



# Recreation Master Plan

April 2018



**Monteith • Brown**  
planning consultants



# Township of Wellington North Recreation Master Plan

April 2018

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of those who contributed to the development of the Recreation Master Plan. This document is a product of the vision and dedication of the Master Plan Steering Committee and Township Council. We also extend our thanks to the many residents and community groups in Wellington North who provided the valuable insights and opinions, whose feedback has made the Plan a document that embodies the core values and beliefs of the community.

### **Municipal Council**

Andy Lennox, Mayor  
Dan Yake, Councillor, Ward 1  
Sherry Burke, Councillor, Ward 2  
Lisa Hern, Councillor, Ward 3  
Steve McCabe, Councillor, Ward 4

### **Master Plan Steering Committee**

Andy Lennox, Mayor  
Sherry Burke, Councillor, Ward 2  
Steve McCabe, Councillor, Ward 4  
Michael Givens, CAO  
Dale Small, Economic Development Officer  
Tom Bowden, Facility Manager – Arthur  
Mark Mackenzie, Facility Manager – Mount Forest  
Tammy Pringle, Recreation Support

### **Project Consultants**

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

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# Section 1.0 Introduction

The Township of Wellington North has a population of nearly 12,500 across two primary settlement areas (Arthur and Mount Forest) and rural countryside. Substantial residential and employment growth is forecasted for the Township – a 25% population increase by 2031 is projected (to 15,610 persons) – underscoring the need to assess current recreational needs and identify future requirements.

A wide variety of parks and recreation opportunities are available throughout the Township, ranging from arenas and outdoor swimming pools to sports fields and playgrounds, all of which are well supported by residents and a robust volunteer sector. The area also has access to a natural trail system – anchored by the Saugeen Trail in Mount Forest and Marvin Howe Trail in Arthur – as well as Luther Marsh. Wellington North’s proximity to nearby population centres means that many residents travel outside the Township for certain leisure activities, while non-residents also make use of the Township’s parks and facilities. The unique array of spaces and services available in Wellington North present exciting opportunities for those wishing to pursue a healthy, active lifestyle.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Recreation Master Plan

This Township of Wellington North Recreation Master Plan is a working document that will guide decision-making relating to recreation, parks and cultural facilities and services to the year 2031. The Plan addresses the varied responsibilities of the Township’s Recreation Department including indoor and outdoor facilities, parks, trails, programs and the way in which these services are delivered. Consideration is also given to the services and spaces provided by other sectors, which together help to respond to the unique needs of the Township’s residents.

The Master Plan is intended to direct the development and sustainability of future operational and financial decisions of Township officials and staff, stakeholders and the public. As a guiding document, the Plan contains best practices and policy frameworks that can be applied to opportunities and needs that may emerge over time. Although a scoped Services Review and Needs Analysis Study was completed in 2003, this is the Township’s first comprehensive Recreation Master Plan.

The Plan is supported by extensive research and consultation, including public and stakeholder input, demographic research, leisure trends and leading industry best practices, local participation data, and the findings of past studies and policy directions. Identified needs and opportunities are prioritized, with a view toward improving the quality of life while managing and sustaining amenities in a cost effective, proactive manner.

The completion of a “Community Growth Plan” and “Community Service Review” was identified as a high priority by the Township in its 2015 Corporate Strategic Plan. These tasks were to include the development of a Recreation Master Plan, along with a needs assessment of services and gaps throughout the Township. In accordance with the Corporate Strategic Plan, this Master Plan identifies strategies to ensure that facility and service provision are appropriate for current and future residents, with consideration given to the maximization of existing assets and resources. The efficient use of municipal resources is an important goal for the Township of Wellington North.

Note: Within the scope of this Master Plan, where “**recreation**” is used as a singular term, it is intended to be broadly defined as including a wide variety of interests and activities, including sports, leisure, social and community events, and arts and culture.

## 1.2 Outcome-based Planning

*“If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.”*  
- Lewis Carroll

Recreation, parks and culture play an important role in advancing community health and wellbeing, including (but not limited to) those benefits identified below<sup>1</sup>:

### ***Essential to Personal Health***

- Combats disease, reduces stress and depression, and contributes to emotional wellbeing.

### ***Key to Human Development***

- Strengthens social, motor, creative and intellectual abilities.
- Develops adults to their full potential (social, intellectual, creative, physical, spiritual).

### ***Essential to the Quality of Life***

- Builds self-esteem and positive self-image.
- Enhances life satisfaction levels and nurtures growth and acquisition of life skills for those living with disabilities.
- Provides meaning and context to people's lives.
- Engages minds, improves health and enriches the education of children and lifelong learning.

### ***Reduces Anti-Social Behaviors***

- Reduces self-destructive behaviors and negative social activities in youth.
- Builds understanding between diverse cultures and helps newcomers feel welcome.
- Reduces crime, particularly with at risk/delinquent youth.

### ***Builds Families and Communities***

- Families that play together, stay together. Children and youth remain connected; couples that share interests are more likely to stay together.
- Provides safe, developmental opportunities for children and youth who are unsupervised before and after school.
- Produces leaders who support their communities.
- Builds social skills and stimulates community life.

### ***Encourages Social Cohesion***

- Helps define the character of a community.
- Develops residents' sense of pride in their unique local landmarks and history.
- Attracts new residents and keeps current residents in the community.

### ***Supports a Thriving Economy***

- Strengthens the economy by revitalizing downtowns and supporting local artists.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants from publications by Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, and Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Recreation services – which are delivered by the Township of Wellington North, its partners, local volunteers and others in the community - facilitate meaningful opportunities for physical activity and social cohesion. The Master Plan provides insights into Wellington North’s unique parks, recreation and cultural needs and will assist the Township in making informed decisions based upon the priorities identified through the planning process.

The Master Plan identifies the types of facilities and services required for current and future generations in Wellington North to be active, healthy and engaged with their community. Master Plans are often considered to be a “first step” or a “roadmap” that are implemented in conjunction with other municipal infrastructure and service plans. An ongoing commitment from the Township and others will be required to ensure that the Master Plan is acted upon and updated at a future date.

