (e.g., Wilmot Family Resource Centre, etc.) to promote awareness of the youth opportunities available in the Township while also exploring opportunities to utilize community halls to provide drop-in programs aimed at youth.
25. Establish an annual youth forum, spearheaded by the Youth Action Council, to identify and discuss issues and improvements to the Optimists' Youth Centre, and other matters relevant to youth.

5.8 Dedicated Older Adult Space

Supply and Distribution

The Wilmot Active Living Centre is a dedicated older adult space within the W.R.C that is available to residents over the age of 55, and is operated in partnership with the Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wilmot, and Wellesley. The Wilmot Senior's Woodworking & Craft Club in Baden is also available to older adults and seniors. This membership-based Club offers a great opportunity for seniors to meet, socialize, learn new skills, and engage in number of programs such as woodworking, stained glass, quilting, wood carving, and computer classes. In addition to these spaces, the meeting room at the St. Agatha Community Centre is used once a week by a seniors group to play cards.



In addition to these two facilities, there are a number of other activities and programs offered in the Township, such as the St. Agatha Seniors, who gather each week at the St. Agatha Community Centre, and other community organizations. The Township's three older adult lifestyle communities – Foxboro Green, Morningside, and Stonecroft – also offer a number of programs and activities geared toward this age cohort and although these activities are only available to members, it is known that many of these members utilize the facilities and opportunities offered by the Township and its community partners.

Community Engagement

Similar to youth space, dedicated space for older adults was requested although to a lesser degree. Approximately 50% of online survey respondents supported spending additional funds on developing new or building new older adult spaces. The online community survey did not

collect respondent data regarding usage of the Township's older adult spaces or drop-in programs; however, the survey found that over the past 12 months, 8% of respondents participated in various organized older adult programs.

Market Trends

Older adult space is important consideration for facility provision given that the aging baby boomer generation have become more sophisticated with the desire to engage in pursuits that emphasize low impact physical activity and socializing with peers. Older adult space provides a location for users to engage in these types of activities, as well as traditional seniors' activities, where residents can gather and share common interests. It is anticipated that older adult spaces will become more popular as the Township's population continues to age and as a result, it is essential to ensure that the needs of this age group are met. Siting the Active Living Centre at the W.R.C. is a step in the right direction as its location within a multi-use recreation complex is complementary to other facility components such as the indoor pool and walking track, allowing for cross-programming opportunities.

Needs Analysis

Similar to the provision of youth spaces, there is no accepted provision standard for the development of older adult and seniors' facilities as these facilities are generally provided based on need and the ability to be co-located with other facilities. Given that no new major indoor recreation facilities are proposed, the provision of a new older adult and seniors' space cannot be supported. The recommended strategy for the Township is to continue growing older adult and seniors' programming within its existing municipal spaces.

As previously mentioned, the Township recently added a Recreation Programmer position, which demonstrates the Township's commitment to offering high quality municipally-provided programs. As the Township continues to explore new program areas that are complementary to programs offered by the Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wilmot, and Wellesley, and other community providers. Given the amount of space available in the Township at various community halls and multi-purpose spaces, the Township should explore ways to expand program offerings (registered and drop-in) to serve the older adult population while providing outreach into the community.

Recommendations

26. No new dedicated older adult and seniors spaces are recommended during the Master Plan's planning period.
27. Continue to provide older adult and seniors' programming within existing municipal spaces (e.g., active living programs) that are complementary to programs offered by Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wilmot, and Wellesley, and other community program providers.

5.9 Sport Fields

Supply and Distribution

Fourteen sport fields are found in Township parks. Many of the Township's sport fields are complemented by amenities such as washrooms and parking, and come in three field sizes – full, intermediate, and mini/micro. The full sport fields can also be partitioned into mini sport fields and/or U12 sized fields to facilitate smaller, simultaneous games. Wilmot's sport fields can be found at the following parks:

- **Full Sport Field:** Wilmot Recreation Complex (3)
- **Intermediate Sport Field:** Mannheim Community Park, Shantz Park
- **Mini/Micro Sport Field:** Scott Park (6), Wilmot Recreation Complex (3)

The sport fields at Shantz Park and Mannheim Community Park can also be used for football. In addition to this supply, five intermediate and three mini size sport fields are found at local schools in the Township. During site visits to Township parks, the condition and quality of the sport fields appeared to be in good condition, although these visits were undertaken early in the spring prior to any field setup (e.g., goal posts and lining).

Community Engagement

The online community survey found 30% of respondents had at least one member of their household participate in soccer in the past 12 months. Through this survey, soccer was identified as a common activity played outside of the Township. Just over half of respondents (57%) supported additional municipal investment towards soccer fields, ranking 10th out of 22 facility types. Comments were received suggesting that the Township's sport fields are in need of improvement, particularly with respect to drainage issues at Scott Park. It was also suggested that the Township provide sport fields in New Dundee, and provide lit artificial turf fields.

Focus group participants identified that the many of the Township's sport fields are located within floodplains. As a result, these fields are prone to flooding and impacts groups' ability to play and degrades the field quality. Other participants identified that Scott Park and the surrounding neighbourhood becomes very crowded during soccer games, which is further enhanced by traffic congestion and parking.



Figure 18: Distribution of Soccer Fields, Township of Wilmot



Market Trends

Soccer experienced enormous growth in participation and popularity during the 1990s when it overtook baseball and hockey as the most popular organized sport among Canadian youth. Coupling this trend with its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate, soccer fields are in high demand in most municipalities.

These factors drive the need for soccer fields, particularly ones that are designed to a suitable size and configuration to meet the needs of soccer groups. Since the Ontario Soccer Association (O.S.A.) adopted the Long Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) model, which is expected to be fully implemented by 2017, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs, which have impacted their facility needs. With less emphasis on scoring and winning, L.T.P.D. focuses on improved coaching, fewer games, more ball time, and skill development. Several new standards were developed that are specific to each age groups, which includes varying coaching styles, number of players, playing time, field size, and other variables. Some of these new standards will have a direct impact on the provision of municipal soccer fields, particularly with respect to the standards in field size and the number of players, as reducing the number of players per team (resulting in an increase in the number of teams) influences the demand for field time.

According to the O.S.A., soccer participation peaked in 2007 with 384,840 registered participants, and has slowly declined each year. For 2014, the organization reported a total of 336,449 registered players, a decline of 12% from the 2007 peak. Regionally, the South-West Regional Soccer Association reported 29,148 registered soccer players, a 13% decline from 2007 (33,341 players).

Utilization

Utilization data provided by the Township reveals that the Township's sport fields have very low usage. Over the past three soccer seasons, the Township has achieved a utilization rate of just 8%. Discussions with Township staff reveals that the low utilization is attributed to the following factors:

- The Wilmot District Soccer only utilizes the soccer fields between Monday and Thursday during mid-May and June.
- Adult groups utilize the soccer fields during July and August and it is understood that adult bookings are generally low.
- Drainage issues are experienced at some of the Township's soccer fields during the beginning of the soccer season, although the Township has indicated that these issues are manageable.

As a result of these considerations, there is ample capacity to accommodate additional usage at existing fields.

Needs Analysis

Wilmot District Soccer is the Township's only organized minor soccer group, reporting a total of 840 minor participants for 2016, nearly all of whom are Township residents. The local registration translates into a service level of one sport field for every 60 participants. The previous study utilized a provision target of one field for every 50 participants, which is much higher compared to a typical provision target of one sport field for every 80 participants. Given that utilization levels of the Township's sport fields are quite low due to the short playing season, there is merit in adjusting the existing provision target in alignment with comparable municipalities. As a result, a provision target of one sport field per 80 participants is recommended. It is also recognized that the Township's sport fields are also utilized by Wilmot Minor Rugby and some adult groups, although these participant figures are generally not considered when determining soccer field needs given that the standards of play for rugby are different and the fact that adult usage is very low.

Assuming that participation rates continue to grow during the planning period, it is estimated that there will be approximately 1,028 minor soccer participants by 2026. Applying the recommended provision target to the forecasted number of participants suggests that there will be a need for 13 sport fields. As a result, the Township will not require any new sport fields during this planning period, something that is confirmed by the fact that there is ample capacity with minor soccer only operating for six weeks in the summer. Instead of new field development, it is recommended that the Township engage local sports field users in discussions to identify opportunities to enhance use of the existing sport fields given that there is currently ample supply to accommodate additional demand, and to ensure that the design of fields are appropriate to support the L.T.P.D. rules and regulations (e.g., dimensions, goal posts, etc.). Consideration should be given to directing maintenance and future improvements to fields that are in higher demand, while reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields so that they can be promoted as casual open field play areas that serve the broader community for passive or pick-up play.

Of note, the Township is currently in talks with the Waterloo Region District School Board to develop an artificial turf field at the Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School. With the total cost estimated to be \$1 million (\$500,000 from each party), the full size and lit artificial turf field will be attractive to adult users (depending upon rental price point).

Pursuit of the artificial turf field is seen as an opportunity to provide a high quality recreation facility in a cost-effective manner. Notwithstanding the fact that simply applying the service level target suggests no new fields are needed, the case to provide an artificial turf field in partnership with the school should account for the following facts:

- A \$500,000 contribution from the Township is just slightly more than the cost to construct a lit natural grass field, meaning the Township would be in a position to have a premier artificial field for nearly the same cost as a grass field.
- An artificial turf field will allow greater use after periods of inclement weather, particularly during the shoulder seasons, something that also is beneficial to field users who would otherwise be displaced at times when the Scott Park fields are unavailable due to flooding.

- Establishing an artificial turf field would be beneficial to a number of other sports field organizations such as field hockey, rugby, football, etc. and there may be an opportunity to engage sports field users to fundraise towards a portion of capital costs. Artificial turf provides an excellent opportunity to expand the range of sports field uses and create an enhanced opportunity for all field sports to meet their needs and have a significantly improved location for tournaments/sports tourism play.

Recommendations

28. Continue discussions initiated by the Waterloo Region District School Board to develop a lit artificial turf field at Waterloo Oxford Secondary School to accommodate a wide range of sports (field hockey, rugby, football, etc.), extending the playing season, reducing the impact of shoulder seasons on existing turf fields, and creating an enhanced sport field opportunity for local organizations and tournament/sport tourism play. Any financial contributions from the Township should be contingent upon negotiating a suitable degree of access for field users representing a variety of field sports.
29. Engage the Township's sports field users in discussions to ensure that the design of fields are appropriate to support Long-Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) rules and regulations. Any future improvements should be directed to fields that are in higher demand, while reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields so that they can be promoted as casual open field play areas that serve the broader community for passive or pick-up play.

5.10 Ball Diamonds

Supply and Distribution

The Township maintains 11 softball diamonds, each of which are generally sized to accommodate both adult and minor play, including eight lit and three unlit diamonds. Each lit diamond is equivalent to 1.5 unlit diamonds due to its extended playing opportunities and as a result, the Township has an unlit equivalent supply of 15 ball diamonds. Supporting amenities such as batting cages, seating, parking, and washrooms can be found at most of these ball diamond locations to support games. In addition, scrub backstops can be found at two parks, as well as at Forest Glen and Grandview Public School, which facilitate informal community level play. The Township's ball diamonds can be found at the following parks:

- **Lit Softball Diamond:** Doug Fischer Memorial Park (New Dundee Community Centre Park) (2), Norm S. Hill Park (2), Petersburg Community Park, Sir Adam Beck Park (2), St. Agatha Lions Community Park
- **Unlit Softball Diamond:** Mannheim Community Park, Norm S. Hill Park, Petersburg Community Park
- **Scrub Backstop:** Haysville Community Centre Park, New Dundee Community Park

During site visits to the Township's parks, the ball diamonds appeared to be in very good condition. Many diamonds featured new and upgraded backstop and outfield fencing, spectator seating, and lighting such as at Doug Fischer Memorial Park, St. Agatha Community Lions Park, and Norm S. Hill Park. The Township's Capital Budget allocated approximately \$210,000 towards ball diamond improvements such as replacing fencing, backstops, and lighting Petersburg Community Park Diamond #2 (\$129,000) and the Mannheim Community Park diamond (\$81,000). These projects are identified to take place between 2017 and 2020.

Community Engagement

Less than half (45%) of online community survey respondents indicated that they participated in baseball or softball over the past 12 months. Baseball/softball was also commonly identified as a popular activity played outside of the Township. Nearly two-thirds of respondents expressed moderately high support for spending additional public funds on improving or developing new baseball/softball diamonds, which rank eighth out of 22 facility types. Comments were also received expressing the need for a new practice ball diamond such as in Baden, or allowing users to practice on the existing ball diamonds without having to rent them.



Market Trends

The popularity of baseball and softball have been in decline across Canada compared to previous generations, although regional differences do exist. This trend is driven by a number of factors including the appeal of soccer (particularly among youth and children), high immigration rates from countries where baseball is not played, and other face-paced sports such as hockey, soccer, and basketball. Over the past decade, Baseball Ontario reported that participation in the sport has remained relatively stable until 2012 where registration experienced growth in participation. For 2015, Baseball Ontario identified that 12,977 participants and 918 teams were registered with the organization a growth of 15% and 18%, respectively, compared to 2004.^{10, 11}

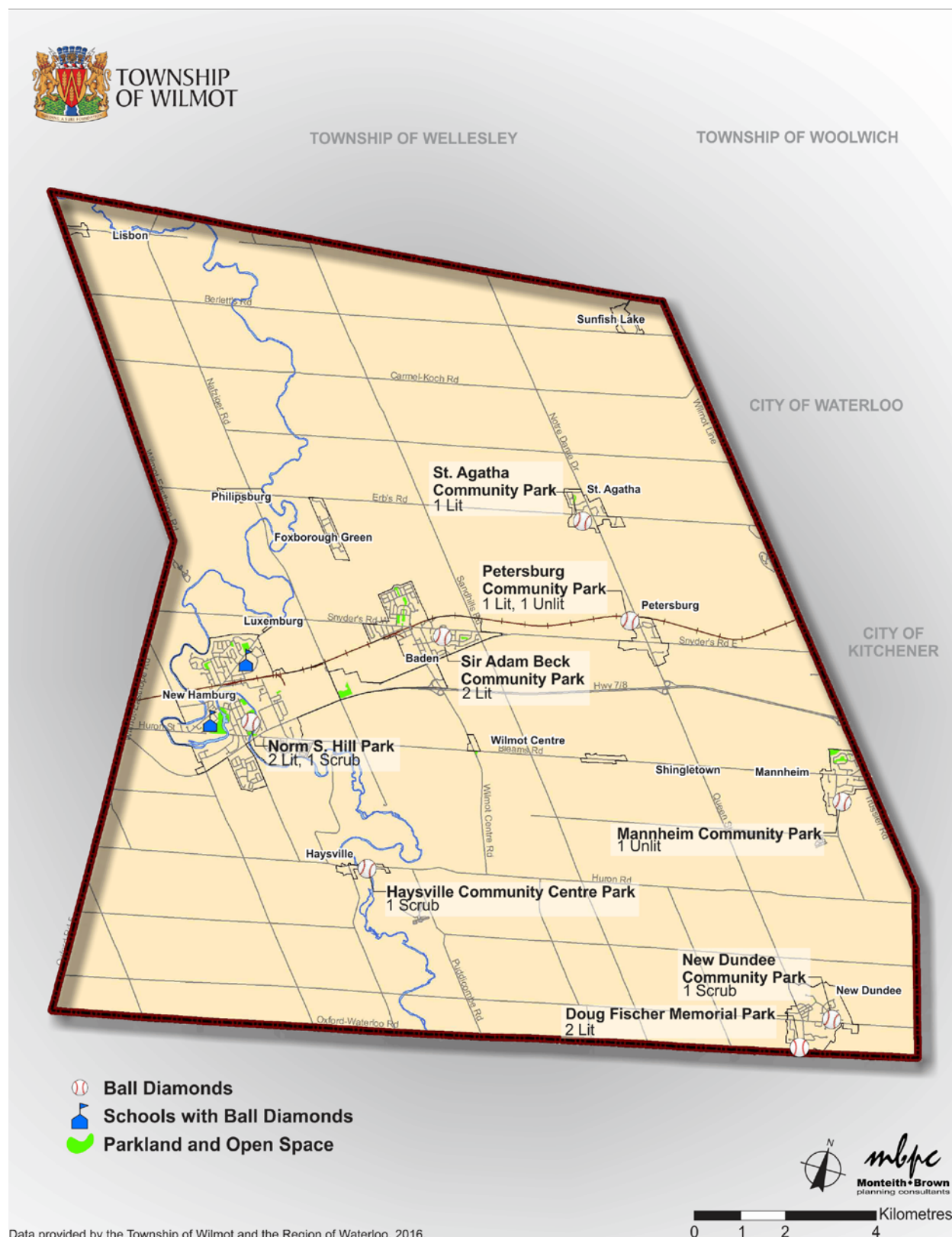


¹⁰ Baseball Ontario. 2015. Annual General Meeting.

http://www.baseballontario.com/filestore/AGM%20Book%20Final2015-11-26T09-33-54v001_by_292.pdf

¹¹ Registration data for 2005 is unavailable.

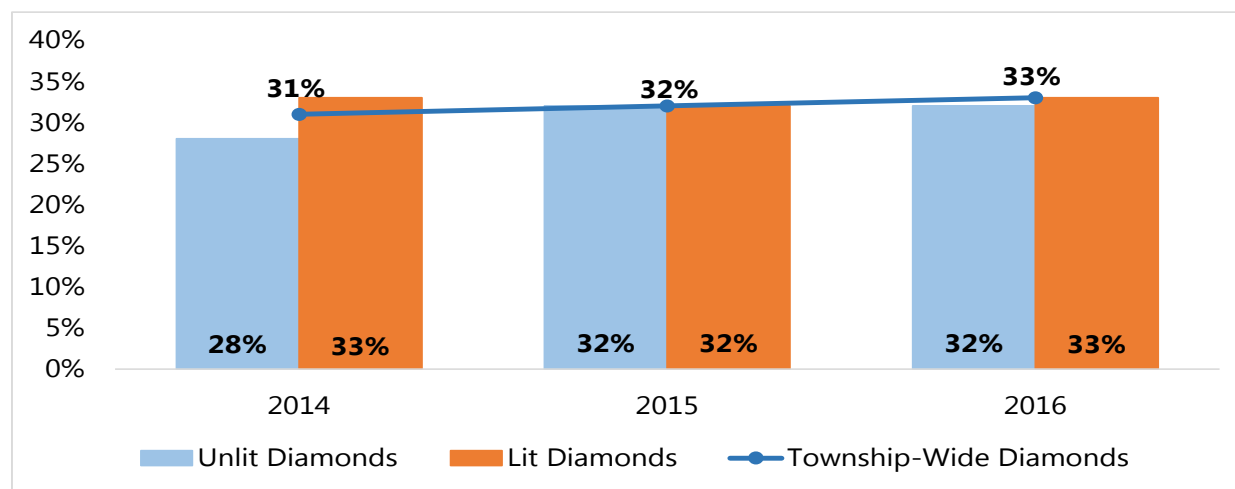
Figure 19: Distribution of Ball Diamonds, Township of Wilmot



Utilization

A review of the Township's ball diamond utilization reveals that there was a slight increase in usage over the past three playing seasons.¹² As illustrated in Figure 21, the Township achieved a utilization rate of 33% in 2016, an increase of 2% from 2014, due to an increase of over 120 additional hours booked. The utilization levels for unlit and lit diamonds were generally the same during this period.

Figure 20: Township-Wide Ball Diamond Utilization, 2014 - 2016



Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Diamond #2 at the Norm S. Hill Park is the most utilized ball diamond with over 500 hours used in 2016, translating into a utilization rate of 51%. The utilization rates of other lit ball diamonds range between 23% and 33%, which suggests that there is capacity to accommodate additional bookings. The Township's unlit ball diamonds are also well used. The most popular unlit ball diamond is diamond #2 at Petersburg Community Park, which had over 350 hours booked and a utilization rate of 44%. The utilization rates of remaining unlit ball diamonds ranged between 21% and 29%, suggesting that there is also capacity to accommodate additional rentals at these diamonds. The ball diamonds at Haysville Community Centre Park and New Dundee Community Park were excluded given that these scrub diamonds are not booked and are geared more towards facilitating neighbourhood level play.

Needs Analysis

As with soccer fields, a market-specific provision target is typically the preferred method to evaluate ball diamond needs for the Township, which is consistent with the standard of 1 diamond per 80 players used in the previous Recreation Facility Needs Study. Unfortunately for this Master Plan, sufficient participation data was not available and thus a population-based standard will need to be applied – provincial benchmarks suggest a typical range of 1 ball diamond for every

¹² The Township's ball season starts in May until August. Prime hours for unlit diamonds are defined as 5 pm to 9 pm during the week and 8 am to 9 pm during the weekend. Prime hours for lit diamonds are defined as 5 pm to 11 pm during the week and 8 pm to 11 pm during the weekend.

2,000 to 3,000 residents can be utilized. The Township current service level of one unlit equivalent ball diamond for every 1,423 is higher than most other municipalities on the basis of population, though this is partially attributable to the fact that the Township is so geographically dispersed as well as recent ball diamond improvements undertaken by the Township that have increased the playable capacity of diamonds through lighting and irrigation enhancements.

National trends suggest that although the popularity of baseball is declining in some areas, participation in ball remains strong in smaller communities and rural areas. This trend remains valid in the Township as ball diamond sports continue to be a staple in local organized sports. Given that the popularity of the sport remains high, and that the Township currently maintains a higher than average service level, it is recommended that a provision target of one ball diamond for every 2,000 residents be utilized to identify ball diamond needs. Applying this target to the projected population reveals that there will be a need for 13 ball diamonds by 2026, suggesting that the Township has a surplus of two unlit equivalent ball diamonds. It is also recognized that this surplus will increase by one unlit equivalent ball diamond given that the Township's Capital Budget Forecast identified that lights will be added to the ball diamonds at Mannheim and Petersburg Park (each equivalent to 0.5 unlit diamonds).

Although the recommended provision target indicates that the Township will have a surplus of three ball diamonds by 2026 (taking into account the additional surplus brought on by the lighting of two more diamonds as noted above), again the Township's distribution of residents and ball diamonds is factored into why a surplus scenario is acceptable. Municipalities that feature comparable spatial characteristics as the Township may provide ball diamonds (or light existing diamonds) at a higher standard to ensure that all settlements have convenient access to these facilities.

Given that the Township is well served with ball diamonds, efforts should be made to enhance use of existing diamonds given that utilization data suggests that there is capacity to accommodate additional usage. Consultations with ball groups and some residents expressed challenges with accessing ball diamonds for practices, training, and general neighbourhood level play, unless users formally book diamond time through the Township. It is recommended that the Township encourage the use of open spaces within parks and school properties to facilitate unorganized sports and similar activities.

Recommendations

30. No new ball diamonds are required during this planning period.
31. Promote open spaces within parks and school properties to facilitate unorganized sports and similar activities.

5.11 Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Supply and Distribution

Five tennis courts are provided by the Township. Two lit, members-only courts are located at Sir Adam Beck Park. A membership can be purchased from the Township. Lit public tennis courts are also found at Scott Park (1) and New Dundee Community Park (2).

Site visits to Township parks revealed that the lit tennis courts are generally in fair condition, although minor asphalt cracks and large crevices were observed at Sir Adam Beck Park. The tennis courts at New Dundee Community Park were observed to be in need of remediation. While these courts featured painted lines, the uneven surface featured a number of cracks and faded paint, while rusting fences were also observed.

The Township's Capital Budget Forecast identified that the tennis courts at Sir Adam Beck Park and New Dundee Community Park are planned to be rebuilt in 2016 and 2017, respectively, at a cost of \$117,000 each. In addition to the municipal tennis courts in Wilmot, there are also four tennis courts located at the Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School in Baden; however, they are considered to be in poor condition.

Community Engagement

The online community survey revealed that one-in-ten responding households played tennis in the past 12 months. Approximately half (54%) of the respondents supported spending additional public funds on improving or developing new tennis courts, ranking 16th out of 22 facility types, suggesting there are other facility priorities in the Township. There was also a moderate level of interest for pickleball courts, which is a racquet sport played on a smaller modified tennis court.

Market Trends

Research suggests that popularity in tennis was generally in decline since peaking in the 1970s; however, Tennis Canada, reports that the sport has been experiencing a resurgence over the past several years. A study undertaken by the organization to examine participation in the sport, found that more than 6.5 million Canadians played tennis at least once over a 12 month period, a growth of 32% since 2012. Further, the organization found that the popularity of tennis is growing among Canadians, as 51% of the population indicated that they are somewhat or very interested in the sport, which is an increase from 38% in 2012.¹³



¹³ Tennis Canada. 2014. Tennis in Canada continues remarkable growth in participation and popularity. <http://www.tenniscanada.com/tennis-in-canada-continues-remarkable-growth-in-participation-and-popularity-recent-study-shows/>

Growth in tennis is driven by a number of factors such as the growing segment of active baby boomers that seek social, low impact activities. Growth in this activity is also spurred on by the success of Canadians on the professional tour, including a number of athletes from the G.T.A. There is also a growing focus on promoting the sport at the youth level through club memberships for youth and programming opportunities that emphasizes the Long Term Athlete Development model.¹⁴ Tennis Canada reported that in 2013, more than 600,000 children between the ages of six and 11 played tennis.¹⁵

There is also evidence that baby boomers are creating a small boost in tennis and related racquet sports as participation trends suggest that older adults have a greater desire to remain physically active in their retirement years. This age segment has driven the sport of pickleball to become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada, which is a lower intensity paddle sport that can be played on modified tennis courts (it requires a badminton-sized court and a net that is slightly lower than tennis height). Pickleball recently debuted at the Ontario Senior Games and is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Utilization

The tennis courts in the Township are primarily used for informal, neighbourhood level amenity; however, the tennis courts at Sir Adam Beck Park in Baden are restricted to members only. Residents can purchase a membership from the Township at a cost ranging between \$25 and \$47 per year. Formerly known as the Baden Tennis Club, the Township assumed responsibilities of this group at the end of 2004 from the Baden Park Board after the Township's Parks Boards were dissolved. 31 tennis memberships were sold in 2015, which represents an increase of 72% over the past three years. Table 15 reveals that the actual number of tennis memberships sold is very low.

Table 15: Tennis Memberships Sold, 2013 - 2015

	2013	2014	2015	Growth (%)
Tennis Memberships Sold	18	29	31	72%

Source: Township of Wilmot, 2016

Needs Analysis

The Township currently enjoys a service level of one tennis court for every 4,300 residents, which falls within the typical provision target of one tennis court for every 4,000 to 5,000 residents. While the online survey suggests that tennis courts may not be a high priority, the increase in tennis memberships and broader market trends suggests that the popularity of tennis is on the rise. Given these considerations, a provision target of one tennis court for every 4,500 residents is appropriate for determining tennis court requirements in the Township. With a projected

¹⁴ Tennis Canada. 2012. 2012-2015 Tennis development strategic plan.

<http://www.tenniscanada.com/files/stratplan2014.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid.

population of 26,375 by 2026, six tennis courts may be required, one more than what is currently provided.

Tennis courts are typically provided in pods of two or more as they can facilitate simultaneous games and offer efficiencies in maintenance. Given these benefits, the provision of a single tennis court is not recommended. It is recognized that there is currently a single tennis court at Scott Park abutting a multi-use court. It is recommended that the Township convert the multi-use court at this park to a tennis court to create a two-court pod when sufficient demand warrants this action. Not only will this achieve the benefits associated with co-locating multiple tennis courts, it provides an opportunity to separate multi-use and tennis courts as these facility types are generally not located together given the demographic markets they serve and the noise generated by multi-use court activities. Creating a pod of two tennis courts would require the relocation of the existing multi-use court to another location within the park.

The tennis courts at Sir Adam Beck Park are being renewed in the fall of 2016, which consists of resurfacing, painting, and re-orienting the courts in a north-south direction. An opportunity exists to extend this rejuvenation project to replace the adjacent skateboard park with two pickleball courts to respond to the growing popularity of the sport. Incorporating pickleball courts at this location is a complementary addition to the tennis courts and will stimulate a more engaging atmosphere. This would require the relocation of the existing skateboard park to another location within the park (in accordance with Recommendation 34). Furthermore, given that the Township's tennis membership program at Sir Adam Beck Park currently benefits very few residents, it is recommended that this system be eliminated to open up the tennis courts for public use, as this is the case for the tennis courts at New Dundee Community Park and Scott Park.

Recommendations

32. Monitor demand for tennis and should demand exist, consider converting the multi-use court at Scott Park to a tennis court to create a two-court pod to support simultaneous play and achieve operating efficiencies. This would require relocating the existing multi-use court to another location within the park.
33. Convert the skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park to two pickleball courts to respond to the growing popularity of the sport. This will require the existing skateboard park to be relocated within the park.

5.12 Multi-Use Courts

Supply and Distribution

The Township has four multi-use courts found at New Dundee Community Park, Petersburg Community Park, Sararas Park, and Scott Park. The multi-use court at Scott Park is lit, which can accommodate extended playing hours. The multi-use courts at New Dundee Community Park and Sararas Park also function as multi-seasonal recreation facilities as they are converted into outdoor

skating rinks during the winter (weather permitting), which are each maintained by community volunteers.

Site visits to Township parks reveal that the multi-use courts and supporting features (e.g., basket posts and nets) in Wilmot are generally in good condition, although the multi-use court at Petersburg Community Park featured older basket posts and chain nets. The multi-use court at this park featured the largest playing surface, although cracks and water pooling was observed. The multi-use courts at Scott Park and New Dundee Park feature painted basketball court markings.

Further to these municipal facilities, youth also have access to the hard surface multi-use courts at each of the public elementary schools in the Township, achieving a balanced distribution of multi-use courts in the Township. Each of these schools are highly accessible to youth and offer at least one basketball court in addition to a large asphalt surface with painted lines to accommodate other outdoor activities that require a hard surface such as ball hockey.

Community Engagement

As previously identified, the online survey found that 14% of respondents had at least one member of their household play basketball in the past 12 months. Moderate support was found for investing in this facility type, with 57% of respondents supporting additional public spending on improving or developing new outdoor basketball courts, ranking 11th out of 22 facility types. Residents who participated in the focus groups for this Master Plan also expressed the need for additional multi-use courts, including suggestions for providing different paint markings on existing courts to accommodate different activities.

Market Trends

Multi-use courts are flexible outdoor recreation facilities that can accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities, although they are primarily used for basketball. Primarily used by youths, research has revealed that basketball has been a popular pastime activity due to its national appeal and low barriers to participation. Compared to other sports such as hockey, basketball is easy to learn, safe, affordable to play, and can be played with one person or in small groups.

The provision of multi-use courts has historically remained unchanged as they are generally rudimentary by design. These facilities can be constructed from concrete, although asphalt is often the preferred surface material. Multi-use courts can be provided in a variety of shapes and sizes given that these facilities are not programmed and primarily focus on facilitating spontaneous opportunities for active play. Best practices suggest that multi-use courts be provided in the shape of a half or full size basketball court given that it will be the most likely use for the space.

Figure 21: Distribution of Hard Surface Courts, Township of Wilmot



Needs Analysis

Due to the dispersed nature of the Township's settlement areas, the geographic distribution of the multi-use courts is assessed to ensure that youth (age 10-19) have convenient access to these types of facilities. Although multi-use courts can typically be accommodated on residential properties (e.g., driveway basketball hoops), these facility types are relatively low cost to provide and facilitate informal pick-up games in the community. At a minimum, a multi-use courts should be located in each settlement areas. Figure 21 illustrates that the Township currently offers a good distribution of multi-use courts, which are complemented by courts



located at school sites. A gap area currently exists in Mannheim and as a result, it is recommended that the Township explore the potential to develop a multi-use court in this community, such as on the existing asphalt surface adjacent to the community centre at Mannheim Community Park. At a minimum, the multi-use court should include basketball hoops and markings, be sized large enough to facilitate basketball games, and accommodate other activities requiring a hard surface. The Township should avoid locating multi-use courts in areas that may negatively impact other park amenities due to the noise generated by multi-use court activities.

Recommendations

34. Explore the potential to develop a multi-use court on the existing asphalt surface adjacent to the community centre at Mannheim Community Park. At a minimum, the multi-use court should include basketball hoops and markings, be sized large enough to facilitate basketball games, and accommodate other activities requiring a hard surface.

5.13 Skateboard Parks

Supply and Distribution

The Township's skateboard park is found at Sir Adam Beck Park in Baden. It is a modular design that features two half pipes and a number of small ramps and rails, which were in satisfactory condition during a site visit. The asphalt skating surface appeared to be in poor condition with cracks and uneven areas, although it is recognized that the Township has identified that this surface will be renewed in 2016. In addition, the Township also utilizes the arena floor for indoor skateboarding at the New Hamburg Community Centre, which is provided in partnership with the Wilmot Family Resource Centre.

Community Engagement

The online community survey found 17% of respondents had at least one household member participate in skateboarding in the past 12 months. Less than half (47%) of respondents supported spending additional funds on improving or developing skateboard parks, ranking second last of

22 facility types. Some of the youth participants at the focus groups indicated that they do not use the existing skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park as they felt that it was in poor condition. Other suggestions were received from the public requesting a skateboard parks in New Hamburg to serve local youth.

Market Trends

Research shows that youth are gravitating towards unstructured, unscheduled, and low-cost activities. Skateboarding is one of these pursuits that has become increasingly popular in many municipalities. Once considered a fad, skateboarding has demonstrated sustained longevity and after being associated with negative youth behaviour, many municipalities recognize that skateboard parks can function as positive places that provide safe and accessible venues for youth to engage in physical activities, while socializing with others that share a common interest.

Similar to other recreation facilities that facilitate informal and spontaneous active play, there is no design standard for skateboard parks, allowing the opportunity to develop unique venues that offer unique skating experiences. Skateboard parks can be designed on a large plaza scale or smaller skate zones using concrete with a variety of basic or challenging components such as rails, stairs, bowls, and jumps. Alternatively, modular components may also utilized so they can be moved and reoriented as needed. Mobile skateboard parks, which can be moved from one location to another, have also been used in communities where youth populations are dispersed across large geographical areas.

Needs Analysis

Youth are commonly identified as a vulnerable age group in many communities and as a result, it is important that the Township provides access to a variety of recreation activities that appeal to this age segment. Skateboard parks are one of the more popular venues that may attract use from local teens.

The distribution of local youth is an important consideration in determining skateboard park needs due to the spatial separation of the Township's settlement areas, combined with the fact that youth are limited in the distance they can travel. The Township should focus on providing a skateboard park in settlements based on highest priority need, with an emphasis on where most youth are located.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that most youth are located in Baden, which is currently served by the Township's skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park. As identified in the tennis court needs assessment, it is recommended that the skateboard park be relocated within the park to separate incompatible recreation facility types. A high level scan of Sir Adam Beck Park suggests that there is ample room to relocate the skateboard park on the west side of the parking lot. Through this relocation, there is also an opportunity to improve the skateboard park to attract and engage youth, which can be achieved through the provision of challenging components including, but not limited to, ramps, rails, and stairs. Integrating public art, with the assistance of local youth, may also encourage youth to create something in the community that they can be proud of. It is recognized that the Township is currently taking steps towards rejuvenating the skateboard area by resurfacing this space together with the abutting tennis courts.

New Hamburg is also one of the Township's major settlement areas where a skateboard park should be considered. Recognizing that the Wilmot Family Resource Centre currently provides a small indoor skateboard park at the New Hamburg Community Centre, although the skateboarding components are limited and this program is only available once a week during the school year and three times a week during the summer. The long term use of the New Hamburg Community Centre is also currently undefined pending a five year review of arena needs as recommended through this Master Plan. Youth located in smaller settlement areas (e.g., New Dundee, St. Agatha, etc.) may also benefit from having skateboard opportunities. Given that these communities are likely to have fewer youth residents, a small-scale skateboard park (or "skate zone") may be considered. Skate zones are characterized by one or two basic features, such as a rail or curb, which tend to be integrated fairly easily within a designated space in a Settlement or Neighbourhood Park. It is recommended that the Township explore the potential to establish major or minor skateboard parks or 'skate-zones' within these settlement areas to provide geographically accessible recreation opportunities for local youth.

Recommendations

35. Relocate the existing skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park to another location within the park (adjacent to the parking lot), and consider providing additional and more challenging skateboard components (also see Recommendation 33).
36. Establish a skateboard park within New Hamburg and, where demand exists, investigate opportunities for smaller skate zones within other settlement areas to provide geographically accessible recreation opportunities for local youth. The Youth Action Council and/or a youth forum should be engaged in the design and location of these skateboard parks/zones.

5.14 Splash Pads / Cooling Stations

Supply and Distribution

The Township offers one splash pad located at the Wilmot Recreation Complex, resulting in a service level of one splash pad / cooling station for every 2,685 children. This splash pad is one of the Township's newest outdoor amenities, opening in June 2015, and features a variety of interactive water features such as spray pads and tipping buckets. The splash pad was funded through local fundraising efforts, contributions from the New Hamburg Optimist Club, an Ontario Trillium Grant, a T.S.N. Kraft Celebration Tour Award, and Township funding.



Community Engagement

Residents who participated in the community engagement process felt that the Township's new splash pad has been an excellent addition to the W.R.C., although comments were received indicating that it is only accessible by car. As a result, residents desired a second splash pad/cooling station that is within walking distance to residents in Baden or New Hamburg. The online community survey found that splash pads/cooling stations were the seventh most popular recreation facility with over half (51%) of the survey respondents using this facility type in the past 12 months. 56% of respondents also supported spending additional public funds on improving or developing new splash pads/cooling stations, which ranked 12th out of 22 facility types and suggests that there is moderate support for this facility type.

Market Trends

Splash pads/cooling stations are some of the most highly sought after amenities for young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot summer day. Splash pads/cooling stations have proven to be more cost effective than traditional outdoor pools to build and operate as they can be integrated into most park systems and do not require regular staffing as there is no standing water to supervise and treat frequently. Splash pads/cooling stations can be developed in a wide variety of stimulating designs with a range of apparatuses that provide an enhanced aquatic experience for residents of all ages.