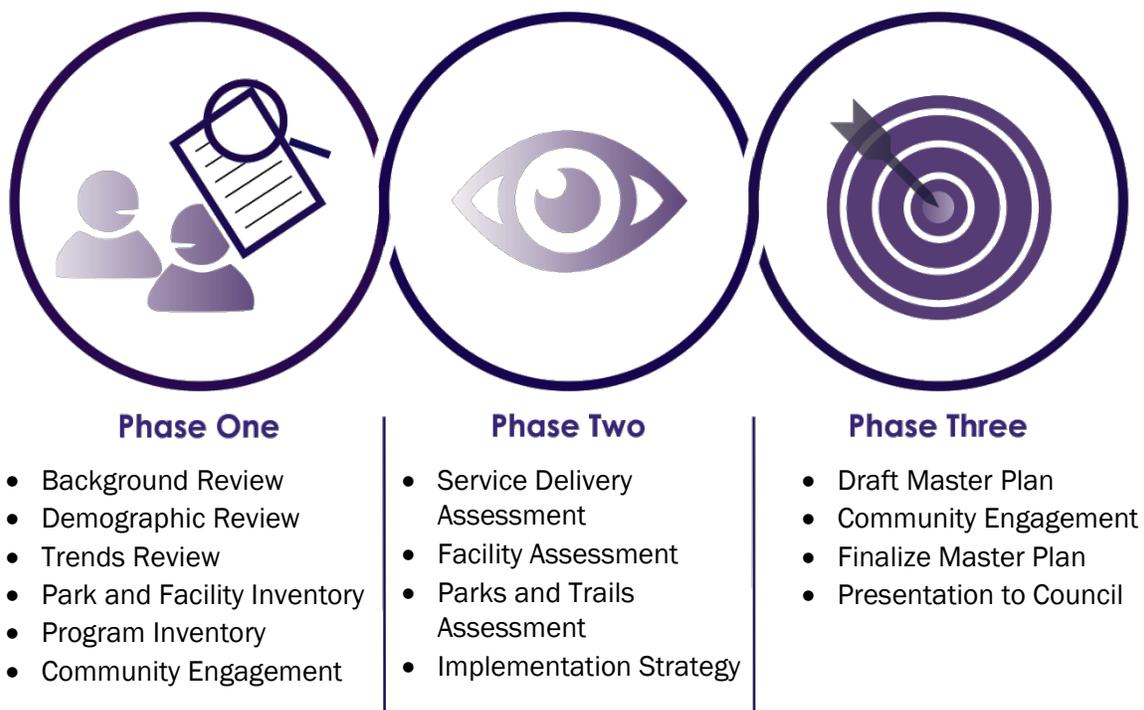
Recognizing that funding is limited, the Master Plan helps to effectively prioritize recommendations so that the most pressing needs can be addressed in a timely manner. In addition, the Master Plan will assist the Township staff with its long-term planning efforts and becoming “funding-ready” should external funding be required.

### 1.3 Master Planning Methodology

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants were retained by the Township to prepare the Master Plan, with guidance and assistance from a Steering Committee comprised of selected members of Council and municipal staff. The preparation of the Master Plan was organized into a three-phase process (

Figure 1) based on several inputs.

Figure 1: Project Methodology



Several background documents were reviewed to establish the planning context associated with the Master Plan. Some documents are broad in scope, while others are topic-specific. Examples include:

- Strategic Direction and Priorities (e.g., Corporate Strategic Plan, Municipal Cultural Plan, etc.);
- Demographics (e.g., Census of Canada, community profiles, etc.);
- Land Use Planning (e.g., Official Plan, Zoning By-law, Community Growth Plan, Community Improvement Plan, etc.);
- Service Delivery (e.g., past assessment studies, user fees, scheduling, partner agreements, administrative policies, etc.);
- Asset Management (e.g., inventories, condition audits, etc.); and
- Finances (e.g., budget documents, reserves, development charges, etc.)

Information contained within these documents is used to provide baseline context for the Master Plan, while integrating and/or reinforcing appropriate findings that support the provision of recreation facilities and services.

## 1.4 Report Organization

The Township of Wellington North Recreation Master Plan is organized as follows:

### **Section 1: Introduction**

Describes the purpose, methodology and organization of the Master Plan.

### **Section 2: Planning Context & Trends**

Contains an overview of the Township and provides a review of emerging trends for consideration in Wellington North.

### **Section 3: Public Consultation**

Outlines the findings of consultation efforts, including input from the public and stakeholders with respect to Wellington North's recreation opportunities.

### **Section 4: Strategic Framework**

Provides a vision statement for recreation, parks and culture in Wellington North, along with principles identifying how the vision will be achieved.

### **Section 5: Service Delivery Assessment**

Assesses the effectiveness of the Township's current recreation delivery model, including an examination of opportunities related to staffing, volunteer support, partnerships, communications, policy development, funding and more.

### **Section 6: Facility Assessment**

Examines the current supply of indoor and outdoor recreation, parks and cultural facilities, with recommendations to address current and future facility needs.

### **Section 7: Parks & Trails Assessment**

Evaluates the adequacy of current parkland provision and examines the implications of population growth. Targets and policy guidelines are identified to determine parkland and trail needs.

### **Section 8: Implementation Strategy**

Summarizes and prioritizes the Plan's recommendations and provides a process for monitoring and updating the Plan.



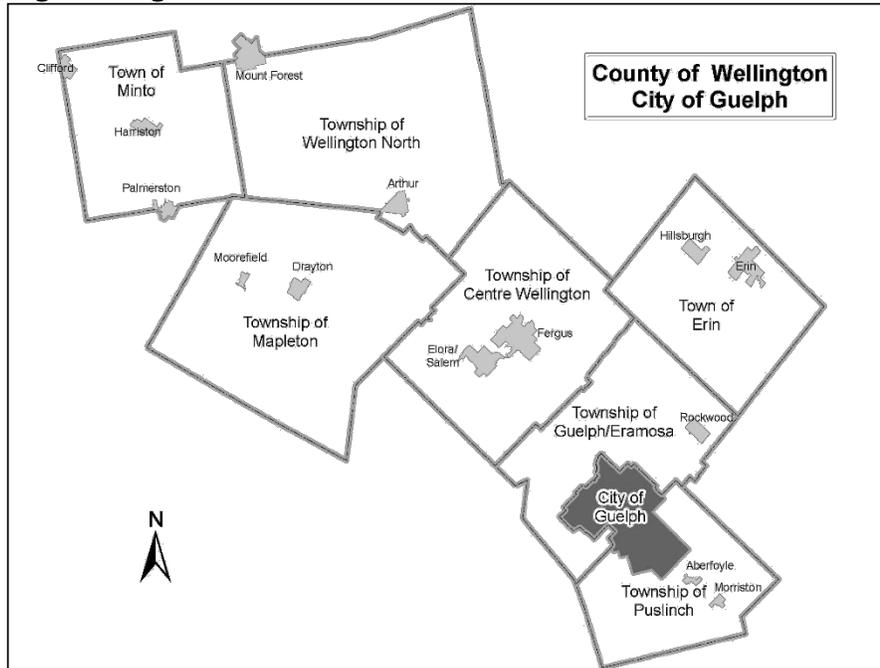
## Section 2.0 Planning Context & Trends

This section provides a broad overview of trends related to the recreation, parks and cultural service sectors. Trends observed at the national and provincial levels are identified. Where applicable, local implications are examined based on the Township’s socio-demographic profile, background reports and secondary research methods.

## 2.1 A Brief Profile of Wellington North

The Township of Wellington North was formed in 1999 through the amalgamation of the former West Luther, Arthur, Peel and West Garafraxa Townships, as well as the former Town of Mount Forest and Village of Arthur. It is the most northerly municipality in Wellington County and is comprised of both rural and urban settings, including a wealth of conservation land. The Township’s “small town” atmosphere and rural countryside are a significant draw for many residents and visitors.

Figure 2: Regional Context



Mount Forest and Arthur are the Township’s two urban growth centres; these communities are approximately 25-kilometres apart and have distinct population and growth characteristics. For example, Mount Forest is the largest community and has the greatest short-term growth potential, along with more retirement age residents and associated seniors’ housing. Arthur has a younger population with housing forms that are attractive to families, but its servicing constraints have limited its growth. Many residents of Mount Forest tend to travel northwest to communities such as Hanover and Walkerton for regional services, while residents of Arthur are closer to the south and east such as Orangeville, Fergus and Guelph.