Needs Analysis

Given the Township's large spatial area and dispersed population, splash pads/cooling station needs should be evaluated based on geography. The Township's existing splash pad is centrally located within the Municipality, and equally located between New Hamburg and Baden, within a five minute drive of each community. This is considered to be a reasonable driving distance given that splash pads are settlement level facilities. While they are more affordable to construct compared to indoor and outdoor pools, splash pads/cooling stations are capitolly intensive and should be located in areas that will capture the greatest number of residents. As a result of these factors, the splash pad at the W.R.C. is sufficient to serve New Hamburg and Baden during this planning period.

To complement the W.R.C. splash pad and improve geographic distribution, minor cooling station features could strategically be integrated into parkland located in other settlement areas through the park development and renewal process. These small-scale cooling stations, would contain fewer and simpler water features (e.g. one or two elements such as a spray jet or mister). Such communities that should be considered include New Dundee and St. Agatha.

Recommendations

37. Explore opportunities to provide cooling stations in New Dundee, Mannheim, and St. Agatha as part of future park development or parkland renewal. These cooling stations should be designed in a smaller scale compared to the splash pad offered at the W.R.C., and include fewer and simpler water features.

5.15 Playgrounds

Supply and Distribution

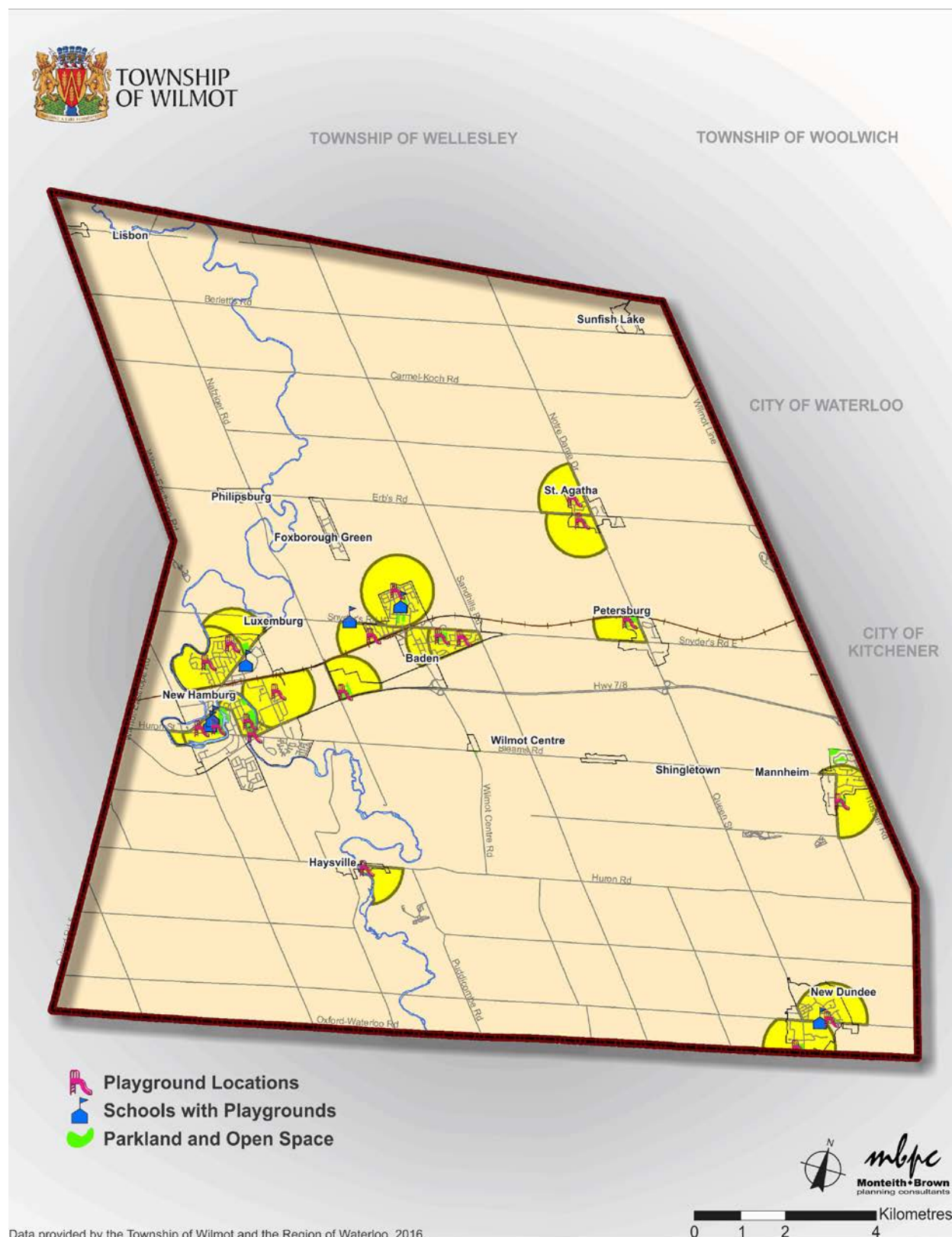
The Township provides 19 playgrounds at parks throughout Wilmot. In addition to these locations, residents also have access to playgrounds at the local schools. A notable playground is the Township's first accessible playground at the W.R.C. Known as the "Kids Play Zone", the playground was designed with an emphasis on inclusion and features creative and challenging elements to facilitate unique playing experiences. The use of rubber surfacing and engineered woodchips provides a heightened element of safety to the play space.

A cursory review of the Township's playgrounds during site visits reveals that Wilmot's play structures offer both basic and creative play experiences. The playground structures vary in age and condition with newer style playgrounds observed at Captain MacCallum Park, Brenneman Park, Constitution Park, Goldschmit Park, and the W.R.C. Other playgrounds were aging and in poor condition, particularly at Scott Park, where deteriorating paint and damaged rubber surface coatings were observed on some equipment. Most recently, the playground structure at Sararas Park in St. Agatha was replaced in 2015 (\$26,400). The Township's Capital Budget Forecast identifies a number of playground replacements for 2016 at Norm S. Hill Park and Scott Park (\$49,000), Sir Adam Beck Park (\$27,000), Petersburg Park (\$21,000), and St. Agatha Park (\$8,500).

Community Engagement

Community engagement participants felt that many of the playgrounds located at Township parks are in need of repairs or replacement, particularly at Scott Park. Focus group participants suggested that the playground at Scott Park is undersized, particularly given that this is a prominent park in New Hamburg that draws a number of residents with children. The online community survey found that playgrounds were the fifth most popular recreation facility with 60% of responding households using a playground in the past 12 months. Respondents also ranked playgrounds as the third highest priority for spending additional public funds on improving or developing new playgrounds.

Figure 22: Distribution of Playground Locations, Township of Wilmot



Market Trends

Playgrounds serve as neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development and foster cognitive and social skills, and physical activity. Playgrounds are typically provided within a reasonable walking distance of residential areas within established urban areas, without having to cross major barriers such as arterial roads, railways, and waterbodies.

The design of playgrounds has evolved from the traditional playground equipment, which typically consisted of swings, slides, and other elements that generally do not provide engaging playing experiences. Modern playgrounds are uniquely designed to facilitate creative play that allows the user to use their imagination to create more enjoyable playing environments. This may include a broad range of design elements such as the use of vibrant colours, interactive play components, thematic designs, and components that stimulate the senses. These features are considered by the Canadian Standards Association (C.S.A.), which guides the standards for children's play spaces and equipment. Proactive communities such as Wilmot have also explored the provision of accessible playgrounds to accommodate users with disabilities. Guided by the A.O.D.A., the provision of new playground structures after 2016 must be fully accessible.

Adventure and nature playgrounds are also becoming more popular across the world, which move beyond traditional play structures and utilize landscape features, natural materials and structures, and provide creative options and daring opportunities.¹⁶ These playgrounds have facilitated the concept of "Risky Play", which encourages children and youth to take more risks through climbing, exploring, moving vigorously, and creating their own activities using their own imagination. These styles of play are popular in the U.K. and U.S.A., and are gaining traction in Canada, which may be beneficial given that the most recent ParticipACTION Report Card identified that the over-protection of children is negatively impacting their ability to be physically active and develop valuable skills. In Ontario, the Lawson Foundation is dedicating \$2.7 million towards risky play in Canada and in 2016, awarded the Y.M.C.A. of Western Ontario with \$160,000 towards a pilot project focusing on self-directed and unstructured risky play.

Needs Analysis

Playgrounds are highly desirable recreation facilities as they provide benefits to the quality of life of growing families. Easily accessible playgrounds are essential in major neighbourhoods and can be achieved by ensuring that they are located within an 800-metre walking distance of all residential/settlement areas without crossing major barriers, which generally equates to a 10 minute walking distance. It is recognized that in rural areas with a geographically dispersed population, it is not always possible to achieve complete coverage; however, it is recommended that at a minimum, major settlement areas be serviced as best as possible.

Strict application of this service target reveals small gaps in a number of the Township's main settlement areas. For example, gap areas are observed in New Hamburg, on the east side of St. Agatha, in Petersburg, and Mannheim. These gap areas may not represent locations where playgrounds are required given that some areas are served by non-municipal playgrounds such

¹⁶ Martin, T. (2016). Fundamentals of Engaging Play Spaces: Adventure and Nature Play.

as those located at schools and religious institutions. Some areas may also have no children at all, such as in the Stonecroft and Morningside older adult lifestyle communities. Low density residential neighborhoods, such as Mannheim, may also not benefit from a playground. As a result of these considerations, a new playground may not be required in all gap areas. The Township should use discretion to investigate where true service gaps exist to establish new playgrounds.

Observations at existing Township playgrounds reveals that a number of structures were recently replaced such as at Sararas Park and Captain MacCallum Park. The Township's long term Capital Budget Forecast identifies the replacement of a number of playground elements for 2016 at Norm Hill Park, Scott Park, Sir Adam Beck Park, and Petersburg Park, totaling \$97,000. It is recommended that the Township continue with the replacement of these structures and identify and prioritize the replacement of aging playgrounds at remaining parks to ensure that they are safe, engaging, and visible in the community. Consideration should be given to erecting senior and junior-level creative structures that offer a unique playing experience.

Recommendations

38. Continue to identify and prioritize the replacement of aging playground structures with creative play and/or adventure/nature play equipment.
39. Target the provision of one playground within 800 metres of all settlement areas, unobstructed by major pedestrian barriers such as regional roads, highways, rail lines, and waterbodies.

5.16 Other Recreation Facilities to Consider

A number of requests were received for a number of other recreation facility types that are currently not provided by the Township. This section explores the opportunity to expand the Townships recreation portfolio. While it is recognized that there are municipalities that may provide these types of recreation facilities, there are a number of factors that communities must consider prior to entering into these areas of facility provision such as market demand, partnership opportunities, and available resources, among other variables.

Recommendations

40. Require unsolicited proposals from established affiliated organizations to be supported by a proponent-led assessment that substantiates need, land use compatibility, and demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Township becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, as well as a business plan and funding strategy suitable to the Township.

Off-Leash Dog Parks

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. Dog parks should not be viewed as being facilities strictly for pets as observations in other municipalities suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, such as residents living in isolation.

There are presently no designated off-leash dog parks in the Township. Low interest to establish such as facility was expressed through the consultation process; 48% of survey respondents were in support of providing additional funding for this facility type, ranking third last among 22 facility types.

There is currently limited demand for an off-leash dog park at this time and as a result, it is not recommended that the Township pursue the provision of this facility type during this planning period.

Community Gardens

A community garden is a parcel of land, usually municipally-owned, which is partitioned into plots that residents can rent to plant and harvest vegetables. These gardens are typically located on lands that have sufficient sunlight and access to a source of water. These facilities can be administered by a municipality, local organization, or interested members of the public free of charge or for a nominal fee. These types of facilities are becoming more popular, particularly in urban communities, as they facilitate social interaction, horticultural education, and awareness of the benefits of healthy diets and local food security.

Community gardens received some support through the consultation process as there were some requests from residents for this facility type. The online survey revealed that 48% of respondents supported spending public funds on developing a community garden, ranking fourth last among 22 facility types, which suggests that the demand for this facility type is low.

Despite being a low priority for additional public spending, community gardens are relatively inexpensive to provide compared to other recreation facilities. Community gardens are becoming more popular on a local and regional level; Fellowship Bible Church in New Hamburg recently erected a number of garden boxes and a community garden is provided by the Township of Wellesley. Given the progressiveness of Waterloo Region, together with Wilmot's rich agricultural background, the Township should remain open to the possibility of a community garden if an established community organization expresses and interest in operating and maintaining a community garden. Interested organizations should be encouraged to submit a business plan outlining the roles and responsibility of each participating party, funding strategy, land use compatibility, and other relevant details suitable to the Township.

Recommendations

41. Based on current demand, a community garden is not warranted at this time. However, the Township should monitor and re-evaluate, as appropriate, demand over the course of the Master Plan planning time frame. If an established community organization expresses an interest in operating and maintaining a community garden, the group should be encouraged to submit a business plan outlining the roles and responsibilities of the each participating party, funding strategy, land use compatibility, and other relevant considerations suitable to the Township.

Outdoor Running Tracks

Traditional outdoor running tracks have long been a pillar in school sports facilities and provide an excellent opportunity for youth to be active and engage in both recreational and competitive running during warmer months. A stone dust running track is currently available at Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School.

Examples of municipally-provided outdoor tracks exist in some areas but they may have a different profile than those at schools. Municipal tracks often vary in length and tend to be lower in quality, with unmarked lanes and a loose gravel surfaces. The track at the Norm S. Hill Park in New Hamburg is an example of a municipally-based track that is geared towards recreational usage only as well as supporting the New Hamburg Fall Fair.

Outdoor running tracks primarily benefit a narrow portion of residents as they are predominantly used for school programming and sports organizations. Outdoor tracks may also be used by running groups; however, running on the road or sidewalk may be more suitable environment that provides more scenic value. Running tracks generally offer limited community benefits given that they serve the above noted groups first, while other residents may have access outside of school hours or during the weekend. As residents would be likely to use the outdoor track for walking, the same can be achieved by walking around their own neighbourhood. Given these reasons, municipalities generally do not provide outdoor running tracks. Instead, municipalities often encourage the use of existing running tracks. In addition to the two running tracks in the Township, a high level scan of outdoor running tracks in the Region reveals that there are 16 outdoor running tracks in Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge, which suggests that Waterloo region is currently well served with outdoor running tracks. It is recognized that experienced runners who desire to advance in the sport are generally willing to drive further distance to access high these high quality facilities.

Given that the Township is currently exploring the opportunity with the Waterloo District School Board to develop a lit artificial turf field at the Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School, an option may exists to develop a running track as part of the overall project. Through this Master Plan process, there is insufficient demand to warrant entry into this level of service and given the

considerations described above, joint-funding of a running track at the Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School with the Waterloo District School Board is not recommended.

Recommendations

42. Maintain open dialogue with the Waterloo District School Board to explore the potential for combining the future lit artificial turf field with an outdoor running track. If a track is warranted by the Waterloo District School Board, full funding for the track should be the responsibility of the Board, given the limited community demand and benefit (also see Recommendation 28).



6.0

Cultural Opportunities

This section provides a high level examination of local cultural opportunities in the Township. It is recognized that the Township will be undertaking a Cultural Master Plan that will guide the growth and development of the local cultural sector. As a result, this section will identify existing opportunities in Wilmot, key cultural themes that emerged from the community engagement process, and areas for further consideration as the Township develops the cultural master plan.

Culture is broadly defined as the arts, cultural industries, and heritage resources. It includes, but is not limited to, the following opportunities and assets.

- Artistic talent and expression (music, theatre, dance, visual art, film, media arts and literature)
- Built heritage (e.g., Castle Kilbride)
- Natural heritage landscapes
- Libraries, museums and archives
- Special events, festivals and tourism

It is these cultural resources that form the backbone of the Township's creative industries, cultural spaces, and the natural and cultural heritage system. Culture plays an important role in building a strong and sustainable community. Trends suggest that a healthy arts and culture sector contributes to fostering economic prosperity, environmental health, and social cohesion. This section examines arts and cultural opportunities in the Township and identifies areas for further consideration.

6.1 Cultural Facilities in Wilmot

In addition to the Township's Castle Kilbride and Oasis-in-the-Centre, a cursory review of cultural opportunities in Wilmot reveals that there are several non-municipal facilities and service providers' available, providing residents with a wide variety of arts, culture, and heritage activities. Some of these cultural facilities are described below (although this is not an exhaustive list). **Appendix B** contains a listing of non-municipal opportunities available in the Township.

Arts Studios

There are numerous studios found in the Township that cater to different aspects of fine arts, creative arts, and performing arts. The Community Players of New Hamburg, for example, is a very popular local theatre group that put on a number of shows each year. Dance instruction is offered by Innovative Dance and Centre Stage, and art and pottery workshops are provided by Viewfinder Art Studio, Dundee Doodle, and Dundee Pottery.

Castle Kilbride Museum

Owned and maintained by the Township of Wilmot and operated by the Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee, this museum was a Victorian home built in 1877 for James Livingston, a prominent resident of Wilmot Township. The museum is currently used as a venue for celebrating local heritage events and exhibits, in addition to educational programming, weddings, and

photography. Most recently, the Township was selected by the Prime Ministers Statue Project to be the location that will be home to 22 statues of Canada's former prime ministers. Township Council voted unanimously in favour of the project and the statues will be erected around Castle Kilbride and the Administration Building grounds.

Oasis in the Centre

This park is located in the centre of the Township and was constructed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Township of Wilmot. The site contains a sculpture honouring the 150th anniversary and the Township's rich culture and heritage, and is complemented by seating, landscaping, and walking pathways.

Region of Waterloo Library

Region of Waterloo Library Services operates a number of library branches within municipally-owned facilities, including locations in New Hamburg, Baden, and New Dundee. In addition to providing residents with a variety of reading materials, the Region of Waterloo Library offers a number of free programs and events that promote and encourage literacy, culture, and recreation including, creative drop-in activities, parent and tots, video game events, book clubs, computer training, story time, and more.

Various Religious Institutions

Wilmot boasts several religious institutions that offer a diverse range of programs and events including, but not limited to bible study, weekly worship services, day care, library, reading groups, support services, sports, group trips, and educational classes.

6.2 Celebrating Culture in Wilmot

Culture is celebrated in Wilmot throughout the year in special events held by the Township together with dedicated volunteer groups such as the Wilmot Agricultural Society, Optimist Clubs, Lions Clubs, and more. The following is a sampling of some of the events offered in Wilmot, some of which were cultivated in response to the Township's Strategic Plan.

Heritage Day / Doors Open Waterloo Region

Heritage Day and Doors Open is organized by the Wilmot Heritage Committee, a committee of volunteers appointed by Township Council to advise and assist Council/staff on matters relating to the protection of properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including properties protected under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. These events encourage visitors to tour local heritage buildings such as Castle Kilbride, the Blue Moon Hotel, New Hamburg Heritage Conservation District, Baden Hotel, and more.