The Township is primarily agricultural in nature; however, manufacturing also plays a large role in the community economic structure. The Township’s proximity to large urban centres, including the Greater Toronto Area and Kitchener-Waterloo-Guelph, help to sustain a vibrant workforce while generating new opportunities for employment.

By virtue of its location within the region, the Township provides recreation opportunities for many non-residents including (but not limited to) those living in nearby municipalities; a formal agreement exists with the Township of Southgate for non-resident access to the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex. In turn, many Wellington North residents travel to nearby communities to access leisure opportunities, such as indoor pools in Centre Wellington and Hanover.

The Township is also home to a large Mennonite and Low German population. While these residents have traditionally not been significant users of municipal facilities (they have several of their own churches and schools), they are making more frequent use of the Township’s diamonds and arenas.

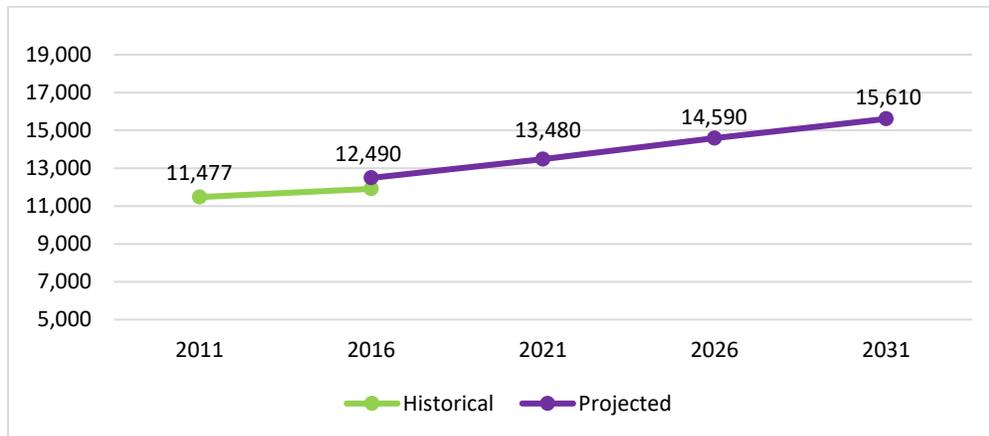
## 2.2 Implications of Population Growth

Wellington North has experienced modest population growth over the past ten years (7% increase between 2006 and 2016, about 740 persons), but is poised for growth. Understanding how and where population changes will occur helps to guide timely and efficient investment in parks and recreation.

The 2016 population estimate for the Township is 12,490<sup>2</sup>, which will be used as the baseline population for this Master Plan. Population projections are contained in the County’s Official Plan (as amended through OPA 99) and reflected in the Township’s 2018 Community Growth Plan. The Growth Plan confirms that future urban growth will occur primarily in the urban areas of Arthur and Mount Forest and to a much more limited degree in the rural settlement areas of Conn, Damascus, Kenilworth and Riverstown. Population growth has been slower than anticipated in recent years due to a number of factors (such as lack of available and affordable housing), but is anticipated to accelerate over time.

The 2031 population projection for the Township is 15,610, representing **growth of 3,120 persons (25%) over fifteen years**. Population change over time is expected to be steady, generally about 1.5% per year. While the timeframe of this Master Plan extends to 2031, additional growth is anticipated beyond this time (the latest projections indicate a Township-wide population of 17,685 in 2041).

**Figure 3: Projected Population, Township of Wellington North**

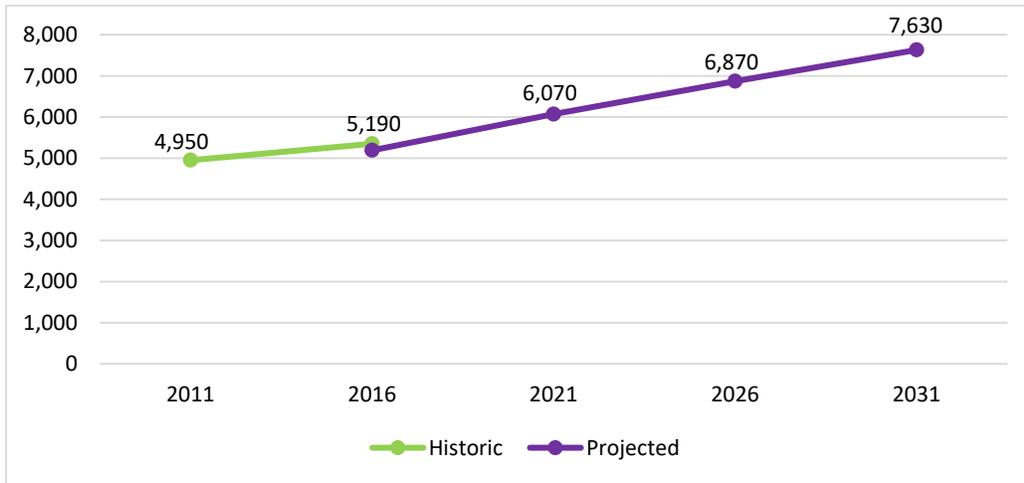


Source: Statistics Canada Census. Wellington County Official Plan Amendment 99

Population projections have been developed for both Arthur and Mount Forest (low to no growth is anticipated for rural settlement areas). Between 2016 and 2031, Mount Forest is anticipated to grow by 47% (2,440 persons), which is faster than the 21% rate (585 persons) projected for Arthur. This amount of growth is notable – particularly in Mount Forest – and will have an impact on parks, recreation and cultural facilities and services.

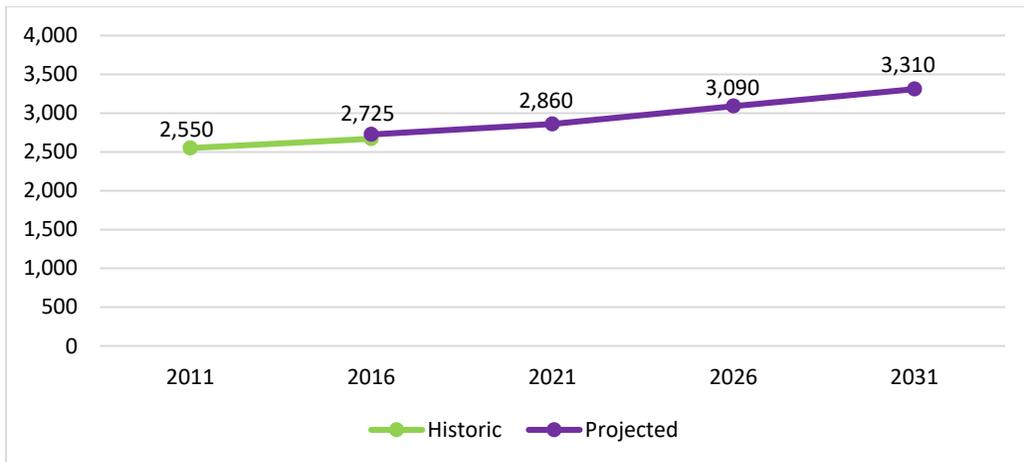
<sup>2</sup> County of Wellington Official Plan Amendment 99.

**Figure 4: Projected Population, Mount Forest**



Source: Statistics Canada Census. Wellington County Official Plan Amendment 99

**Figure 5: Projected Population, Arthur**



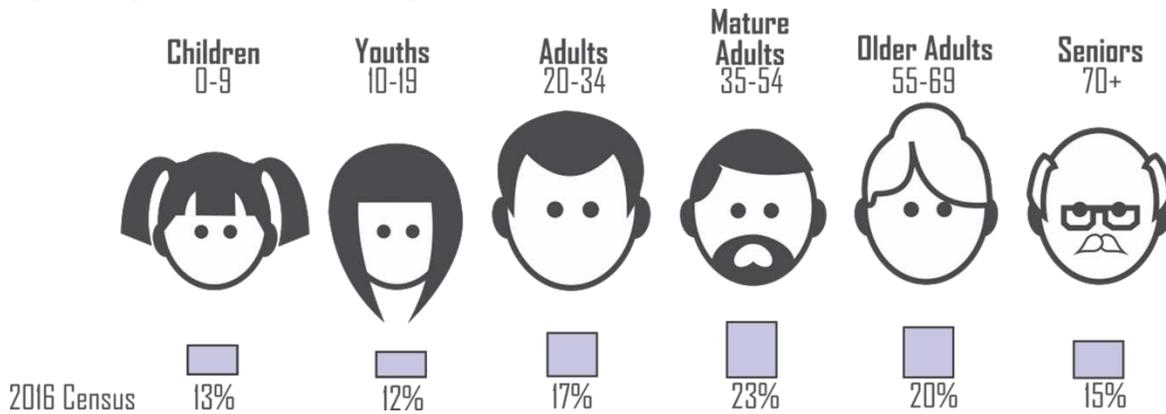
Source: Statistics Canada Census. Wellington County Official Plan Amendment 99

## 2.3 Engaging People of All Ages

The Wellington County Official Plan supports the development of healthy communities, of which active lifestyles and recreational opportunities for all segments of the community are an important contributor. Variety in recreation activities is a key objective for the Township, which largely will be driven by new and enhanced opportunities brought about by growth.

Understanding Wellington North’s age profile provides insights into the types of recreation and leisure services that might be needed to effectively serve residents. Communities with a larger market share of children and youth typically have higher demands for sports and active pursuits, whereas communities with a larger proportion of older adults and seniors may place greater emphasis upon health and wellness, arts and culture, and activities that encourage social interaction.

Figure 6: Age Composition of Wellington North, 2016



The 2016 Census reported a median age of 43.1 years for Wellington North, which is older compared to the Province (41.3 years) and Wellington County (40.3 years). The median age is much older in Mount Forest (49.1 years) than Arthur (38.9 years). As the following table illustrates, the majority of growth between the 2006 and 2016 Census occurred among older adults and seniors, indicating that the Township’s population is aging.

Table 1: Population by Age Cohort in Wellington North, 2006-2016

	2006	2011	2016	Change (2006-2016)
Children (0 to 9 Years)	1,330	1,360	1,520	12%
Youth (10 to 19 Years)	1,700	1,545	1,430	-16%
Adults (20 to 34 Years)	1,750	1,860	2,060	15%
Mature Adults (35 to 49 Years)	2,400	2,190	1,855	-23%
Older Adults (50 to 69 Years)	2,505	2,950	3,305	24%
Seniors (70+ Years)	1,475	1,580	1,750	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,160</b>	<b>11,485</b>	<b>11,920</b>	<b>6%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Census

Wellington North is an attractive community for older adults and seniors to retire as it offers a relaxed, affordable, small town atmosphere that is a short driving distance to larger urban centres. Out-migration of young adults seeking education and employment opportunities in other communities may also be contributing to the aging population.

Based on national aging trends, it is anticipated that the Township’s population profile will continue to age, particularly as the baby boom generation moves through the age cohorts (by 2021, the front wave of the baby boom population will turn 75 years of age). There are currently no age cohort forecasts specific to the Township, however, forecasts exist for Wellington County that allow for an understanding of trends at the County-level. The following table illustrates age-specific population forecasts by percentage for the County between 2016 and 2031. Most notable is the projected increase in the 70+ age group. Greater than average growth is also forecasted for children, adults and mature adults. The youth is expected to remain relatively stable, while a decline is anticipated for the

older adult age group due to the baby boomers aging out of this category. These trends are likely to impact Wellington North to varying degrees.

**Table 2: Current and Forecasted Population by Age (2016 & 2031), Wellington County**

Age Group	Percent of Total Population – 2016 (Census)	Percent of Total Population – 2031 (forecasted)	Forecasted Change in Total Population – 2016 to 2031
Children (0 to 9 Years)	12%	13%	increasing
Youth (10 to 19 Years)	12%	10%	stable
Adults (20 to 34 Years)	16%	20%	increasing
Mature Adults (35 to 49 Years)	18%	22%	increasing
Older Adults (50 to 69 Years)	30%	19%	declining
Seniors (70+ Years)	12%	17%	increasing substantially
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>increasing</b>

Source: Statistics Canada (2016) and Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Forecasts to 2041 Technical Report (November 2012).

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

## 2.4 Lack of Free Time and Physical Inactivity

The 2016 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for youth and children graded overall physical levels at D- for the fourth year in a row, suggesting that there has been limited progress in improving physical activity at the national level. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found that physical activity declines with age, which is driven by factors such as increasingly busy lifestyles that are centered on vehicular transportation and an increasing variety of sedentary choices for leisure.

Communities are often faced with the challenge of overcoming the “lack of free time” barrier from a service delivery perspective, which 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. Such strategies include extended hours of operation at certain facilities to allow residents to participate in activities that fit their schedules and providing more drop-in activities.

## 2.5 Overcoming Financial Barriers

Research from the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute indicates that participation in physical activity is proportional to income. For example, children between the ages of 5 to 19 who live in higher income households are more likely to participate in organized physical activities compared to their counterparts residing in lower income households.<sup>3</sup>

According to Statistics Canada, the 2015 median after-tax income in Wellington North was \$56,905, which was lower than the Province (\$65,285) and Wellington County (\$70,728). This finding suggests that based on income alone, Wellington North’s residents may not be as physically active compared to the Province or County. The 2016 Census also reported that 15% of Wellington North’s residents

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute. Retrieved from [www.cflri.ca](http://www.cflri.ca).

are living in low income households, which is higher compared to the County (10%) and the Province (14%). These results emphasize the need to ensure that affordable recreation opportunities are available to engage all residents, regardless of income status.

While the Township subsidizes its recreation opportunities, it does not provide any direct financial assistance for low income residents. However, there are financial assistance programs available from non-municipal organizations such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart. The Township also provides a number of no-cost recreation opportunities at its parks that offer playgrounds, trails and more.

## 2.6 Inclusivity and Accessibility

The Canadian Survey on Disability reported that 14% of Canadians and 15% of Ontarians were living with a disability in 2012.<sup>4</sup> If these rates are applied locally, it can be estimated that nearly 2,000 Wellington North have some form of disability. Given these statistics and the aging of the population, it is crucial that recreation opportunities in Wellington North are inclusive and that universal design and barrier-free elements are provided wherever possible to minimize barriers.

This Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 requires municipalities to remove all barriers within municipal facilities by 2025. In doing so, municipalities are required to form Accessibility Advisory Committees and adopt accessibility plans, which identify, develop and prioritize solutions to remove barriers from municipal facilities. The County's Accessibility Advisory Committee advises Council on the preparation and implementation of Township of Wellington North Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and other matters related to accessibility. The Plan identifies a number of recommendations to make the Township's parks and recreation facilities more accessible, which includes accessible washrooms, elevators, barrier free access and more.

## 2.7 Aging Infrastructure

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 recreation infrastructure requires attention as it is showing signs of deterioration. On average, the Report Card found that community/recreation centres, pools, skate parks and sports fields were generally in good condition, while 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 financial priorities that can lead to deferred maintenance and replacement.<sup>5</sup>

Many recreation facilities throughout the County were originally built between 1956 and 1980, with several constructed to celebrate Canada's Centennial year in 1967. Since this period, infrastructure province-wide has been underfunded. Most recently, however, the federal government reignited its commitment to the parks and recreation sector with over \$1.8 billion in funding directed to improving and managing parks and recreation assets, in addition to accessibility and trail improvements.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian survey on disability 2012. Catalogue no. 89-654-X, Ottawa. Retrieved from [mieux-etre.edsc.gc.ca](http://mieux-etre.edsc.gc.ca).

<sup>5</sup> Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. CPRA applauds federal government commitment to parks and recreation opportunities for Canadians. Retrieved from [www.cpra.ca](http://www.cpra.ca).

Township has benefited from past provincial and federal economic stimulus programs, including upgrades to playgrounds and the Arthur & Area Community Centre. Most recently, the Township received over \$60,000 from the Ontario 150 Grant towards installing an accessible washroom and playground at Murphy Park.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.8 Environmental Design and Operational Efficiency

Environmental conservation is top of mind for Canadians as there is an increasing recognition of the need to make efficient use of natural resources. Municipalities are demonstrating their commitment to environmental conservation through the design and redevelopment of facilities, including the integration of state-of-the-art technologies to enhance environmental efficiency. The design of environmentally-friendly facilities is promoted and encouraged by the Canadian Green Building Council, which is responsible for 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.

## 2.9 Celebrating Arts, Culture and Heritage

Arts and cultural opportunities play an important role in creating vibrant and livable communities, contributing to knowledge building and bolstering the local economy. Generally speaking, arts and culture is broadly defined as the industries and resources that centre around artistic talent, expression, built and natural heritage, museum and archives, libraries, events and festivals. Activities may include, but not be limited to, painting, creating sculptures, singing, dancing, theatre, crafts, attending a cultural or heritage event, visiting a museum or historical site, using the library and more. It is these arts and cultural resources that form the backbone of creative industries, cultural spaces, the natural heritage system and the delivery of community-based programs.

In recent years, leisure trends revealed that there is a greater desire for non-sport opportunities such as arts and culture. The benefits of arts and culture in a community, both intrinsic and extrinsic, have been widely heralded through numerous studies and include: encouragement of social interaction, stimulation of creativity and personal thought, contributions to economic development and tourism, the facilitation of healthy lifestyles and more.

Several Ontario communities – including Wellington North – have recognized the importance of promoting local culture opportunities and capacity building through the guidance of cultural planning. Wellington North’s Municipal Cultural Plan engages the creative community by identifying the current state of arts and culture and advances recommendations to grow the local creative sector. Local arts and cultural opportunities are provided by groups such as the Mount Forest Heritage Society, Arthur & Area Historical Society, Mount Forest & District Arts Council, Wellington County Library, and other community and private-sector groups, while the Township’s parks and recreation facilities are used to accommodate community and special events.

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<sup>7</sup> Ontario 150 Community Capital Program. Retrieved from otf.ca

## 2.10 The Value of Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the operation and delivery of high quality recreation opportunities. The Township relies heavily on volunteer assistance to deliver recreation programs and services, particularly with regard to organized minor sports and other community-based activities and events. In the 2013 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 44% of Canadians participated in some form of volunteer work, which is a decrease from 47% reported in 2010%. This trend is consistent in many municipalities as many groups struggle in finding volunteers.<sup>8</sup>

Older adults and seniors generally represent the most active volunteer group, although it is anticipated that many in this age group will soon move on from the volunteer workforce, resulting in greater pressures on recreation opportunities in the Township. Sector research indicates that there are a number of strategies that can be adopted to recruit and retain volunteers such as: maintaining an online database of volunteers; establishing formal practices for volunteer recruitment, orientation and training and recognition; and having a designated volunteer coordinator. Services such as the People Information Network are an example of an online database that connects volunteers with communities and potential opportunities.

## 2.11 Strengthening Partnerships

The Township collaborates with community partners in a number of ways to provide a range of recreation activities. Groups such as sports organizations, service and community clubs, schools, public agencies and religious institutions are critical to supporting the Township's recreation system.

Maintaining and building strong partnerships with organizations achieves a number of community benefits. A collaborative service delivery approach between the Township and another organization provides an opportunity to maximize the use of community resources, gain a competitive advantage in having specialized groups deliver programs and services, and share important information to help identify emerging challenges and solutions. Engaging groups through partnerships can also result in financial support through sponsorships, project funding and donations, as well as non-financial resources. 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., costs and liabilities).

## 2.12 Emerging Activities and Facilities

Like most communities, the Township's demographic profile is changing, which is leading to recreation needs that are different from past generations. For example, aging populations are generating demands for spaces that were not previously considered in parks due to the great focus that was placed on children's programming. Today's older adults have been observed to be more physically active than past generations of seniors, seeking venues for casual sport, active living and a greater variety of choices. At the same time, pressure remains for the continued provision of sports fields, non-programmed spaces for social activities and supporting amenities that improve the user experience.

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<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. Volunteering and charitable giving in Canada. 2013. Retrieved from [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

As a result of these demographic shifts, municipalities across Ontario have received requests for various new facilities including, but not limited to, pickleball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, community gardens and off-leash dog parks. The need for many of these emerging facility types are evaluated in this Master Plan.

## 2.13 School Reviews and Enrollment

From 2017 to 2022, enrollment at Victoria Cross Public School and Arthur Public School is expected to increase by 10% and 4%, respectively, due to proposed housing development. Kenilworth Public School enrollment is anticipated to decrease by 5%. Over the same time period, enrollment at Wellington Heights District Secondary School is expected to decrease by 5%. This finding reinforces the presence of young families in the area. In addition to Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 students, the school board also provides Continuing Education programs. One of the four sites that offer adult and continuing education is the North Wellington Centre for Continuing Education located in Mount Forest.

A closer analysis of school enrolments finds that, over the next five years, increasing enrolments are projected for Victoria Cross Public School (23%) and Arthur Public School (9%). Stable enrolments are projected for Kenilworth Public School and Wellington Heights District High School.<sup>9</sup> The Wellington Catholic District School Board (St. John Catholic School and St. Mary Catholic School) reported declining enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year<sup>10</sup>; enrolment projections for these two schools are not currently available. Information from the public school board suggests a growing need for recreational activities and amenities serving school-age children in both Mount Forest and Arthur. Demand for teen activities and amenities can be anticipated to remain stable.

## 2.14 Active Transportation

The Public Health Agency of Canada defines active transportation as any form of human-powered transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, etc.) for utilitarian and leisure purposes<sup>11</sup>. The benefits of active transportation are many and include economic and environmental (e.g., reduced motorized vehicles, road congestion, and greenhouse gas emissions, lower road maintenance costs, etc.), as well as healthy and higher quality of living. Active transportation is effective in heightening community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more livable communities where people are likely to have meaningful social interaction with each other.