New Hamburg Fall Fair

The New Hamburg Fall Fair is held annually at the New Hamburg Arena and Norm S. Hill Park. Hosted by the Wilmot Agricultural Society, this event draws numerous visitors to celebrate 4-H through a variety of exciting events and activities including, but not limited to a horse show, petting zoo, arts and crafts exhibit, and other competitions.

Moparfest

Arranged by the Moparfest Organizing Committee with the support of the New Hamburg Lions Club and other community groups, Moparfest is held each year at Norm S. Hill Park. This car show draws approximately 20,000 spectators and has raised \$3 million since its inception to benefit local non-profit community organizations.

Baden Corn Festival / St. Agatha Strawberry Festival

The Baden Corn Festival and St. Agatha Strawberry Festival are put on by the Baden Community Association and the St. Agatha & District Lions Club, respectively. These events aim to celebrate local agricultural heritage and produce growers.

New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale

The annual Mennonite Relief Sale is made possible with the help of 2,000 volunteers and 40 venues who fundraise for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, a not-for-profit organization who assists those in need who are suffering around the world from poverty, conflict, oppression, and natural disaster. Since its inception in 1967, this event has raised over \$12 million.

6.3 Community Engagement

The community engagement process collected a broad range of input from participants. It was clear that residents enjoy the local community events and festivals, such as Moparfest and the opportunities that are available to volunteer and give back to the community.

A modest number of residents also reported their engagement in local arts and cultural programming. In the online community survey, 25% of respondents participated in performing arts programs such as dance; 9% of respondents also participated in visual and creative arts. More than two thirds (68%) of respondents identified that their household is able to participate in arts and culture activities as often as they would like, while the remainder indicated that they were not. The most common barrier was due to the lack of time, followed by the availability of their desired program/facility or being unaware of the opportunities that are available. The desire for a variety of arts and culture facilities and programs were identified including, but not limited to, arts and music programs, music concerts, and theatre. A shared arts space was also suggested to provide a location for creative minds to gather and share ideas. However, a visual or performing arts venue received the lowest level of support for additional public funding from survey respondents, which may suggest that this facility type is not a priority.

A number of ideas were expressed by residents who participated in the community engagement process. The most common suggestion was the need to bolster awareness of the arts, culture, and heritage opportunities that are available by improving advertising through social media, partnerships, and regular promotion in high visibility areas (e.g., electronic signs). It was also identified that a cultural mapping project be completed in Wilmot to understand where artists and cultural providers are located and what services and programs they offer. It was suggested that this project should be supported by an artist portal on the Township website to allow residents to locate relevant information in one location.

6.4 Culture Counts

The promotion of culture in Wilmot is currently guided by the strategic directions contained in the Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan (2013). This document identifies two strategic goals that emphasize the promotion of local arts, culture, and heritage. Each strategic goal is supported by a number of specific actions, as summarized in Table 16.

Table 16: Strategic Goals related to Culture in the Township of Wilmot, Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Promoting our rich cultural heritage	
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding Summer Concerts at Castle Kilbride. • Providing funding for murals on the Grandstand. • Provide new events and exhibits at Castle Kilbride that appeal to all ages. • Consider external grant funding for community organizations that run cultural exhibitions and/or events. • Protect the Township's built heritage. • Promote the collection of the Sir Adam Beck Archives. • Produce a cultural asset map. • Conduct a needs assessment to review existing facilities for cultural services to consider the establishment of a facility for the arts. • Consider developing a Municipal Arts and Cultural Plan. • Work with the New Hamburg Board of Trade to develop signage to promote New Hamburg's Heritage District.
Strategic Goal: Supporting community events and celebrations	
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Wilmot's tourism profile by supporting existing and new community events. • Provide funding for community events. • Support and maintain community centres.

Source: Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan

The actions expressed in the Strategic Plan will build upon Wilmot's vibrant arts, culture, and heritage community, which is already vast in its spectrum. The Township is rich in culture and heritage with strong agricultural roots and traditions. Culture can be found embedded throughout Wilmot including its churches, cemeteries, beautification efforts, storefronts, architecture and historic buildings, countryside, and the vibrancy created by special events.

The Township may consider taking on a more prominent role in guiding, directing, and/or managing local arts culture, and heritage interests. In order to evaluate this role and to ensure that the Township's cultural opportunities continue to grow and develop in a sustainable manner, a Master Plan is needed. Developing a cultural master plan offers the Township a number of key benefits, particularly with assisting the Township in addressing the actions identified in the Strategic Plan. More importantly, a long term plan for culture will assist with prioritizing

challenging funding decisions municipalities must make. To align with the Township's Strategic Master Plan, the Cultural Master Plan should consider the following areas, in addition to other key elements as determined by the Township:

- The benefits of culture in the community
- The role of the Township in providing cultural facilities, programs, and services
- Coordination with the arts, culture, and heritage sector
- Cultural mapping of municipal and non-municipal facilities, programs, and services
- Cultural facility, program, and service needs
- Cultural Policies (e.g., public art, funding, etc.)
- Cultural tourism and special events
- Marketing and awareness of cultural opportunities

Recommendations

43. Proceed with the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan as identified in the Township's capital budget, to guide the growth and development of arts, culture, and heritage opportunities in the Township. The development of a Cultural Master Plan should be guided by the Township's Strategic Plan, the direction contained in this Master Plan, and be supported through community engagement with local residents and stakeholders.



7.0

Service Delivery

This section assesses the efficiencies and effectiveness of the Township's Facilities and Recreation Services Department. Its intent is to assist in identifying areas of high performance as well as areas to improve through the introduction of new or more robust strategies, techniques, and/or other mechanisms to ensure that the delivery of services continues to grow in tandem with growing community expectations.

7.1 Township's Role in Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services

The ultimate purpose of a municipal recreation department organization is to contribute to the high quality of life of the community. This is achieved through the provision of quality recreational facilities, parks, programs, and activities. Municipal recreation opportunities in Wilmot is delivered by the Facilities and Recreation Services Department. The success of this department stems from the positive relationships between the Township, local community groups and organizations, and residents, resulting in a unified commitment to make the community a better place. The delivery of effective parks and recreation opportunities requires collaboration between the Township, volunteers, service providers, agencies, and the private sector. Each entity brings its own set of expertise and efficiencies in delivering specific services that benefit a broad spectrum of residents.

Corporate decision-making is guided by the Township's Strategic Plan, which has relevance to the Facilities and Recreation Department and this Master Plan. The Strategic Plan identifies a number of goals and strategies to guide the Township over a 20 year period. With relevance to this Master Plan, one of the Strategic Plan's goals is expressed as "We enjoy our quality of life". The supporting strategy states that this will be achieved "through providing recreational opportunities for everyone." A number of actions in this Strategic Plan are articulated to achieve this goal, a number of which have been completed, while the remainder are supported throughout this Master Plan. As a result, positioning the departmental role of the Township to respond to each of the recommendations effectively is vital to ensure that residents have access to high quality recreation opportunities.

Generally speaking, municipal parks and recreation departments operate under two models – direct and indirect service delivery:

- 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 larger municipalities that possess sufficient resources to provide this level of service.
- An indirect service delivery approach is typically employed in municipalities with limited financial and human resources and as such, the municipality's primary role is to provide physical space, while the programming and activities that occur in these spaces are operated by local organizations and community groups.

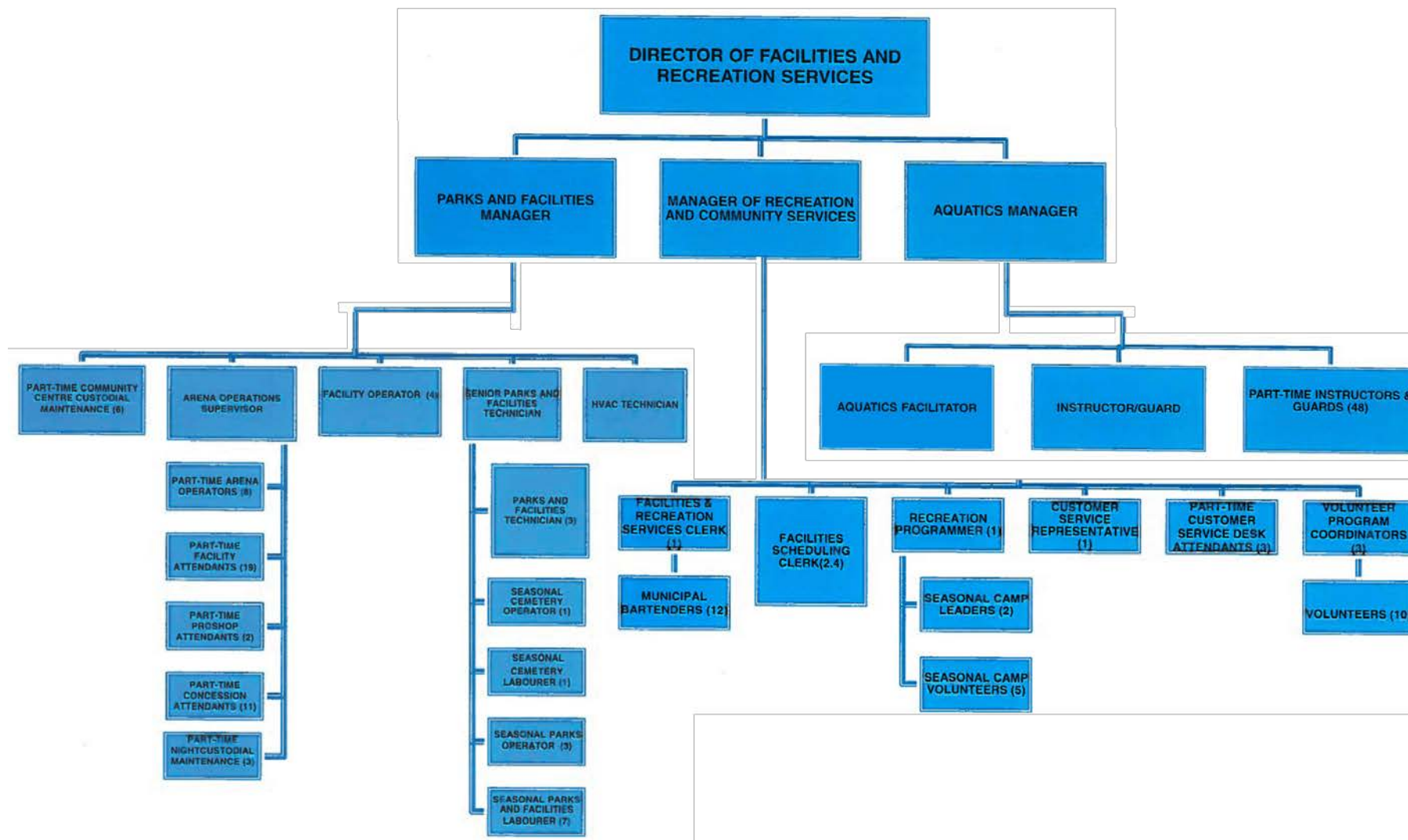
The Township currently utilizes a blend of these two approaches through the provision of facility space and a limited range of municipal programs (although it is expanding), which is augmented by programs and services provided by local groups and community organizations. This practice

has proven to be successful in the past and as the Township continues to grow, there is a need to ensure that the Township's mandate continues to meet the needs of its residents and that the municipal programs and services provided are complementary to those offered by non-municipal organizations.

7.2 Staffing Structure

In order to achieve the desired results of the Facilities and Recreation Services Department, senior management must provide a sense of purpose and clear direction to the entire organization so that the department is positioned to fulfil its ultimate purpose of contributing to a higher quality of life in the community through the provision of recreation facilities, parks, programs, and activities. Although a detailed departmental staffing review is beyond the scope of this Master Plan, this section will provide a broad look at staffing levels to identify areas for consideration and to ensure that the department is positioned to deliver on the directions of this Master Plan. As indicated in this Master Plan, the Township has experienced, and will continue to experience, growth in the community. Due to this growth, the Township will need to allocate additional staffing resources within the Facilities and Recreation Services Department to meet these demands. This is congruent with direction contained in the Township's Strategic Plan to evaluate staffing requirements to respond to the needs of a growing community.

Figure 23: Organizational Structure - Facilities and Recreation Services Department



Currently, the Facilities and Recreation Services (F.R.S.) Department is led by the Director of Facilities & Recreation Services. The department is comprised of three separate divisions including Parks and Facilities, Recreation and Community Services, and Aquatics (Figure 24). The department is staffed by 162.4 employees, which includes 21 full time staff (and 0.4 full time staff equivalent), 109 part-time staff, 18 volunteers, and 14 seasonal staff. From a municipal operating perspective, the reporting structure appears to work well given the emphasis on providing and maintaining physical space (e.g., recreation facilities and parks). The organizational hierarchy is similar to other municipalities that are similar and/or rural in nature. The advantages of this structure is that the leadership team has a broad range of key roles, which includes the responsibility to be inclusive to staff opinions and shared decision-making, thus promoting a team environment. To ensure that the F.R.S. Department continues operating as a high performance department, it is recommended that the Township review the existing roles and responsibilities of supervisory staff in both the Parks and Facilities sections of the Division in order to enhance project management accountabilities throughout. Pending the number and complexity of approved capital projects, additional capital project management training may be required.

As the Township continues to grow, it may be necessary to review and evaluate additional staffing requirements in the Facilities and Recreation Services Department, particularly in the area of recreation programming to address key demographic areas such as older adults and seniors, preschool children, and youth. The current recreation programmer is responsible for the supervision and coordination of the Youth Action Council and its events and activities; organizing and implementing adult fitness programs; and summer day camps at the W.R.C. This leaves very little time to focus on seasonal and/or preschool activities for children and youth, and programming for older adults and seniors, which is the fastest growing segment of Wilmot's population. The workload also does not allow for outreach programming to be provided in the community centres in other settlements within the Township. The implementation of programming in these centres could increase revenue, develop a stronger sense of belonging, and boast engagement in the community. The Township should consider the addition of a second programmer to address these programming needs of the growing population. Contingent upon population growth, the position should be required on a part-time basis in the medium term and should transition into a full-time position by the end of the Master Plan period.

Recommendations

44. Review the existing roles and responsibilities of supervisory staff in both the Parks and Facilities sections of the Division in order to enhance project management accountabilities in each area, which includes trails development responsibilities within the Parks function. Pending the number and complexity of approved capital projects, additional capital project management training may be required.
45. Contingent upon community growth rates, an additional recreation programmer will be required to address the recreational needs of key demographic segments of the population base. Initially, the position will be required on a part-time basis in the medium

Recommendations

term and should be transitioned into a full-time position by the end of the master plan period.

7.3 Programs and Activities

Quality programs that are affordable and accessible are essential for fostering a healthy, active community. Given that the lack of time is one of the most common barriers to participation at every age group, activities that are convenient, accessible, affordable, and relevant will be the most successful in any community.

A limited selection of programs and activities currently take place within municipal facilities, which are provided by the Township, community partners, and the private sector. With the recent addition of the Recreation Programmer to the municipal staffing structure, it is clear that the Township endeavours to take on a larger programming role. The addition of a second Recreation Programmer, as recommended by this Master Plan, lends to further support this role. These actions are supported given that there is a need to improve utilization of municipal facilities and the Township's ongoing commitment to providing complementary programs offered by non-municipal providers.

Consideration should also be given to partnering with groups to provide programs. Evidence of this provision model is currently found in a partnership between the Township and Wilmot Family Resource Centre. To engage youth in physical activities, the Township offered the Healthy Kids Community Challenge at St. Agatha and New Dundee, while the Wilmot Family Resource Centre provided the program in New Hamburg. Partnerships such as this are often successful and are described in more detail in Section 7.7. According to the Online Community Survey, half (52%) of respondents felt that programs/activities should be provided in combination between the Township, community/volunteer organizations, and the private sector, while 40% of respondents felt that programs/activities should be provided solely by the Township.

The online community survey found that respondents were least satisfied with the parks, recreation opportunities for teens (ages 13-18), which may suggest that there is a gap in service for this age segment; however, it should be noted that survey respondents may not be fully aware of the opportunities for all age groups. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to ensure that there are programs that appeal to all ages and abilities.

The majority of programs offered by the Township are considered active sports and physical programs, akin to traditional activities typically offered in municipalities. This primarily includes swimming, skating, and fitness programs, as well as some general leisure and arts activities. These programs are augmented by a broad range of activities offered by local organizations. The Township's Recreation Guide does an excellent job in promoting these non-municipal opportunities. It is recommended that the Township monitor current municipal and non-municipal programs to understand what programs are run well, how to improve existing programs, and to identify potential gaps areas (including within the various settlement areas of the Township). To

remove financial barriers to participating in these programs, financial assistance should be offered to older adults and seniors with low income (it is recognized that the Township currently offers financial assistance for youth under the age of 14 although the level of subsidy should be reviewed to ensure that it is sufficient). Where possible, consideration should be given to forming partnerships with local groups or service providers in the provision of new programs (whether registered or drop-in).

Recommendations

46. Monitor current municipal and non-municipal programs to understand what programs are done well, how to improve existing programs, and to identify potential gap areas. Where possible, consideration should be given to forming partnerships with local groups or service providers in the provision of program offerings (whether registered or drop-in).
47. Review the financial assistance program for youth under the age of 14 years to ensure that subsidy levels are appropriate and develop a similar program for older adults and seniors to remove financial barriers to participation for this age group.

7.4 Fiscal Responsibility

Parks and recreation infrastructure requires a significant investment to construct and maintain. Funding for the Township's recreation facilities largely comes from municipal and community contributions (e.g., tax levies, debentures, capital reserves, fundraising, etc.), as well as occasional grants from federal and provincial governments (e.g., Canada 150 Fund). Table 17 summarizes the funding allocated towards the provision of parks and recreation facilities in the Township, in addition to the total capital budget for parks and recreation services. The Township's 10-year capital budget and development charges by-law should be updated to incorporate the recommendations of the Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan. It should be noted that the funding total excludes future development charge collections and any annual operating surplus that is allocated towards the Township's Infrastructure Reserve Fund. After taking into account these future funds, any shortfall would be offset through the general tax levy and external funding sources.

Over the past few years, the Township has been successful in benefiting from a number of provincial and federal stimulus programs, which has provided funding towards improving the St. Agatha Community Centre, New Dundee Park, as well as the W.R.C. The Township should continue exploring alternative funding sources to augment existing capital programs to finance planned parks and recreation projects, as well as to implement the recommendations contained in this Master Plan.

Table 17: Funding Sources and Capital Budget Forecast

Funding Source	Funding Available
Development Charges for Parks and Recreation Services (2014 – 2020)	\$347,091
Park Levy	\$1,322,042
Facilities Reserve	\$1,088,966
Funding Total:	\$2,758,099
2015 – 2024 Capital Budget Forecast	Total
Parks and Recreation Facilities	\$7,762,868

Note: Funding sources are current as of April 30, 2016 and exclude any future anticipated Development Charge collections, which will offset approximately \$3.4 million of capital costs. In addition, one-third of the Township's annual operating surplus is allocated to the Infrastructure Reserve Fund for facilities in accordance to Township policy.