Active transportation infrastructure in Wellington North primarily consists of pathways within parks and tracts owned by the Township, County and Grand River Conservation Authority, as well as sidewalks within settlement areas. The creation of a fully integrated network within Wellington North cannot be achieved overnight, but it nonetheless warrants serious consideration and action to achieve the benefits described above. The County's Active Transportation Master Plan provides a guide to advance

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<sup>9</sup> Upper Grand District School Board Long Term Accommodation Plan Background Report. (2018). Retrieved from [www.ugdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LTAP-Background-Report-Jan-16.pdf](http://www.ugdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LTAP-Background-Report-Jan-16.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Wellington Catholic District School Board 2017/18 Budget. Retrieved from: [www.wellingtoncdsb.ca/BoardOffice/bps/budget/Documents/WCDSB%202017-2018%20Budget.pdf](http://www.wellingtoncdsb.ca/BoardOffice/bps/budget/Documents/WCDSB%202017-2018%20Budget.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. (2010). What is active transportation? Retrieved from [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php)

the Township's trail network through a combination of signed on-road routes and off-road pathways that connect residents within and between settlement areas, as well as with adjacent municipalities.

## **2.15 Technology and Customer Service**

In recent years, the adoption of new technologies has provided municipalities (including the Township and community organizations) with a more advanced and streamlined process to register participants, improve scheduling and communicate with the community. At present, the Township's website and Leisure Calendar are excellent sources to access information and promote opportunities.

Social media and personal devices have revolutionized the way people communicate and socialize, while using very few resources. The application of these innovative communication techniques require communities to understand and apply these methods in an effective manner to inform all age groups in the community. Tools such as Facebook and Twitter provide the Township, as well as other organizations, with the power to market recreation opportunities to varying interests. These tools can also be used as a forum to collect valuable information and community feedback in an efficient manner. While it is clear that the use of technology has changed the way most residents communicate, a balanced distribution of information through multiple communication mediums is necessary to maximize the delivery of information to residents.



## Section 3.0 Public Consultation

Public consultation is integral to the master planning process. It ensures that the public, stakeholders, municipal officials and staff have the opportunity to be engaged to provide input and insights relating to the provision of recreation and leisure opportunities, needs and priorities. At the project's initiation, a Public Consultation Strategy was crafted, which articulated the consultation tasks to be undertaken at key stages during the planning process. Each engagement tool was designed to maximize community involvement and was tailored to respond to a variety of audiences. The following methodologies were utilized:

- Public Input Sessions
- Online Community Survey
- Stakeholder Group Workshops
- Youth Input

Note: The information and suggestions presented in this section do not represent recommendations, nor has public input been altered even in instances where the comments may not reflect the Township's actual policies, practices or level of provision.

### 3.1 Summary of Key Themes

The following is a summary of key themes from all public consultation events. The key themes represent common views expressed during consultation and do not include all individual responses.

#### Service Delivery & Programs

- a) 84% of online survey respondents agreed that parks and recreation services should be a high priority for Township Council.
- b) Residents experience barriers to participation (financial, transportation, communication, etc.). The Township should look to address these barriers through a variety of means.
- c) The Township's staff structure is primarily focused on maintenance, not community development or customer service. Some groups expressed frustration with the responsiveness and accountability levels of staff.
- d) A desire for operating procedures and policies to be reviewed on a regular basis, such as ice allocation, user fees, support for ball diamonds, arena concession hours, etc.
- e) Membership in many service clubs is aging. Concerns were raised surrounding succession planning, volunteer support and recognition.
- f) There is a large Mennonite presence in Wellington North. This culture participates in recreation differently; however, are becoming more engaged in organized recreational activities locally.
- g) Suggestions were made for community representation on the Recreation & Culture Committee.
- h) There were suggestions for additional programs that do not compete with private business, including Township-run summer camps; arts and culture, etc. Improvements in the coordination of programs for older adults and seniors were also suggested.
- i) Enhanced communication between the Township and groups was requested regarding local recreation and cultural events, capital projects, Community Investment Policy, asset management, etc. Improvements to the Township website, such as a community calendar and links, were also suggested.

## Parks and Facilities

- j) Nearly two-thirds (63%) of online survey respondents indicated that they would like to see additional parks and recreation activities in Wellington North. An indoor pool was among the more popular suggestions.
- k) Groups indicated that greater efforts are required to promote local trails within the Township, such as updated mapping, wayfinding signage and funding for maintenance and expansion (to connect destinations). Hiking and walking was the second most popular activity for residents according to the online survey (54% of households participated in the past twelve months).
- l) Many felt that investment in playground updates (including accessible play features) should continue to be a priority – 82% of online survey respondents felt that additional investment is required.
- m) Some suggested that utilization of halls could be improved through lower fees, use by seniors and community partnerships.
- n) A desire for additional youth activities, including space for youth to hang out (e.g. youth drop-in centre) – 54% of online survey respondents were not satisfied with the recreational opportunities available for teens.

## Parks and Facilities – Arthur

- o) Arthur Arena is aging and in need of infrastructure updates to address safety and lifecycle issues (e.g. concrete slab, lobby, flooring, boards, change rooms). The Arena Park also needs reinvestment (fencing, structures, etc.)
- p) Arthur Seniors are seeking assistance from the Township to secure long-term access to suitable space, ideally in their current building.
- q) There were suggestions for a skateboard park (with a willingness to fundraise) and youth ball diamond. 71% of online survey respondents from Arthur suggested a need for a skate park.

## Parks and Facilities – Mount Forest

- r) Some expressed concern around the long-term status of Mount Forest Fairgrounds, which is an important destination in the community.
- s) Some groups indicated that there is a need for more ice time in Mount Forest, especially during prime-time hours and shoulder seasons.
- t) Volunteers suggested that the area surrounding the Mount Forest cenotaph would benefit from enhanced maintenance and beautification.
- u) Suggestions for a splash pad and a new outdoor pool (with a willingness to fundraise – 84% of online survey responses supported replacing the existing Mount Forest pool with a new outdoor pool and/or splash pad), as well as ball diamonds, off leash dog park, outdoor rink and community garden.

## 3.2 Public Input Sessions

Two public input sessions were held – at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex (November 7, 2017) and the Arthur & Area Community Centre (November 9, 2017). Both open houses were well advertised and invited participants to view display boards and learn more about the master planning process. There were opportunities for attendees to provide feedback through comment sheets or by answering questions provided on display boards. Approximately 35 people attended the two events. Key themes identified through these and other consultation activities are identified in Section 3.1.

Additional public information sessions were held in both Arthur and Mount Forest to present the draft Master Plan and seek feedback – at the Arthur & Area Community Centre (March 27, 2018) and the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex (March 28, 2018). Nearly 60 people attended the two events.

## 3.3 Stakeholder Group Workshops

Several stakeholder workshops interviews were undertaken on November 1, 2017 in Mount Forest and November 2, 2017 in Arthur. A total of 54 people representing 34 organizations participated – a list of groups is contained in **Appendix A**. The sessions provided a variety of community partners and stakeholders an opportunity to speak candidly about a range of topics. Subjects included facility utilization and needs, areas for improvement, programming and service needs, opportunities for partnerships and funding, and more. The input received from these sessions was highly detailed and has been integrated into subsequent sections of the Master Plan. Key themes identified through the stakeholder sessions and other consultation activities are identified in Section 3.1.