User and registration fees also assist with offsetting operational costs associated with its facilities, which are typically driven by varying municipal cost recovery models, level of service, and facility quality. To ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are affordable, the Township compares its fees with similarly sized municipalities and those within the Region and undertakes a review of user and rental fees every five years. This practice should be continued to ensure that the cost to participate and access services represent a fair and equitable balance between true costs and public benefits, and are competitive in the broader regional market.

Recommendations

48. Continue to explore alternative funding sources to augment existing capital programs to finance planned parks and recreation projects, as well as to implement the recommendations contained in this Master Plan.
49. Continue to assess user and rental fees and subsidies to ensure that they represent a fair and equitable balance between true costs and public benefits, are competitive in the broader regional market, and allow the Township to sustain the delivery of high quality facilities, programs, and services.
50. Update the 10-year capital budget and development charges by-law to incorporate the recommendations of the Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan.

7.5 Community Use of Schools

Devoting efforts to strengthening the relationship between the Township and the local school boards should be a priority area, given that the Township does not currently offer a gymnasium space and the fact that there is no suitable large multi-purpose space to accommodate active indoor programming such as basketball or volleyball. While the St. Agatha Community Centre Hall boasts a large open space that may accommodate indoor recreation activities, transportation may be a challenge for youth who are primarily located in New Hamburg and Baden. The Township's

Official Plan provides policy support to this position by stating that “the Township will facilitate partnership agreements, joint ventures, and facility sharing with the school boards, and other institutions and community groups to expand the supply of parks, open space, and recreational facilities.”

The *Education Act* permits joint agreements between school boards and municipalities to allow use of school facilities for recreational, athletic, cultural, and educational or community purposes. Schools have been long used for community activities (e.g., for their sports fields, gymnasiums, resource areas, etc.), though escalating costs across the province has led to recent challenges. The Township is currently participating in a Joint Use and Maintenance Policy (J.U.M.P.) Committee with the Waterloo District School Board to share outdoor facilities (school grounds and outdoor municipal facilities).

While, residents can access school gymnasiums through the Community Use of Schools initiative for a fee, there are limitations involved such as consistent access to the space. These limitations are outweighed by the benefits of maximizing existing space that is presently available. The gymnasium assessment found that there are approximately 185 hours of gymnasium time available for booking. Accessing these facilities is far more cost effective compared to constructing a new municipal gymnasium, particularly given that there are currently no suitable municipal lands and the fact that there are no other new major facilities recommended in this Master Plan that could be co-located with a gymnasium (as standalone recreation facilities are discouraged). As articulated in Recommendation 17, the Township should continue dialogue with the Waterloo District School Board and initiate discussions with the Waterloo District Catholic School Board to formalize an agreement to ensure regular access to school gymnasium space to augment municipal and community-based indoor recreation programming.

Recommendations

See Recommendation 18

7.6 Effective Partnerships

Part of implementing a community development approach is formally working with groups and individuals to provide services. There may be instances when 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 this instance, the creation of a partnership can be a great benefit in addressing identified needs or service gaps. As identified throughout this Master Plan, Wilmot Family Resource Centre and Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wilmot, and Wellesley are vital partners in the delivery of essential programs and services in the Township.

Examples of potential partners in the Township should include, at a minimum:

- Upper tiers of government (e.g., Region of Waterloo, Ministry of Natural Resources, etc.)
- Adjacent Municipalities (e.g., Wellesley, Woolwich, etc.)

- Environmentally-focused organizations (e.g., Grand River Conservation Authority, etc.)
- Educational institutions such as the Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board
- Local stakeholders such as service clubs, minor sports and recreation providers, festival organizers, community associations, and arts, culture, and heritage groups
- The private sector (and local land owners)

Partnerships can be excellent means in which to ensure that a broad range of services and facilities are available to serve the public. Not all partnerships are the same and thus careful consideration must be undertaken to manage risks, while clearly defining roles and expectations. For example, due diligence is required to ensure 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.

Furthermore, it is important that all requests are evaluated in the same way, so that there are no perceptions of inequality. A transparent, carefully thought-out partnership evaluation framework is needed as a result so that the Township can demonstrate its decision-making process and justify why it believes that some requests to partner are acceptable, while others should not be pursued with public sector involvement. The Township should create a Partnership Evaluation Policy that specifically identifies:

- Whether, first and foremost, the proposed partnership is consistent with municipal mandate and philosophies
- If there is a role for the Township to play in providing the program or service
- Whether there is a quantifiable or justified need for the service in the community
- That the service can be sustainably accommodated within the Township's long-term capital and/or operating resources
- Whether the partner is sufficiently capable/qualified (e.g., financially, staffing, internal expertise, etc.) to be able to deliver the service over the long-term, and in compliance with legislated policies and municipal standards
- The level of risk (e.g., financial liability, etc.) and how this will be managed by the partner or the Township
- Whether the partner can provide the service on a sole source basis
- Agreeing upon terms, conditions, standards, and responsibilities for all parties involved

Recommendations

51. Continue to pursue potential partnership opportunities that are consistent with the Department's Mission Statement in order to reduce reliance on municipal resources in providing quality recreation services. In doing so, a standardized process or framework for

Recommendations

evaluating and responding to requests for partnerships should be developed, with the view of maximizing public interests.

7.7 Volunteerism

The Township's volunteers are essential to the operation of many recreation opportunities in Wilmot, particularly with programs, services, and special events. From sport and recreation to arts and culture, local volunteers devote a significant amount of their time towards helping community groups deliver programs and services to residents.

Volunteers in the Township are essential in providing quality services that remain affordable to users, participants, and the community and as a result, it is important for both the Township and its community groups continue to maintain a strong profile of volunteers. According to a national study, over half of current volunteers stated that they approached an organization by themselves to become involved, though once they joined, they provided more of their time than volunteers who did not approach an organization on their own.¹⁷ The study also stated that a common barrier to volunteering is that people were not asked to do so, which suggests that residents should be regularly engaged about the volunteer opportunities that exist in order to target residents who are unaware of opportunities but would otherwise be willing to help. The Strategic Plan identifies that consideration should be given to hosting a service club fair to engage and attract new volunteers, which should be supported to promote opportunities to become involved in the community.

Volunteerism in the Township is strong among some organizations, while other groups are challenged with recruiting sufficient volunteers. There are currently organizations seeking dedicated volunteers to be a part of local municipal committees, Kilbride Castle, Youth Action Council, summer camps, and at the W.R.C. The Township promotes volunteer opportunities through a number of methods including the Recreation Guide, website, and the bi-annual Registration Fair. Given that the Township relies on volunteers to deliver programs and assist with events, the need to establish and maintain a strong system of volunteers is paramount. In addition to recruiting volunteers, some groups identified challenges with finding qualified volunteers for positions requiring certain skills or knowledge, such as coaching. From a community development perspective, the Township may intercept this challenge by assisting groups with appropriate volunteer training. This may involve organizing workshop sessions with group representatives to disseminate the appropriate resources to assist groups with volunteer training, coaching, recruitment, retention, recognition, and more. An opportunity may also exist to leverage the external expertise of professional training consultants to facilitate these sessions.

¹⁷ Imagine Canada & Statistics Canada. 2009. Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating. Ministry of Industry.

Recommendations

52. Coordinate a workshop session with user group representatives to disseminate appropriate resources for local groups to address challenges in the volunteer sector such as training, coaching, recruitment, retention, and recognition and more. Consideration may be given to leveraging the external expertise of professional training consultants to assist with facilitating this session.

7.8 Focus on Customer Service

Consumers of public recreation services are more demanding than ever before. The Township has experienced enhanced expectations for high quality customer service that is on par with the recent development of the W.R.C. This is compounded by the growth of new residents from highly urbanized areas who seek the small town charm, but desire the same level customer service, programming, and facilities that they have become accustomed to.

A well-managed, quality focused customer service system is considered to be one of the fundamental components of an effective service delivery system. Top performing municipal departments acknowledge this by allocating sufficient resources, as well as an appropriate number of well-trained staff to fulfill the service expectations of their clientele. The way in which a patron is treated by staff is often perceived to be just as important as the quality of the facility or program that they are using. Consequently, progressive organizations are placing greater emphasis on their ability to meet their patrons' service expectations, while also realizing that the consistent delivery of quality customer service is a planned activity that must be carefully managed and effectively coordinated. Ideally, this involves the development and articulation of customer service standards.

Recommendations

53. Continue to regularly explore opportunities to enhance the way that services are being delivered to customers, with a continued focus on quality. This may require the Township to consider new approaches and technologies that will aid staff in their ability to administer the high quality customer services that residents now associate with municipal facilities and programs.

7.9 Leveraging New Technologies

The use of technology has transformed how municipalities interact with residents and stakeholders. The use of the Recreation Guide, social media, and the Township's website has required new levels of expertise and some very creative thinking. Innovative departments are committed and are willing to devote resources into ensuring that they understand the needs of their staff, users, and non-users and develop technology based solutions centred on these needs, while maintaining traditional resources for less tech-savvy residents. Some current examples of how the use of technology can enhance the parks, facilities, and recreation experience include:

Promotion and the use of Social Media

Continuous efforts to promote recreational opportunities and its benefits is an ongoing necessity in keeping residents informed. The use of the Recreation Guide, new Township website (launched in 2015), digital signs, and social media, are excellent communication mechanisms. An annual strategy to communicate and promote recreation opportunities using additional mechanisms, such as cross promoting with other providers, would also assist in increasing the number and frequency of communication impressions.

People Counters

Laser people counters have been installed by some municipalities in municipal parks and facilities to count the number of users in a day, month, year, etc. As the Township implements the Trails Master Plan, these counters would be particularly beneficial to quantify the success of the developing trail network. This information provides data on peak time usage and can address efficiencies such as energy use, staffing, and maintenance scheduling.

Points of Interest Enhancement Applications

Parks Canada has introduced a GPS based application that allows parks users to learn more about points of interest in national parks through the use of their mobile phone. Two other applications that Parks Canada has introduced include a "How to Camp" application for new campers and a "Heritage Gourmet" application that lists Canadian heritage cooking recipes. The Township is also currently using QR codes, which are uniquely generated bar codes that is linked to digital content. These types of applications can be useful for promoting and educating users of key destinations and points of interest within the Township's parks and recreation system. As the Township moves forward with the Prime Minister Statue Project, an opportunity may exist to create a mobile application that provides users with a background of each Prime Minister.

These uses of technology are provided as examples and food for thought in order for the Township to maximize how residents receive information. There may be applications or spin-offs of applications that can create efficiencies and enhance the Township's leisure experience. As well there may be an ability to work with other organizations to create meaningful applications and share the resources that it takes to source and utilize them.

Recommendations

54. Continue to explore new technologies that become available to enhance the education, awareness, and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities in the Township.

8.0

Implementation Plan

This Section contains a framework for reviewing and updating the Master Plan as well as a summary of the recommendations put forth within this Master Plan, along with their suggested priority/timing.

8.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

The Township should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations contained in this Master Plan in order to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring activity patterns, tracking user participation and satisfaction levels, consistent dialogue with community organizations, annual reporting on implementation and short-term work plans, and 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.

Reviewing the Master Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of parks, facilities, and recreation 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:

- 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.).
- Identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, political pressures, etc.).
- cursory review of the Master Plan for direction regarding its recommendations.
- 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.), as it is currently being done in conjunction with the C.A.O. and the finance department during annual capital and operating budget deliberations with Council.
- Communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and projects to be implemented in the coming year, as it is currently being done through the annual work plan, the mid-year work plan update, and quarterly staff reports (project status, capital status, and operational status) presented to Council.
- Budget requests/revisions as necessary.

8.2 Implementation Strategy

Throughout the body of this Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each topic area. This is not intended to be a definitive list, as additional capital repairs, operating expenditures, and other initiatives outside the scope of this Plan may be identified and prioritized on a case-specific basis. By approving the Master Plan, the Township is not bound to implementing every recommendation; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

The implementation strategy provides guidance for ensuring that the most critical recommendations are dealt with in a timely fashion, while the less critical (yet important) recommendations are implemented over time. As necessary, it is expected that an analysis of capital and operating implications and partnership options would be undertaken prior to approving any project. The full implementation of this Plan will require the pursuit of senior government grant money and the establishment of various partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, schools, agencies, and the private sector. Furthermore, due to limited staff resources, it is not likely possible for all recommendations to be implemented immediately. The Township should reconcile the recommendations with its fiscal capacity and focus on the highest priority items.

Priority is generally synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. All recommendations are important and, if properly implemented, will benefit parks, facilities, and recreation services in the Township. The priority/timing of recommendations is organized into the following three categories:

- Short-term priority (1-3 years) – 2017 to 2019
- Medium-term priority (4-6 years) – 2020 to 2022
- Long-term priority (7-10+ years) – 2023 to 2026+

It bears noting that the recommendations are based on what is needed and not what is financially achievable by the Township at the present time. The proposed priority/timing of each recommendation has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the Master Plan process (including public consultation, trends and demographic analysis, assessment of parks, facilities, programs, services, etc.) and is based upon ideal circumstances. Budget pressures, changes in participation rates or demographics, availability of volunteer resources, and other factors may impact upon the implementation of these recommendations.

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited on a regular basis prior to the capital and operating budget development exercise. Readjusting resource allocations is critical in a climate where base funding is not increasing substantially and resources need to be maximized in order to garner the greatest gain to the community. Factors that might change priorities year to year may include, but not be limited to:

- Safety and accessibility issues that need to be addressed immediately
- New legislation and mandated requirements
- Changing service standards

- Public input and community interests
- Emerging trends, participation rates, and socio-demographic changes
- Availability of alternate providers and volunteers

The Township has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the primary reasons for undertaking this Master Plan. Although the Township may be challenged in providing the appropriate financial resources to meet the provision targets recommended in this Plan given competing needs in the community for funding, the Township should make every reasonable effort to implement these strategies through a variety of appropriate and acceptable means.

In the following tables, the recommendations are numbered according to the order in which they are presented in the body of the Master Plan.

Parkland	Priority / Timing
Parkland Classification System	
1. Utilize the parkland classification hierarchy to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.	Ongoing
2. Incorporate a parkland classification system into the Official Plan at the time of its next review, using Table 4 contained within this Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan as a point of departure.	Medium
Parkland Distribution and Supply	
3. Over the long term, actively pursue parkland acquisition and development to provide approximately 4.0 hectares of Neighbourhood Parkland to meet the Township's year 2026 parkland provision target, with a focus on providing parkland in the Township's main growth areas – New Hamburg and Baden.	Ongoing
4. On an opportunity basis, pursue opportunities to rectify any parkland gaps that may exist in the Township's smaller, built-up settlement areas, utilizing the parkland development strategies identified in this Master Plan, in addition to continuing to work with the Grand River Conservation Authority, Region of Waterloo, and local school boards to maintain access to a wider range of active and passive open spaces.	Ongoing
5. Strive to maintain a parkland service area of 800 metres from all neighbourhoods in settlement areas, unobstructed by major barriers such as major roads, railways, etc.	Ongoing
Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines	
6. Avoid accepting or developing active parkland parcels of less than 0.5 hectares in size unless the Township has determined that there is a need to fill a gap in parkland and other options are inadequate.	Ongoing

Parkland	Priority / Timing
7. Continue to employ alternative acquisition tools, as necessary, to supplement parkland dedications and enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.	Ongoing
Parkland Design Guidelines	
8. Undertake strategic parkland renewal and redevelopment projects to ensure that parks effectively service their intended populations. Where appropriate, potential projects should be supported by area-specific consultation, park-specific master plans, facility fit diagrams, and business planning. The timing of potential actions is subject to the Township's discretion, based upon needs determined through consultation, community demographics, and the availability of funding.	Ongoing
9. Continue to maintain commitment to accessibility, safety, and comfort within the Township's parks system through compliance with the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> (A.O.D.A.) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (C.P.T.E.D.) principles.	Ongoing
10. Implement the Township's standardized, branded signage design template and install at all municipal parks and recreation facilities, and trailheads.	Short to Medium
Active Transportation Opportunities in Wilmot	
11. Continue to implement the Township's Trails Master Plan and Implementation Strategy with a priority of connecting of existing parks and recreation facilities, as well as future park development opportunities, to enhance connectivity and linkages throughout the Township.	Ongoing

Recreation Facilities	Priority / Timing
Ice Pads	
12. Re-evaluate the need for a third ice pad in 2020 following the expansion of the New Hamburg treatment plant. The Township should monitor participation and utilization trends during this time to ensure that the demand for ice is sustained during this period. This exercise should also confirm the size of the children/youth population once the 2016 Census for population by age cohort has been released, seek to determine if national hockey participation trends (declining participation) are affecting Wilmot, undertake consultation with arena groups, and investigate opportunities in adjacent communities to accommodate additional capacity within their respective arenas to accommodate Wilmot residents.	Medium

Recreation Facilities	Priority / Timing
If a third ice pad is determined to be required, undertake a site selection process, which should include the following options: a) re-opening the New Hamburg Community Centre for ice, b) expansion of the Wilmot Recreation Complex, and c) any other site(s) deemed appropriate for consideration.	
13. Undertake an engineering study to assess the costs associated with re-opening the arena at the New Hamburg Community Centre to assist with identifying the location for a third ice pad should demand exist in the future. This study should also identify the costs associated with converting the floor pad into a warm building, in the event that another option for a third ice pad is selected.	Short
14. Develop an ice allocation policy to ensure that the allocation of ice time is distributed efficiently and equitably.	Short
Indoor Pools	
15. As a part of a cost avoidance strategy, the Township should remove the former Wilmot Community Pool from its inventory of recreation facility assets and divest of the property. Staff should continue discussions with Waterloo Region District School Board to determine if there is an interest in acquiring the property for use by Forest Glen Public School.	Short
Fitness Spaces	
16. Continue to focus on promoting and facilitating active living and fitness programs, offered by the Township and community-based providers, at existing municipal facilities.	Ongoing
17. Continually re-evaluate program offerings to focus on providing higher demand programs, while reducing the number of programs with lower participation rates to improve overall programming performance (fill rates).	Ongoing
Gymnasiums	
18. Maximize opportunities for gym-based recreation opportunities in the Township by working with school boards to optimize access through Community Use of Schools and, where appropriate, introduce activities (especially during daytime hours – e.g., pickleball, badminton, ping pong, etc.) into the Township's community centres in order to increase utilization and meet demands for such space. This may require an amendment to the Township's policy on facility usage to permit active gymnasium-based programs.	Short
Multi-Purpose Program Spaces	
19. Continue to monitor, promote, and encourage use of the Township's multi-purpose and meeting spaces to facilitate a broad range of uses such as meetings, social gatherings, active living programs, youth and senior programs, and more.	Ongoing

Recreation Facilities	Priority / Timing
20. In consultation with local community partners and user groups, identify and prioritize improvements to the Township's multi-purpose and meeting spaces, which must be rationalized through a cost-benefit analysis, to modernize municipal facilities and ensure that they are flexibly designed to accommodate a broad range of uses.	Medium
21. Expand successful program offerings that are in high demand through outreach at multi-use spaces throughout the Township to bolster facility utilization.	Ongoing
Dedicated Youth Space	
22. No new dedicated youth spaces are required during this planning period.	Short
23. Continue to offer programs that are complementary to those provided by community partners (e.g., Wilmot Family Resource Centre) to bolster the Township's status as a "Youth Friendly" community.	Ongoing
24. The Township's Youth Action Council should continue to work closely with community organizations (e.g., Wilmot Family Resource Centre, etc.) to promote awareness of the youth opportunities available in the Township while also exploring opportunities to utilize community halls to provide drop-in programs aimed at youth.	Medium
25. Establish an annual youth forum, spearheaded by the Youth Action Council, to identify and discuss issues and improvements to the Optimists' Youth Centre, and other matters relevant to youth.	Ongoing
Dedicated Older Adult Space	
26. No new dedicated older adult and seniors spaces are recommended during the Master Plan's planning period.	Short
27. Continue to provide older adult and seniors' programming within existing municipal spaces (e.g., active living programs) that are complementary to programs offered by Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wilmot, and Wellesley, and other community program providers.	Ongoing
Sport Fields	
28. Continue discussions initiated by the Waterloo Region District School Board to develop a lit artificial turf field at Waterloo Oxford Secondary School to accommodate a wide range of sports (field hockey, rugby, football, etc.), extending the playing season, reducing the impact of shoulder seasons on existing turf fields, and creating an enhanced sport field opportunity for local organizations and tournament/sport tourism play. Any financial contributions from the Township should be contingent upon negotiating a suitable degree of access for field users representing a variety of field sports.	Short

Recreation Facilities	Priority / Timing
29. Engage the Township's sports field users in discussions to ensure that the design of fields are appropriate to support Long-Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) rules and regulations. Any future improvements should be directed to fields that are in higher demand, while reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields so that they can be promoted as casual open field play areas that serve the broader community for passive or pick-up play.	Medium
Ball Diamonds	
30. No new ball diamonds are required during this planning period.	Short
31. Promote open spaces within parks and school properties to facilitate unorganized sports and similar activities.	Long
Tennis and Pickleball Courts	
32. Monitor demand for tennis and should demand exist, consider converting the multi-use court at Scott Park to a tennis court to create a two-court pod to support simultaneous play and achieve operating efficiencies. This would require relocating the existing multi-use court to another location within the park.	Ongoing
33. Convert the skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park to two pickleball courts to respond to the growing popularity of the sport. This will require the existing skateboard park to be relocated within the park.	Short
Multi-Use Courts	
34. Explore the potential to develop a multi-use court on the existing asphalt surface adjacent to the community centre at Mannheim Community Park. At a minimum, the multi-use court should include basketball hoops and markings, be sized large enough to facilitate basketball games, and accommodate other activities requiring a hard surface.	Medium
Skateboard Parks	
35. Relocate the existing skateboard park at Sir Adam Beck Park to another location within the park (adjacent to the parking lot), and consider providing additional and more challenging skateboard components (also see Recommendation 33).	Short
36. Establish a skateboard park within New Hamburg and, where demand exists, investigate opportunities for smaller skate zones within other settlement areas to provide geographically accessible recreation opportunities for local youth. The Youth Action Council and/or a youth forum should be engaged in the design and location of these skateboard parks/zones.	Long

Recreation Facilities	Priority / Timing
Splash Pads / Cooling Stations	
37. Explore opportunities to provide cooling stations in New Dundee, Mannheim, and St. Agatha as part of future park development or parkland renewal. These cooling stations should be designed in a smaller scale compared to the splash pad offered at the W.R.C., and include fewer and simpler water features.	Long
Playgrounds	
38. Continue to identify and prioritize the replacement of aging playground structures with creative play and/or adventure/nature play equipment.	Ongoing
39. Target the provision of one playground within 800 metres of all settlement areas, unobstructed by major pedestrian barriers such as regional roads, highways, rail lines, and waterbodies.	Ongoing
Other Recreation Facilities to Consider	
40. Require unsolicited proposals from established affiliated organizations to be supported by a proponent-led assessment that substantiates need, land use compatibility, and demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Township becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, as well as a business plan and funding strategy suitable to the Township.	Ongoing
41. Based on current demand, a community garden is not warranted at this time. However, the Township should monitor and re-evaluate, as appropriate, demand over the course of the Master Plan planning time frame. If an established community organization expresses an interest in operating and maintaining a community garden, the group should be encouraged to submit a business plan outlining the roles and responsibilities of the each participating party, funding strategy, land use compatibility, and other relevant considerations suitable to the Township.	Long
42. Maintain open dialogue with the Waterloo District School Board to explore the potential for combining the future lit artificial turf field with an outdoor running track. If a track is warranted by the Waterloo District School Board, full funding for the track should be the responsibility of the Board, given the limited community demand and benefit (also see Recommendation 28).	Short

Cultural Facilities in Wilmot	Priority / Timing
Culture Counts	
43. Proceed with the preparation of a Cultural Master Plan as identified in the Township's capital budget, to guide the growth and development of arts, culture, and heritage opportunities in the Township. The development of a Cultural Master Plan should be guided by the Township's Strategic Plan, the direction contained in this Master Plan, and be supported through community engagement with local residents and stakeholders.	Short

Service Delivery	Priority / Timing
Staffing Structure	
44. Review the existing roles and responsibilities of supervisory staff in both the Parks and Facilities sections of the Division in order to enhance project management accountabilities in each area, which includes trails development responsibilities within the Parks function. Pending the number and complexity of approved capital projects, additional capital project management training may be required.	Short
45. Contingent upon community growth rates, an additional recreation programmer will be required to address the recreational needs of key demographic segments of the population base. Initially, the position will be required on a part-time basis in the medium term and should be transitioned into a full-time position by the end of the master plan period.	Medium
Programs and Activities	
46. Monitor current municipal and non-municipal programs to understand what programs are done well, how to improve existing programs, and to identify potential gap areas. Where possible, consideration should be given to forming partnerships with local groups or service providers in the provision of program offerings (whether registered or drop-in).	Ongoing
47. Review the financial assistance program for youth under the age of 14 years to ensure that subsidy levels are appropriate and develop a similar program for older adults and seniors to remove financial barriers to participation for this age group.	Short
Fiscal Responsibility	
48. Continue to explore alternative funding sources to augment existing capital programs to finance planned parks and recreation projects, as well as to implement the recommendations contained in this Master Plan.	Ongoing

Service Delivery	Priority / Timing
49. Continue to assess user and rental fees and subsidies to ensure that they represent a fair and equitable balance between true costs and public benefits, are competitive in the broader regional market, and allow the Township to sustain the delivery of high quality facilities, programs, and services.	Ongoing
50. Update the 10-year capital budget and development charges by-law to incorporate the recommendations of the Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services Master Plan.	Short and Ongoing
Community Use of Schools	
See Recommendation 18	
Effective Partnerships	
51. Continue to pursue potential partnership opportunities that are consistent with the Department's Mission Statement in order to reduce reliance on municipal resources in providing quality recreation services. In doing so, a standardized process or framework for evaluating and responding to requests for partnerships should be developed, with the view of maximizing public interests.	Ongoing
Volunteerism	
52. Coordinate a workshop session with user group representatives to disseminate appropriate resources for local groups to address challenges in the volunteer sector such as training, coaching, recruitment, retention, and recognition and more. Consideration may be given to leveraging the external expertise of professional training consultants to assist with facilitating this session.	Medium
Focus on Customer Service	
53. Continue to regularly explore opportunities to enhance the way that services are being delivered to customers, with a continued focus on quality. This may require the Township to consider new approaches and technologies that will aid staff in their ability to administer the high quality customer services that residents now associate with municipal facilities and programs.	Ongoing
Leveraging New Technologies	
54. Continue to explore new technologies that become available to enhance the education, awareness, and promotion of parks and recreation opportunities in the Township.	Ongoing

Appendix A

Summary of Background Documents

This Appendix summarizes all relevant municipal documents reviewed in the preparation of this Master Plan.

Strategic Policy Documents

Township of Wilmot Official Plan

Prepared in accordance with the *Planning Act* and in conformity with the Region of Waterloo Official Plan, the Township of Wilmot Official Plan is the guiding land use planning document that contains the long-term policy direction and strategies to direct future development within the Township. Policies for open space, parks, and recreation facilities are found in Section 6.11 of the Official Plan, where general policies maintain that the Township will provide sufficient opportunity for the provision of active and passive recreation pursuits through the provision of parkland, recreation facilities, sports fields, and natural areas. Policies regarding parkland acquisition are also contained in this Section, allowing the Township to require parkland dedication in the amount of 5% of land for residential development and 2% of land for all other forms of development. Cash-in-lieu may be required in place of parkland dedication, provided the appropriate criteria is met.

Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan

The Township of Wilmot Strategic Plan was approved by Council in 2013 and is a roadmap to guide decision-making over the next 20 years. With the benefit of public input, the Strategic Plan articulates the desired direction for growing the Township, which is supported by prioritized goals and actions. In developing the Strategic Plan, a vision and mission was crafted, together with four key goals for achieving this vision. A summary of which is highlighted below, together with actions relevant to this Master Plan (some of which have already been completed).

Strategic Plan Vision

"Wilmot is a cohesive, vibrant, and welcoming countryside community."

Strategic Plan Mission

"To evolve and grow as a community of caring people working together to build upon a sure foundation."

Strategic Plan Goals

- We enjoy our quality of life
- We are an engaged community
- We protect our natural environment
- We have a prosperous economy

Actions relevant to the Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services Master Plan

- Offer more structured programming for youth, adults, and seniors.
- Actively pursue grant and funding opportunities relative to recreational programming and service provision.
- Provide financial assistance opportunities for under-privileged youth to allow them to participate in recreational programming.
- Provide grant funding to community groups running recreational programming.

- Undertake a Recreational Master Planning process.
- Develop a splash pad.
- Develop an accessible playground.
- Complete an ice utilization needs study.
- Enhance existing soccer facilities.
- Provide new events and exhibits at Castle Kilbride that appeal to all ages.
- Consider external grant funding for community organizations that run cultural exhibitions and/or events.
- Increase Wilmot's tourism profile by supporting existing and new community events.
- Provide funding for community events.
- Support and maintain community centres.
- Produce a cultural asset map.
- Conduct a needs assessment to review existing facilities for cultural services to consider the establishment of a facility for the arts.
- Consider developing a Municipal Arts and Cultural Plan.

Region of Waterloo Official Plan

The Region of Waterloo Official Plan (R.O.P.) came into effect on June 18, 2015, containing strategic direction and policies to guide the growth and development of Waterloo Region over a 20 year period. Population estimates are identified in the R.O.P., which allocates 28,500 residents in the Township by 2031. The Township of Wilmot is designated as a "Township Urban Area", which will be a focus for non-Urban Area growth. Expansion of the Township boundaries will be permitted provided it conforms to the policies in the R.O.P. and maintains a minimum of one full-time job for every three residents within the Township Urban Area.

Parks, Recreation, and Culture Documents

Township of Wilmot Trails Master Plan

The Trails Master Plan establishes the long-term vision for trail development in the Township. There are a number of existing major trail routes located within established woodlands, environmental areas, and other publicly-owned lands throughout Wilmot including the Petersburg Regional Forest, Walker Woods, Petersburg Crown Lands, Avon Trail, Christner Trail, and Morningside Trail. In addition, unopened road allowances and cycling routes are available to trail users. General design guidelines are also articulated. The Trails Master Plan identifies a number of trail connections throughout the Township, which will be considered in the development of this Master Plan to enhance connectivity and opportunities to each park.

Township of Wilmot Recreation Facility Needs Study (2002 and 2007 Addendum)

The Township developed a Recreation Facility Needs Study in 2002 to assess program and service priorities relating to recreation needs in Wilmot. The key direction articulated from this study was the development of a new multi-purpose recreation facility, which would later become the W.R.C. It was originally recommended that this new facility would be developed as a single pad arena with the potential to be twinned; however, it was ultimately constructed as a twin pad facility in

Phase I of the facility, which was complemented by a community centre, and outdoor soccer fields, with the potential to add an indoor pool and community space.

In 2007, an Addendum was developed to update the 2002 Recreation Facility Needs Study to reassess the recommendations regarding the provision of an arena and aquatics in the Township. Several recommendations were advanced in this Addendum, a sample of which are described below:

- Repurpose the New Hamburg Arena to another use;
- Develop an Ice Allocation Policy;
- Undertake a financial feasibility study to determine the capital and operating costs associated with developing a third ice pad and a site selection process assessing the W.R.C., refurbishing the New Hamburg Arena, or an alternative site;
- Construct a combination leisure/competitive pool as a second phase to the multi-use recreation facility;
- Consider a small, warm-water therapy pool;
- Evaluate alternatives for the Wilmot Community Pool; and
- Work with the Waterloo Region School Board to negotiate a formal agreement for access to school facilities.

Indoor Arena Ice Usage & Needs Analysis

The Township of Wilmot Indoor Arena Ice Usage & Needs Analysis was developed to reassess the timing of future ice surface provision in the Township by updating the ice pad needs component of the 2007 Recreation Facility Needs Study Addendum. This addendum identified that the New Hamburg Arena should be repurposed to another use. It was also recommended that when the Township requires 2.5 to 3.0 ice pads, a financial feasibility study be undertaken to determine the capital and operating costs associated with developing a third ice pad and a site selection process assessing the W.R.C., refurbishing the New Hamburg Arena, or selecting an alternative site.

Based on a reassessment of ice pad needs, this analysis identified that one additional ice pad should be provided by 2018/19, where local demand will reach 2.5 ice pads. It was also recommended that the Township monitor local participation and regional market demand as these factors could impact ice demand and the timing of facility provision. The development of an ice allocation policy was also recommended.

Recreation Guide 2015-2016

The Township's Recreation Guide contains all relevant information for residents to access recreation opportunities in Wilmot. A broad range of information is contained in this document including, but not limited to, registration information, municipal information, programming opportunities, day care services, special events, service clubs and other community organizations, facility rentals, community contacts, and more.

Other Supporting Documents

Accessibility Plan 2016 – 2020

The Township's Accessibility Plan was developed in accordance with the A.O.D.A. to ensure that the Township is inclusive of all residents regardless of physical abilities. The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities, and to raise awareness about the Township's ongoing initiatives. Several goals and actions are identified in this multi-year plan, while there are currently no new recommendations to undertake accessibility retrofits to existing facilities, all new facilities will be constructed with A.O.D.A. requirements in mind. The W.R.C. is one of the Township's newest facilities, which incorporated numerous accessibility components such as barrier free washrooms, automated doors, accessible seating areas, and more.

Development Charges Background Study

The Township's Development Charges Background Study articulates the charges for infrastructure development in the Township, covering many municipal services including roads, public works, fire protection, recreation, libraries, administration, and water. With respect to this Master Plan, this D.C. Study indicates that the Township offers 195 acres of developed parkland and 100 major park amenities. In addition, the Township boasts over 230,000 square feet of indoor recreation facility space. The total capital cost allocation towards parks and recreation services over the 10 year forecast is approximately \$5.6 million (approximately \$3.3 million is funded from development charges), identifying future projects including a third ice pad, artificial turf field, trail development, splash pad, playground, enhancing ball diamonds, and other park and facility improvements.

Capital Forecast 2016-2025

The Township's Capital Forecast describes the planned projects to be undertaken over a ten year period and the associated budget. Capital projects relevant to parks, facilities, and recreation services will be identified throughout this Master Plan. The Capital Forecast is a living document, which can be amended from time to time based on changing priorities and needs.

Schedule of Fees and Charges By-law

This document outlines the fees and charges by-law for the Township of Wilmot. Fees and charges related to the use of the W.R.C. are outlined in Schedule D and fees for parks use and community programs are identified in Schedule G and H, respectively. Charges for the Castle Kilbride are contained in Schedule I.

Appendix B

Inventory of Non-Municipal Parks, Recreation, and Culture Organizations in Wilmot

This Appendix summarizes all research on local parks, recreation, and culture opportunities offered by non-municipal organizations and community groups (e.g., schools, religious institutions, service clubs, private organizations, etc.) to augment the facilities, programs, and services provided by the Township.

This summary is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all opportunities available in the Township.

Creative and Fine Arts

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facility Used
Alliet Expressions Photography	New Dundee	Photography	-
Andrew Grant Photography	New Hamburg	Photography	-
Centre Stage Dance Studio	New Hamburg	Dance classes	-
Dundee Doodle Art Studio	New Dundee	Art classes	-
Dundee Pottery and Stained Glass	New Dundee	Pottery classes	-
Images Photography	New Hamburg	Photographer	-
Kenneth Brown Photography	New Hamburg	Photographer	-
Innovative Dance	Baden	A dance club that develops dancers through strong, technical training	-
Martina Wendlan Photography	Petersburg	Photographer	-
Michlynn Schweitzer Photography	Baden	Photographer	-
Music Together	Baden	Music program for children ages 0-7 and families	Wilmot Recreation Complex
Outdoor Summer Concert Series	Baden	Outdoor live music during July and August	Castle Kilbride
Papertrail	New Dundee	Art Store	-
Scott Williams Photography	New Hamburg	Photographer	-
Sights and Sounds Studio	New Hamburg	Educational programming in the musical and visual arts for all ages and abilities	-
The Blue Moon Food & Drink	Petersburg	Restaurant and live music venue	-
The Community Players of New Hamburg	New Hamburg	Community theatre group	New Hamburg Community Centre
Viewfinder Art Studio	New Hamburg	Art classes	-
Wilmot Senior's Woodworking & Craft Club	Baden	Woodworking and carving, stained glass, quilting, and computer classes	Wilmot Senior's Woodworking Shop

Religious Institutions

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs
Bethel Missionary Church	New Dundee	Bethel's Kids Klub Focus on youth grade 1 through 6 Hosts weekly activities, games, and stories from the Bible
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	Wilmot	Weekly worship service Ladies quilting Choir practice Coffee-fellowship hour
Fellowship Bible Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service Men's Prayer Group Playground Garden Ice Rink
Holy Family Catholic Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service Catholic Women's League Men's Club and Prayer Group Youth Group
Nith Valley Mennonite Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service Hosts Mothers of Preschoolers Children's group Youth ministry
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Chapel	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service
Rosebank Brethren in Christ	Wilmot	Weekly worship service Hosts special events and out-of-town trips Library
Shantz Mennonite Church	Wilmot	Weekly worship service Women's, youth, and children's ministries Supports international service projects Shantz Mennonite Kids Club Mennonite Youth Fellowship Community Bible Study KOOL-aid Junior Youth
St. Agatha Mennonite Church	Wilmot	Weekly worship service
St. George's Anglican Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service Anglican Church Women Men's breakfast and Bible Study Choir; Fundraising for local, national, and international charities Offers Fung Loy Kok Taoist Tai Chi TM

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs
Steinmann Mennonite Church	Baden	Weekly worship service Organizes out-of-town trips Children, youth, and adult classes Women's retreat Quilting and sewing Men's sports (e.g., hockey, skiing, softball) Monthly men's breakfast Mennonite Youth Fellowship Logos Ministry (children's bible study and activities)
Trinity Lutheran Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service International service trips Reading group Child care Children's programs: Faith Adventures, Affirmation Classes, and Confirmation Classes Adult learning classes Faith in Film program Support for refugee resettlement Support for international mission work Initiatives: Secret Sisters, Funeral Lunch Hospitality, Communications Committee, Trinity Gentle Friends Readers' Group, Trinity Shepherds, Trinity Prayer Circle, Prayer Shawls, and Cradle Roll Trinity Youth Group
Wilmot Centre Missionary Church	Petersburg	Weekly worship service Wilmot Kids Junior and Senior Youth Groups Life groups Ministries for Men, Women, and Seniors Support for national and international charity and mission efforts
Wilmot Mennonite Church	New Hamburg	Weekly worship service Giving Tree Wilmot Family Resource Centre House of Friendship Women's Bible Study Girl's Club

Halls / Venues

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs
Hubertushaus German-Canadian Hunting & Fishing Club	Mannheim	Offers hall space for rent
The Royal Canadian Legion, New Hamburg Branch 532	New Hamburg	Offers recreation and events for Veterans and their families, as well as venue space for rentals and hosts special events

Historical Attractions

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs
Baden Walking Tours	Begins at Castle Kilbride	Provides a tour of historical and significant sites throughout the Baden community
Castle Kilbride	Baden	A National Historic site and the original home of James Livingston Educational tours Summer concert series Special events
Historic Countryside Tours	Mannheim	Offers a tour by car throughout the countryside of the Wilmot area
New Dundee Walking Tours	Kavelman's Store	Provides a tour of historical and significant sites throughout New Dundee
New Hamburg Walking Tours	New Hamburg Library (Carnegie Building)	Provides a tour of historical and significant sites throughout New Hamburg
Wilmot Heritage Brigades	Baden	Fire Museum

Libraries

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs
Waterloo Region Library	Baden, New Dundee, New Hamburg	Borrowing materials and online resources Reading programs and events

Older Adult Clubs

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
39+ Club	New Hamburg	Meets every Tuesday to enjoy solo, euchre, and socializing	-
Foxboro Green	Foxboro	Older adult lifestyle community	-
Morningside Retirement Village	New Hamburg	Older adult lifestyle community that offers a broad range of recreation programs including billiards, bocce, bridge, shuffleboard, and other social activities	-
Restless Seniors	New Hamburg	Seniors meeting for social activities including, cards, darts, cribbage, and twice yearly potlucks	-
St. Agatha Seniors	St. Agatha	Seniors meet-up to play solo and celebrate birthdays and holidays.	St. Agatha Community Centre
Stonecroft New Hamburg	Stonecroft	Older adult lifestyle community	
Wilmot Senior Shuffleboard	Baden	Group meet for senior shuffle board	W.R.C.