## 3.4 Youth Input

Representatives of local schools were invited to participate in the stakeholder consultation sessions and were given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions regarding parks, recreation and culture improvements in Wellington North. Arthur Public School, Victoria Cross Public School and Wellington Heights Secondary School had students take part in brainstorming exercises to identify improvements.

A common theme from all schools was the demand for a skate park in Arthur; the distance to the park in Mount Forest is a barrier and a closer alternative would increase participation by Arthur youth.

Improvements to local bike and walking trails were also desired. Suggestions included: improving and expanding trails to encourage more people to hike and bike, creating boardwalks (e.g. Island Lake in Orangeville) and connecting subdivisions with trails (such as East Ridge with the rail trail).

A “fit trail” was also suggested as a way to incorporate outdoor exercise along existing local trails. These amenities offer outdoor exercise equipment with instructional signs along trails/paths, available for free community use.

Many students felt that there are activities for younger children, but fewer for older children and youth. Some suggestions to engage youth/teens were dances and a drop-in centre that could include space for teens to socialize, participate in activities and coordinate trips.

Other activities/facilities identified by multiple schools included:

- dog park
- indoor pool
- movie theatre/movie nights
- paintball
- outdoor hockey rink
- more social events
- more programs at the Library (e.g. youth activities, paint nights)
- gym/workout space

### 3.5 Online Community Survey

To gain input from the broader community, an online survey was made available to Wellington North residents from mid-October to mid-November 2017. The survey was advertised through the Township's website, community posters and social media. The survey collected information on attitudes and preferences towards various aspects of parks, recreation, and cultural activities and facilities.

A total of 435 responses were received. Although the survey provides valuable insight into resident preferences and needs, its self-selected format means that it is not statistically significant. The following is a summary of respondents' answers; detailed responses and data can be found in **Appendix A**. Unless otherwise noted, all responses have been normalized to exclude "don't know" responses or skipped questions.

#### Respondent Profile

Of the 435 completed surveys, 295 indicated their area of residence. 93% of respondents were residents of Wellington North while 7% were non-residents. Amongst Township residents, 47% (140) live closest to Mount Forest and 43% (126) live closest to Arthur. There was no notable difference in the size or age composition of responding households between the Mount Forest and Arthur areas.



The majority of responding households (62%) consisted of a couple with one or more dependent children. Families were more inclined to complete the survey and older adult residents were under-represented compared to the community as a whole.

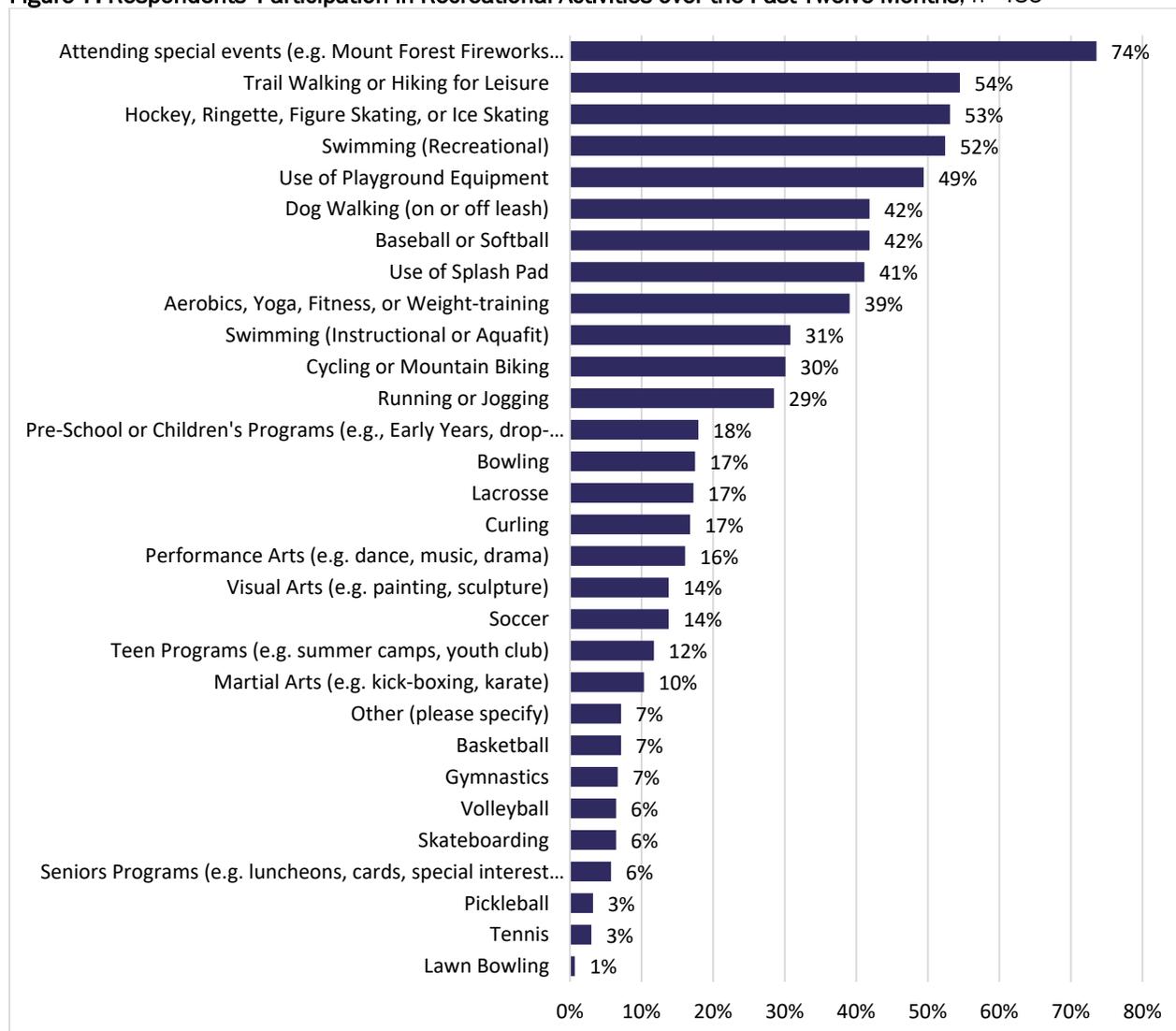
**Table 3: Demographic profile of survey respondents**

Household size	Mount Forest	Arthur	Entire Township
Average household size (persons)	2.60	2.75	2.64
Age of household members	Mount Forest	Arthur	Entire Township
Under 10 years	20%	18%	19%
10 to 19 years	18%	18%	18%
20 to 34 years	19%	22%	21%
35 to 54 years	25%	25%	25%
55 to 69 years	11%	12%	11%
70 years and over	7%	5%	6%

## Participation in Activities

Respondents were asked which recreation and leisure activities their household had participated in over the past twelve months. The most heavily participated activity was attending special events (74%), followed by trail walking or hiking for leisure (54%) and hockey, ringette, figure skating or ice skating (53%). The following graph displays all responses with associated responses.