Youth Clubs

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
Optimists' Youth Centre	Baden	Large youth centre focused on ages 8-16 Operated in partnership with Township of Wilmot's Facilities and Recreation Services Department and Wilmot Family Resource Centre Provides space for youth to gather, socialize, and play games in a safe environment Equipped with pool table, air hockey table, large flat screen TV, and gaming system	Wilmot Recreation Complex
Wilmot's Youth and Jr. Youth Action Councils	Baden	Local youth volunteers ages 14 through 19 who work to organize opportunities for youth, build leadership, communication, and	W.R.C.

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
		organizational skills, and help build partnerships with the community	

Service / Social / Hobby Club

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
4-H	No information available	Carries out projects focused on agriculture, the environment, health, and food Promotes learning in a number of areas (e.g. bread making, paintball, scrapbooking, heritage beef) Open to all youth 9-21 years of age	St. Agatha Community Centre
Baden and District Chamber of Commerce	Petersburg	Promotes local businesses and benefits members Hosts networking opportunities Annual community BBQ Baden Santa Claus Parade	W.R.C.
Baden Community Association	Baden	Promotes community events and community beautification including Community clean-up days Halloween safety patrols Helps with the Santa Claus parade and Chamber of Commerce Barbecue Promotes Baden Corn Festival	Wilmot Administration Complex Meeting Room, W.R.C.
Catholic Women's League	New Hamburg	Service club that fundraisers and supports charity initiatives	-
Girl Guides of Canada	Baden, New Dundee, New Hamburg	Safe, inclusive space for girls to challenge themselves and learn new skills	New Hamburg Community Centre, New Dundee Community Centre, Haysville Community Centre
Grand Valley Woodcarvers Association	Mannheim	Promotes wood carving as an art, learning, and sharing skills Offers mentorship and formal presentation on techniques	Mannheim Community Centre

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
Heritage Wilmot	Baden	Committee of volunteers appointed by Council to promote Wilmot heritage	Wilmot Administration Complex, St. Agatha Community Centre
Hubertushaus German-Canadian Hunting & Fishing Club	Mannheim	Social club that hosts dances, picnics, fish fries, Oktoberfest, rifle range, archery range, and has a fishing pond available for members	-
K-W Khaki Club	No information available	No information available	-
New Hamburg Lioness Club	New Hamburg	Ladies' group for promoting community service Activities involve: fundraising for Tree of Light in December, participating in Santa Clause Parade, working for Interfaith with a Bake Table at the Silent Auction, hosting Fashion Show or Welcome Home Tour, helping at Blood Donor Clinic, assisting New Hamburg Lions Club with Moparfest, Woodstock Farm Show, and Bade Cornfest, and social activities for members	New Hamburg Community Centre
New Dundee Board of Trade	No information available	Hosts guest speakers Represents business community in New Dundee Installs lights in the village Maintains road cleanup	New Dundee Community Centre
New Dundee Women's Institute	New Dundee	Offers fellowship, fun and education through guest speakers, tours, and activities Promotes: responsible citizenship, good family life skills, initiating and supporting community events, compiling community histories, leadership skills, lobbying on local, national, and global issues, projects on agriculture, industry, and education, working toward safer, healthier communities and environment	New Dundee Community Centre

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
New Hamburg Board of Trade	New Hamburg	Represents business community in New Hamburg	New Hamburg Municipal Building, New Hamburg Community Centre
New Hamburg Concert Band	New Hamburg	No information available	New Hamburg Municipal Building, Kirkpatrick Park
New Hamburg Scouting	New Hamburg	Program for boys and girls age 5 to 26 with focus on outdoor skills and helping people and the environment	New Hamburg Community Centre
New Hamburg Lions Club	New Hamburg	<p>Focuses on local, national, and international needs</p> <p>Community service work</p> <p>Dinner meetings</p> <p>Fundraising through Moparfest</p> <p>Woodstock Farm Show</p> <p>Hosts charity BBQs and events</p> <p>Participates in student eye screening</p> <p>Helps with programs at local public schools</p> <p>Provides support for youth exchange programs and student bursaries at Waterloo Oxford DSS</p> <p>Provides funding for Wilmot Recreation Complex</p>	W.R.C.
Nith Valley Singers	New Hamburg	Vocal training, performance, and choral tours	-
Optimist Club of Mannheim	Mannheim	<p>Club serving to benefit youth</p> <p>Activities include: Easter Egg Hunt, Fishing Derby, Pumpkin Carving Contest, Young Person of the Year award, Children's Christmas Party, Youth Sports Night, and a number of annual fundraisers.</p>	Mannheim Community Centre and Park
Optimist Club of New Dundee	New Dundee	<p>Supports youth and focuses on activities such as respect for the law, youth appreciation, and youth safety</p> <p>Involved in a number of fundraising activities and festivals, as well as community betterment programs.</p>	New Dundee Community Centre

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
Optimist Club of New Hamburg	New Hamburg	Supports youth through programs and volunteering Involved in a number of fundraisers Provides financial support for sports teams and a number of community programs	-
Optimist Club of Petersburg	Petersburg	Supports youth and promote education on drug abuse and law enforcement Other programs include helping children with disabilities and supporting fundraisers	Petersburg Park, Mannheim Community Centre
Optimist Club of Wilmot	Baden	Ladies' club striving to promote opportunities for residents Focus on youth Projects focus on special events for youth, baby sitting courses, road cleanup, sponsoring students and sports teams, co-sponsoring Baden Santa Clause Parade, and a number of fundraisers	W.R.C., Haysville Community Centre
St. Agatha & District Lions Club	St. Agatha	Promotes community service work Sponsors of Santa Claus parade and Strawberryfest Installs village Christmas lights Provides bursaries to Waterloo Oxford High School Fundraises	St. Agatha Community Centre
Trillium Miniaturist Club	No information available	No information available	-
Trinity Gentle Friends Reading Group	New Hamburg	Gathering to share and discuss literature	-
Trinity Quilters	New Hamburg	Regular meeting group for quilters	-
TYGers	New Hamburg	No information found - listed in Leisure Guide	-
Welcome Wagon		National program that welcomes newcomers to the community and helps familiarize them with what services and facilities are available	-
Wilmot Agricultural Society	Baden	Hosts themed events, livestock competitions, horse shows, home	Wilmot Administration

Organization Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
		craft exhibits, demolition derby, and a petting zoo	Complex, New Hamburg Community Centre, Norm S. Hill Park
Wilmot Family Resource Centre	Baden and New Hamburg	Offers a range of prevention and support services for individuals and families Gym Night Teen Fun Zone W.R.C Youth Drop-in	W.R.C., New Hamburg Community Centre (arena), New Dundee Community Centre, St. Agatha Community Centre
Wilmot Horticultural Society	Baden	Educational programs and lectures on gardening Social opportunities for gardeners	W.R.C., Haysville Community Centre, New Dundee Community Centre
Wilmot Senior's Woodworking and Craft Club	Baden	Woodworking and craft club for seniors	Wilmot Seniors' Woodworking Shop
Wilmot Township Rod & Gun Club	New Hamburg	Promotes knowledge of firearms and safe handling of guns and ammunition Promotes conservation of fish, wildlife, forests, and sportsmanship Offers social events and archery	-

Special Events

Special Event Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
Baden Corn Festival	Baden	Annual summer event showcasing local food producers and restaurants	Wilmot Township Administration Complex grounds
Easter Egg Hunt	Baden, New Hamburg, New Dundee, and other communities	Annual Easter Egg Hunt	New Hamburg Community Centre (arena), Norm S. Hill Park, Mannheim Community Park, New Dundee Community Park
Mennonite Relief Sale and Quilt Auction	New Hamburg	Annual fundraising event in support of the Mennonite Central Committee	New Hamburg Community Centre

Special Event Name	Location	Primary Activities / Programs	Township Facilities Used
		for its relief, development, justice, and peace building work locally and internationally	(arena), Norm S. Hill Park
Moparfest	New Hamburg	Car show fundraiser	New Hamburg Community Centre (arena), Norm S. Hill Park
Baden Road Race	New Hamburg	Running race fundraiser	W.R.C.
New Hamburg Fall Fair	New Hamburg	Annual festival fair in support of a charity with special events and vendors	New Hamburg Community Centre (arena), Norm S. Hill Park
St. Agatha Strawberry Festival	St. Agatha	Annual strawberry festival day	St. Agatha Community Centre
Wilmot Terry Fox Run		Annual community run in support of cancer research	-
Youth Appreciation Night/Week		Hosted by Optimist Clubs and other youth-focused groups	W.R.C. Youth Centre

Appendix C

Master Plan Community Launch Event Results

This Appendix contains the input received from the Community Launch Event for this Master Plan. It is important to note that the comments and suggestions presented in this Appendix do not represent recommendations, nor has the public input been altered even in instances where the comments incorrectly reflect the Township's actual policies, practices, or level of provision.

Community Values

- Summer camps for kids (Mad Science)
- Local fairs, safety, friendliness
- Moparfest
- Youth Action Council
- I can leave the front door unlocked
- Wilmot itself
- We're adorbs
- Volunteer opportunities
- I can walk to my friends' places
- People always say "hello" when you walk by them!
- Community events
- The thing I like the most is that you can basically walk anywhere when you live in a small town
- Great rec centre, parks (green space), pool, awesome splash pad J
- WRC facility, volunteers, willingness to change and adapt to needs, trends
- Friendly, safe, sense of community

Improving Indoor Recreation Facilities

- We need more ice – our hockey teams have to book ice as far away as St. Clements to cover all games and practices. Would prefer to support our area.
- A wider variety of activities
- Gym – basketball and/or volleyball court
- Not as competitive, have it for people of different skill levels
- Make ice fees more management during day hours for individuals who want to skate
- Youth friendly spaces
- Indoor playing field for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, general playing, indoor batting cages
- Better use
- More plants

Improving Outdoor Recreation Facilities

- More bases options in Petersburg and St. Agatha (playing options for younger players)
- Walking trails, safe bike paths, basketball courts, and/or volleyball courts
- Additional ball diamond, some of the ball diamonds change to clay
- Native areas to attract wildlife and pollinators
- Safe equipment and updated parks
- Nature/natural play areas educational
- "Wild" area for playing without supervision
- Safer for younger kids
- Unstructured play opportunities
- Have trails that go somewhere (another person: I agree)

- Interconnected trail system with Baden, New Hamburg, including Foxboro, Morningside, and Stonecroft
- 3rd diamond in Baden, clay playing fields, batting/hitting cages
- Keep playgrounds updated and safe for kids
- More swings that are safe
- More bike trails
- Create a place for teenagers to hangout when they bring their younger cousins/siblings to the park
- Dog park
- Garbage/recycling bins
- Community garden opportunities
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- More trails and bike paths

Improving Parks and Open Spaces

- Better playgrounds
- More walking trails
- No lights so people can enjoy the night sky (save lights)
- Clean up garbage
- Beck Park in Baden has dangerously deteriorated playground equipment. Needs to be upgraded, cleaned up. Seating around play area would be good as well. (another person: I agree)
- Get people to clean up after their pets, especially in the park around the playground (another person: fines; two other people: yes)
- Leave gate to Scott Park open all winter for cross country skiing, walking
- Swings
- More trees
- Leave some wild – good for birds, butterflies, reptiles, etc.
- Community garden
- Natural areas in all parks
- Add recycling boxes and more garbage receptacles
- Trim the bushes by the river
- Bathrooms in the park
- Safe bike trails
- Connected trails to Baden and New Hamburg including Foxboro, Morningside, and Stonecroft
- Host community events to attract people to parks (concerts?)

Improving Recreation Programs and Activities

- Soap box car races
- Ask interfaith and Wilmot Family Resources for drop-in, leisure, and recreational activities in the Town of Baden and New Hamburg

- Less littering
- Activities and events for teens!
- "Drop-in" sports: basketball night, floor hockey, dodgeball
- Age friendly
- Partnership with seniors/children's' programs
- More opportunities for teens to volunteer in community
- Better places for teens to hang out at
- More things that are meant for teens (13+)
- When I first moved to Wilmot the Township offered craft classes. I think we need more of that – aimed at the adult population, short-term commitment, great way to get to know other people in the community.
- Gardening
- Employment for teens
- Trails
- Offer more programs – fitness for kids? Yoga?

Promoting and Improving Cultural Facilities, Programs, and Special Events

- Better advertising of the arts
- Public art studio – paint classes, pottery...
- Instagram
- Links to local businesses
- WRC digital sign
- Media Arts – outlook, news, etc.
- Partnerships
- Facebook, twitter, etc., social media
- Regular promotion in high visibility areas
- Advertisement at schools
- Better advertisement
- Provide consultation access to computer services – accounting, email etc. from the organization

Supporting Local Community Organizations

- Refugee support
- Fundraisers
- Youth Action Council
- Help facilitate communication and user groups and/or sports groups to work together on similar challenges and limited resources
- Find out what other organizations exist (through other groups, clubs, etc.)
- Continual improvement for sport, recreational development upgrades
- Offer grants
- Community connections and utilize social media

Appendix D

Online Community Survey

This Appendix contains the results from the Online Community Survey undertaken for this Master Plan. Open-ended questions have not been transcribed; however, the key themes from these questions have been summarized in this report and will be considered in the development of this Master Plan. It should be noted that non-resident entries, 'Don't Know', and 'No Response' have been removed from these results.

Section 1: Participation in Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Services

1. In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Wilmot or elsewhere? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participate, either at home or in public.

Activity	%	#
Attending Local Special Events (New Hamburg Fall Fair)	77%	176
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	73%	168
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating, or Ice Skating	62%	141
Swimming (Recreational)	59%	136
Use of Playground Equipment	59%	136
Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit)	55%	127
Use of Splash Pad	51%	117
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training	51%	116
Baseball or Softball (or other forms)	45%	102
Running or Jogging	43%	98
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	40%	92
Cycling or Mountain Biking	34%	78
Soccer	30%	68
Organized Youth Programs (e.g. summer camps, youth club, etc.)	29%	67
Performing Arts (dance, music, drama, theatre etc.)	24%	56
Skateboarding/Bike Park	17%	38
Preschool Programs (Mothers of Preschool, Creative Beginnings Childcare, etc.)	16%	36
Basketball	14%	31
Volleyball	12%	28
Tennis	11%	25
Visual Arts (creative arts, etc.)	10%	22
Organized Older Adult Programs (e.g. billiards, guest speakers, gentle fitness, etc.)	8%	18
Curling	7%	17
Gymnastics	7%	16
None of the above	1%	3
Total Respondents		229

2. Where does your household primarily participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities?
(select up to two responses)

	%	#
Public park or facility in the Township of Wilmot	85%	188
At home	32%	70
Public park or facility in another municipality	19%	42
School	19%	42
Conservation Area	10%	21
Private club	9%	19
Church or religious institution	6%	14
Total Respondents		220

3. Are you and members of your household able to participate in active recreation pursuits (e.g. sports, physical wellness, outdoor play, etc.) as often as you would like?

Response	%	#
Yes	64%	139
No	36%	78
Total Respondents		217

4. Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in active recreation pursuits as often as you would like?

Barrier	%	#
Lack of desired facilities or programs	52%	41
Lack of personal time / Too busy	44%	35
Program not offered at a convenient time	23%	18
Lack of money / Too expensive	16%	13
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	13%	10
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	11%	9
Health problems / Disability / Age	6%	5
Lack of Child Care	5%	4
Total Respondents		79

5. Are you and members of your household able to participate in arts and cultural pursuits (e.g. music, crafts, drama, theatre, visiting a historical site, attending special events, etc.) as often as you would like?

Response	%	#
Yes	68%	136
No	32%	63
Total Respondents		199

6. Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in arts and cultural pursuits as often as you would like?

Barrier	%	#
Lack of personal time / Too busy	60%	48
Lack of desired facilities or programs	30%	24
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	26%	21
Lack of money / Too expensive	20%	16
Program not offered at a convenient time	18%	14
Not interested in participating in arts and cultural pursuits	5%	4
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	4%	3
Health problems / Disability / Age	1%	1
Lack of Child Care	1%	1
Total Respondents		80

7. Generally, what proportion of your household's parks, recreation, and culture needs are met within the Township of Wilmot?

Proportion	%	#
All (100%)	14%	30
Most (67-99%)	45%	96
About Half (34-66%)	29%	63
Some (1-33%)	12%	25
None	0%	0
Total Respondents		214

8. What activities do you or members of your household typically participate in outside of the Township of Wilmot and where do you participate in them?

Top 5 Activities Undertaken Outside of the Township of Wilmot

- Hockey
- Walking/Hiking
- Cycling
- Arts and Cultural Events
- Fitness Programs

9. Why does your household participate in these activities outside of the Township of Wilmot? (select up to two responses)

Reason for Participation in Activities outside of Wilmot	#	%
Facility/program is not available in the Township	73%	108
Quality of facility/program is superior	22%	32
Facility/program not available at the preferred time	13%	19
Less expensive	10%	15
"Connected" to other community/used to live there	9%	14
Closer to work or school	7%	11
Tournaments / Special Events / travel teams	7%	10
Closer to home	3%	5
Total Respondents		148

Section 2: Program and Activity Gaps

10. Are there any parks, recreation, and culture activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Township of Wilmot that are not currently available?

Response	%	#
Yes	70%	102
No	30%	45
Total Respondents		147

11. What activities would you like to see offered?

Top 5 Desired Activities / Facilities

- Improved trails network
- A third ice pad
- Fitness centre
- Dog park
- Gymnastics

12. In your opinion, which of the following organizations should provide these new programs/activities?

Proportion	%	#
A combination of the above providers	52%	53
Township of Wilmot	40%	40
Community / volunteer organization	6%	6
Private sector	2%	2
Total Respondents		101

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

Facility Type	Very Unimportant / Unimportant	%	Neutral	%	Very Important/ Important	%	Total
Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas, and community halls	3	2%	7	4%	179	95%	189
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, and pavilions	6	3%	12	6%	171	90%	189
Trails	8	4%	17	9%	159	86%	184
Passive parks that preserve natural areas and open space	8	4%	21	11%	156	84%	185
Arts and cultural facilities such as theatres, historic sights, visual and performing arts spaces	30	16 %	56	30%	101	54%	187
Total Respondents							189

14. Thinking about those facilities that currently exist in the Township of Wilmot, what is your level of satisfaction with the following?

Facility Type	Very Unsatisfied/ Unsatisfied	%	Neutral	%	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	%	Total
Indoor Recreation facilities such as the Wilmot Recreation Complex	15	8%	6	3%	168	89%	189
Outdoor Recreation facilities such as Wilmot's sports fields and playgrounds	14	7%	29	16%	141	77%	184
Passive Parks that preserve natural areas and open space	43	24%	59	33%	77	43%	179
Arts and cultural facilities such as theatres, historic sights, visual and performing arts spaces	25	15%	84	51%	57	34%	166
Trails	86	48%	49	27%	46	25%	181
Total Respondents							189

15. What is your levels of satisfaction with the parks, recreation, and culture opportunities in the Township of Wilmot for the following age groups?

Age Group	Very Unsatisfied/ Unsatisfied	%	Neutral	%	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	%	#
Children (0-12 years)	26	16%	18	11%	120	73%	164
Teens (13-18 years)	32	26%	38	31%	53	43%	123
Adults (19-54 years)	28	17%	37	23%	96	60%	161
Older Adults (55-69 years)	8	9%	31	34%	52	57%	90
Seniors (70+)	12	15%	30	37%	40	49%	82
Total Respondents							189

Section 3: Facility Priorities

16. To what degree do you oppose or support the Township spending additional public funds on developing new or improving existing facility types?

Activity	%	#
Parks and Open Space	80%	144
Unpaved Nature Trails	79%	142
Playgrounds	76%	136
Space for Youth Programs	72%	126
Gymnasiums	71%	124
Paved Trails	70%	125
Fitness Centres	63%	112
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	62%	108
Arenas	60%	109
Soccer Fields	57%	99
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	56%	97
Splash Pads	56%	100
Indoor Swimming Pools	55%	101
Outdoor Swimming Pools	55%	96
Outdoor Running Track	54%	94
Tennis Courts	54%	94
Community Halls and Multi-purpose Rooms	52%	92
Space for Older Adult Programs	50%	85
Community Allotment Gardens	48%	85
Off-Leash Dog Parks	48%	81
Skateboard Parks	47%	82
Visual or Performing Arts Space	46%	81
Total Respondents		182

17. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	%	Neutral	%	Strongly Agree/ Agree	%	Total
My household is generally satisfied with the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities in the Township.	26	14%	21	12%	133	74%	179
The Township's parks and recreation facilities are generally well maintained.	19	11%	13	7%	146	82%	177
The Township should consider alternate uses for community facilities that have very low levels of use.	3	2%	31	18%	139	80%	172
Parks and recreation should be a high priority for Township Council.	4	2%	15	8%	158	89%	176
Arts and culture opportunities should be a high priority for Township Council.	33	19%	67	38%	78	44%	177
Total Respondents							180

18. Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding parks and recreation in the Township of Wilmot.

Due to the open ended nature of this question, the responses have not been included. However, the key themes expressed by respondents have been considered as a part of this Master Plan.

Section 4: Survey Summary

19. How many people live in your household?

Household Size	#
1	2
2	42
3	63
4	320

Household Size	#
5	200
6	48
7 or more	28
Total Respondents	176
Average Household Size	4.0

20. Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

Age Group	#	% of Sample	2011 Census
Under 10 years	196	28%	13%
10-19 years	123	18%	14%
20-34 years	99	14%	16%
35-54 years	214	31%	29%
55-69 years	48	7%	18%
70 years and over	17	2%	11%
Total Respondents	174		

21. In what year were you born?

Year	%	#
1930 to 1939 (77 to 86 yrs)	2%	3
1940 to 1949 (67 to 76 yrs)	7%	12
1950 to 1959 (57 to 66 yrs)	8%	13
1960 to 1969 (47 to 56 yrs)	16%	27
1970 to 1979 (37 to 46 yrs)	37%	62
1980 or later (36 yrs or younger)	31%	51
Total Respondents		168
Average Age		42
Median Age (2011 Census)		41 (40)

22. In which community do you live closest to?

Community	%	#	Community	%	#
New Hamburg	51%	91	Mannheim	1%	2
Baden	29%	52	Petersburg	1%	2
New Dundee	4%	8	Sunfish Lake	1%	2
Haysville	3%	6	Foxboro Green	1%	1
St. Agatha	3%	6	Luxemburg	1%	1
Philipsburg	2%	3	Shingletown	1%	1
Lisbon	2%	3	Wilmot Centre	0%	0
Total Respondents					178

Appendix E

Focus Group Summaries

This Appendix contains a list of groups that participated in the Focus Groups held for this Master Plan and a summary of key themes that emerged from each session. It should be recognized that **the input received from the focus groups do not represent recommendations, nor has the public input been altered even in instances where the comments incorrectly reflect the Township's actual policies, practices, or level of provision.**

Arts, Culture, Heritage, and Special Events Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

- Region of Waterloo Library
- Community Players of New Hamburg
- Castle Kilbride
- Wilmot Agricultural Society
- Heritage Wilmot

Summary of Key Themes

- There was a desire for a greater emphasis on celebrating local cultural opportunities in the Township. Suggestions included promotion and raising awareness through signage, social media, online presence, and open communication between the Township and local organizations.
- The development of an online “artist portal” was suggested to recognize local arts and culture providers, and to provide a convenient location where the community can find information about events and opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to repurpose underutilized facilities to establish a cultural hub where artists can gather, share space, and express creative ideas.
- The development of new spaces or improvements to existing spaces needs to be designed with flexibility in mind, with consideration for the needs of existing users.

Outdoor Sports Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

- Wilmot Minor Rugby
- Waterloo-Oxford Running
- New Dundee Dodgers
- New Dundee Slo Pitch
- Baden Minor Softball
- Wilmot District Soccer Club
- New Hamburg Minor Softball
- Men’s Church Fastball League

Summary of Key Themes

- Many groups expressed the desire for additional sports field hours to support growth in the number of participants.
- Participants supported improvements to existing outdoor recreation facilities to enhance efficiencies within existing spaces. This may be achieved by lighting existing soccer fields and ball diamonds to extend playing times during the week and season.
- With no sports field allocation policy in place, user groups work in co-operation to schedule field time.
- User groups utilize school fields and facilities when needed, although the condition and quality is not up to par with Township standards.
- There was a desire for an indoor sports field, hard surface running track, appropriately-sized soccer fields at the W.R.C., improved drainage at soccer fields, high quality tennis courts, and a ball diamond at New Dundee Community Park.

- User groups acknowledged that the Township offers high quality outdoor sports facilities and that they are maintained to a higher standard; however, there is a need to ensure that user fees are affordable.

Indoor Sports Focus Group

Focus Group Participants

- Wilmot Girls Hockey Association
- Junior C Firebirds
- New Hamburg Karate Club
- New Hamburg Skating Club
- New Hamburg Hockey Association
- ACES Swim Club

Summary of Key Themes

- Participants expressed the desire for a third ice pad to support growing participation and to remain competitive in ice sports, in addition to a larger dry-land training space.
- There is a strong desire to reopen the New Hamburg Arena as the Township's third ice pad.
- It is recognized that there is available prime time ice particularly during the morning weekend and late weeknights; however, evening prime time ice during the weekdays are the most desirable rental periods.
- To accommodate existing ice pressures, user groups utilize available prime time ice in abutting municipalities such as Wellesley, Plattsville, and Tavistock.
- It was suggested that the rental fees for recreation facilities in the Township are unaffordable for some users and that there are more competitive rates in adjacent municipalities. As a result, financial assistance opportunities need to be promoted by the Township to engage households with financial barriers.
- There was a desire for a weight-training facility to complement existing recreation facilities at the W.R.C.

Non-Sports Focus Groups

Focus Group Participants

- New Dundee Board of Trade
- New Dundee Women's Institute
- Optimist Club of Baden
- Optimist Club of Mannheim
- Optimist Club of Wilmot
- Petersburg Optimist Club
- St. Agatha District Lions Club
- Waterloo 4-H
- Wilmot Horticultural Society

Summary of Key Themes

- Consideration should be given to reinvesting and updating the five community centres and halls to bring them up to modern standards, particularly with respect to accessibility and kitchen areas.

- It was suggested that there is a general need to enhance communication between the Township, community groups, and the public to raise awareness about the opportunities that are available.
- A number of community groups are open to partnering with the Township to raise money to improve existing recreation facilities.
- The Township should designate a staff member to liaise with community groups and stakeholders to provide accurate and consistent information, ensure that their needs are being met, respond to inquiries or direct inquiries to the appropriate department, and facilitate general community development.
- Facility requests included upgraded playgrounds, community garden, off-leash dog park, native plantings, additional park amenities, and an outdoor ice pad. Some user groups expressed the desire to assist with operating and providing some of these new facilities.
- Some participants commented on the importance of ensuring that the Township's parks and recreation facilities are safe and clean, which can be achieved through diligent maintenance and upkeep.

Support Agencies

Focus Group Participants

- Community Care Concepts
- Wilmot Family Resource Centre

Summary of Key Themes

- Volunteerism is high among support agencies.
- Support agencies work well with the Township, although there needs to be continuous dialogue and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Each community partnership should emphasize communication, co-operation, and collaboration.
- Financial subsidy policies should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they are appropriate, adequate, and accessible to residents with financial barriers.
- Support agencies are positioned to accommodate emerging demographic groups such as minority groups, vulnerable age groups, and persons with disabilities.
- It was suggested that regular meetings between the Township and community groups would be beneficial to discuss issues, opportunities, and areas that need improvement.

Youth Advisory Council Focus Group

Summary of Key Themes

- Youth described their ideal park as one that offers a place for teens to hang out and socialize away from younger children with facilities that includes a playground for teens, skateboard park, passive open space, charging station, and a water feature.

- Participants enjoy the youth room at the W.R.C. as it is complemented by other recreation facilities; however, it was expressed that it is difficult to get to for youth. Improvements identified includes a kitchen to cook, vintage arcades, music studio and more couches.
- It was suggested that there is too much focus on sports and not enough emphasis on other opportunities to ensure that there is something for everyone such as arts and culture, more events, drop-in activities, and inclusive programs.
- Youth felt that there is still a negative stigma associated with teens and that youth-oriented facilities should be a safe and accepting place to gather without judgement.

Older Adults and Seniors' Focus Group

Summary of Key Themes

- Although there are three older adult lifestyle communities that provide their own recreation facilities and programs, many of these members frequently utilize the W.R.C. to participate in the Active Living Centre, walking track, or aquatic programs.
- There is a desire for more low impact, active living programs such as drop-in sports. As many older adults and seniors possess a broad range of skills, multi-generational activities with youth should also be considered
- Transportation and the cost to participate are common barriers to participation among older adults and seniors. As a result, there is a need to ensure that residents are aware of the financial assistance opportunities that are available.
- There was a desire for art and music in the park, technology training, snooker table and shuffle board, and inclusive programming.
- Communication of the opportunities that are available should be clear, consistent, and effective such as through social media, traditional mediums, awareness and activity fairs, older adult activity guide, etc.

Families Focus Group

Summary of Key Themes

- A broad range of programs should be provided to enhance the use of the Township's facilities (e.g., W.R.C., community centres, parks and open spaces).
- Suggested programs that should be considered included organized sports for teens (e.g., dodgeball), inclusive programs, fitness, introductory classes, programs for older adults, and arts and culture.
- Desired facilities included accessible ball diamonds, pond hockey, multi-purpose courts, walking trails, a skateboard park, updated playgrounds, shade structures, fitness centre, community gardens, and a lawn bowling green.

- Connectivity and transportation throughout the Township is a challenge, particularly to the W.R.C. and although the Grand River Transit will be beneficial to some residents, it will not be running during the weekend.
- It was suggested that there is a general need for more parkland and open space in the Township, particularly in Baden as the settlement area continues to expand and attract new residents.

Appendix F

Stakeholder Group Survey

This Appendix contains a summary of the input collected from each community organization that completed the Stakeholder Group Survey undertaken for this Master Plan. The input collected from this survey included historical participation trends, projected growth estimates, the municipal facilities used in the Township, facility improvements (if any), and pressing needs of the organization.

Arena Groups

Men's Pickup Hockey

An adult men's pickup hockey group reported 20 participants for the current year, half of whom are Wilmot residents. The group uses the W.R.C. and indicated that the availability of ice time is the main factor in future growth opportunities.

New Hamburg Firebirds

The New Hamburg Firebirds is a junior C hockey league for players between the ages of 16 and 21. With 23 participants for the current year, one-quarter of the members are Wilmot residents and the league reported that there are no plans to add additional players due to participant limitations under the O.S.A. regulations. The group plays at the W.R.C. and did not express any concerns.

New Hamburg Minor Hockey

New Hamburg Minor Hockey (N.H.M.H.) offers organized minor hockey to New Hamburg Youth between the ages of 5 and 17. The organization estimates that there are approximately 550 minor players for 2016, a moderate growth from 2014 (523 players). The majority of players reside within the Township. The organization estimates that the group will grow consistently over the next three years in line with the Township, coupled with the growing popularity of the N.H.M.H.'s programs. The group utilizes the ice pads at the W.R.C. and identified the need for a third ice pad, and additional ice time, to accommodate this growth.

New Hamburg Skating Club

The New Hamburg Skating Club reported 485 members for the 2016 season, which is a decline of 10% from 2014. A majority of their members are Township residents who range in age from 3 to 16 years. It is anticipated that this level of participation will remain the same over the foreseeable future, provided the Club is able to maintain the current ice schedule and rental rates. The Club specializes in recreational skating programs that focuses on skill development, as well as training for professional figure skating at the W.R.C. The Club did not identify any areas of improvement; however, their most pressing concern is their ability to keep costs low to ensure that programming it is financially accessible to residents.

Wilmot Girls Hockey Association

The Wilmot Girls Hockey Association (W.G.H.A.) offers organized hockey opportunities for females between the ages of 4 and 39. Over the past three years, this organization has grown slightly from 243 participants in 2014 to 257 participants in 2016. Over four-fifths (85%) of participants are Township residents. The organization expects to grow by up to 20 participants over the near future due to the growing popularity of girls hockey, which has a particular effect on the W.G.H.A.'s minor hockey program. The organization utilizes the Township's ice pads and has identified the need for additional weekday prime ice, though the provision of a new ice pad, in order to accommodate more teams. The lack of available ice time during the week is the W.G.H.A.'s main concern, and has had to utilize ice time in other municipalities to support their organization's needs.

Outdoor Sports Groups

Baden Minor Softball

Baden Minor Softball Report 296 participants for 2015 (a majority of whom are Wilmot residents), which is a growth of nearly 100 participants from 2014. The group expects to continue growing over the foreseeable future due to expanding their development program to include additional teams and levels of competition. The group uses the ball diamonds within the Township and expressed the need to improve the diamonds at Petersburg Community Park to ensure that it is adequate for minor players (e.g., appropriate base distances). Additional ball diamond time was also requested in Baden.

Missionary Church Slo Pitch League

The Missionary Church Slo Pitch League has consistently maintained 72 ball players over the past three years and plans to remain stable over the foreseeable future. A small portion of these players are reported to be Wilmot residents. The adult league identifies that they utilize the ball diamonds in St. Agatha, Mannheim, and Petersburg, and have no expressed any concerns.

New Dundee Slo Pitch League

The New Dundee Slo Pitch League is open to participants between the ages of 5 and 18. The League has consistently maintained 134 players over the past three years, a majority of whom live in the Township. The League expects to maintain this level of membership of the next five years.

St. Agatha Ladies Slo Pitch

St. Agatha Ladies Slo Pitch is an older adult, female ball group for players between the ages of 30 and 55. Over the past three years, the number of participants has declined by half to 15 players for 2016; three-quarters are from the Township. The group expects to add up to 10 more players over the next five years through word-of-mouth given that the organization has amalgamated with the St. Clements Ladies Slo Pitch. The group uses the ball diamond at St. Agatha Park and noted that an emergency phone should be installed at the park.

W-O Oxford Cross Country & Track Teams

The W-O Cross Country & Track Team reported approximately 70 high school participants who requested an updated track facility to be located at the Waterloo-Oxford Secondary School (these responsibilities lie with the W.R.D.S.B.). It was mentioned that the existing track conditions is unsafe for proper use. This group believes that updating the existing track would grow their organization and draw additional users to support a broad range of program and training opportunities, as well as school gymnasium classes.

Indoor Activity Groups

New Hamburg Karate Club

The New Hamburg Karate Club provides Chito Ryu Karate-Do instruction to students of all ages. Over the past three years, eight students have been added to the Club, which results in a total of 65 members; the majority of whom are Wilmot residents. Due to the demand for the program, the Club indicates that there is currently a wait list, although they are not able to accommodate additional students due to a number of factors such as space limitations and the availability of instructors to maintain an appropriate student to instructor ratio. The Club offers programming at the W.R.C. and identified the need for a larger space that is equipped with hardwood floors and mirrors.

Arts and Culture Groups

Castle Kilbride Museum

Castle Kilbride is a museum that is currently used as a venue for celebrating local heritage events and exhibits, in addition to educational programming, weddings, and photography. No details were provided regarding participant numbers, facility improvements, or future needs.

Heritage Wilmot

Heritage Wilmot is an organization with nine members who work to protect and celebrate the Township's rich heritage. The group's main goal is to engage residents and tourists in the value of local heritage as well as recruiting members to join their organization.