**Figure 7: Respondents' Participation in Recreational Activities over the Past Twelve Months, n=435**

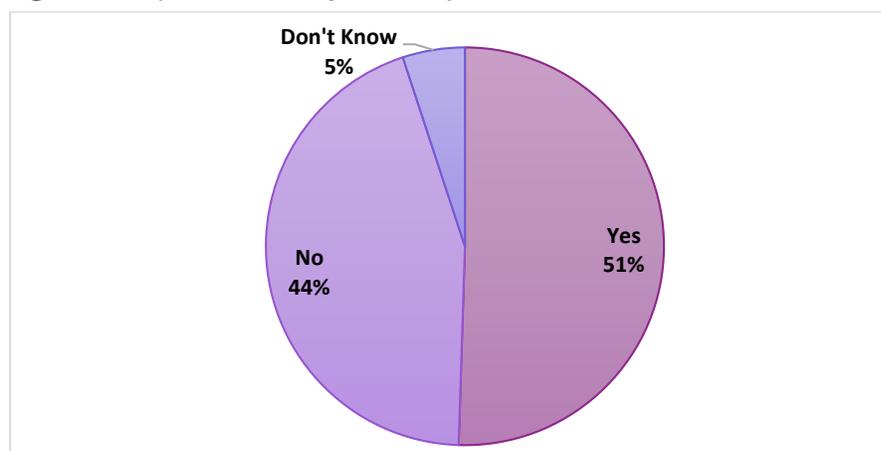


The following table identifies the top ten recreational activities for residents living closest to Mount Forest and Arthur. A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (89%) reported attending special events compared to Arthur respondents (62%); the example provided – Mount Forest Fireworks Festival – may have contributed to this. A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (61%) reported using playground equipment compared to Arthur respondents (43%). A greater proportion of Arthur respondents (29%) reported participating in lacrosse compared to Mount Forest respondents (4%); the Arthur arena is a regional hub for lacrosse in the summer.

**Table 4: Most common activities participated in within the past twelve months by location of respondent**

Activity (top ten)	Mount Forest	Activity (top ten)	Arthur
Attending special events (e.g., Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.)	89%	Attending special events (e.g., Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.)	62%
Use of playground equipment	61%	Trail waking or hiking for leisure	56%
Hockey, ringette, figure skating or ice skating	59%	Baseball or Softball	51%
Trail waking or hiking for leisure	57%	Hockey, ringette, figure skating or ice skating	50%
Swimming (recreational)	55%	Swimming (recreational)	48%
Aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight training	41%	Dog walking	48%
Dog walking	41%	Use of Splash Pad	48%
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	39%	Use of playground equipment	43%
Baseball or Softball	38%	Aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight training	36%
Cycling or mountain biking	37%	Running or jogging	26%

Respondents' were then asked if they were able to participate in recreational activities as often as they would like. One-half (51%) of online survey respondents stated that they were able to participate in parks and recreation activities (e.g. sports, fitness, outdoor play, etc.) as often as they would like. 44% of respondents stated that they were unable to participate as often as they would like and 5% were unsure.

**Figure 8: Respondents' Ability to Participate in Parks and Recreation Activities, n=434**

Reasons for not participating in activities as often as they would like include lack of desired facilities or programs (68%), program not offered at a convenient time (44%) and lack of personal time/too busy (40%). The following chart displays all respondent answers.

The following table identifies the top three barriers to participation in recreational activities for residents living closest to Mount Forest and Arthur. There is no significant difference in the responses.

**Table 5: Barriers to Participation by location of respondent**

Barrier (top three)	Mount Forest	Barrier (top three)	Arthur
Lack of desired facilities or programs	74%	Lack of desired facilities or programs	61%
Program not offered at a convenient time	40%	Lack of personal time / too busy	48%
Lack of personal time / too busy	32%	Program not offered at a convenient time	48%

### Participation Outside of Wellington North

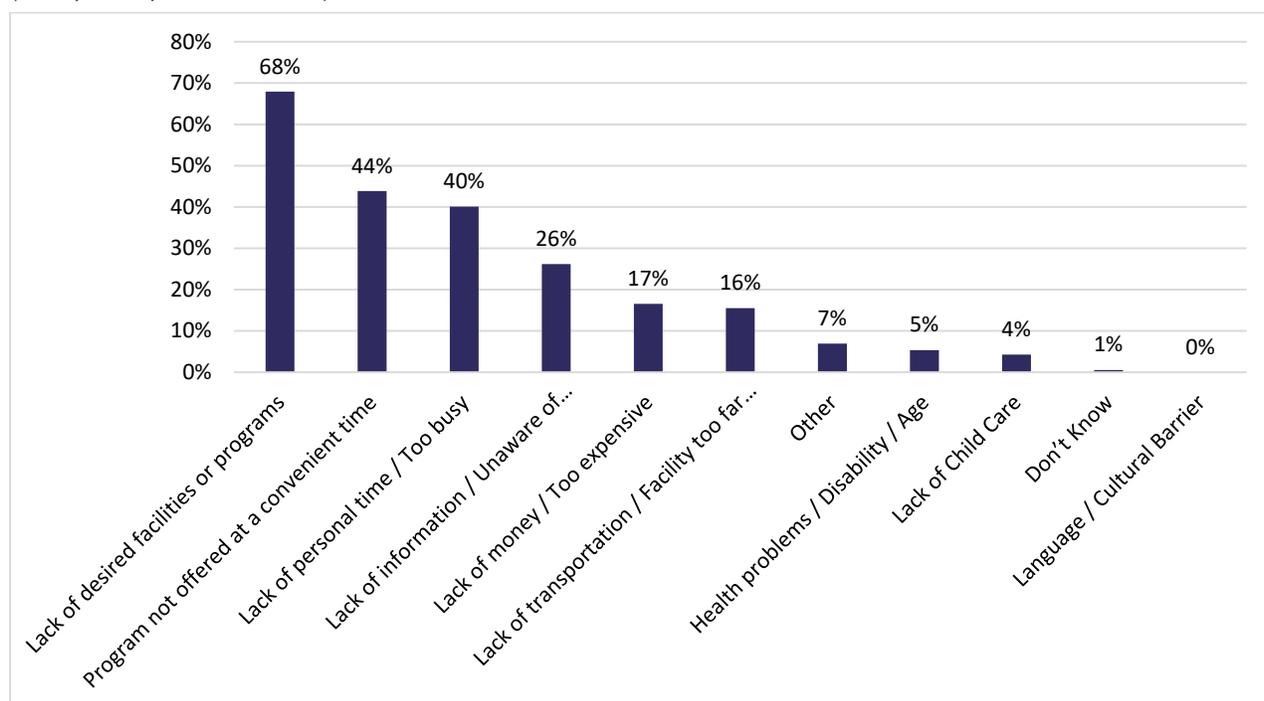
Respondents were asked what proportion of their household’s recreation needs were met within the Township of Wellington North. Responses were very balanced, with one-third (32%) participating in all or most of their activities locally, just less than one-third (29%) participating in some or none of their activities locally, and just more than one-third (37%) participating in about half of their activities locally.

**Table 6: Parks and Recreation Needs Met within Wellington North (n=419)**

Answer	#	%
All (100%)	19	5%
Most (67-99%)	114	27%
About Half (34-66%)	156	37%
Some (1-33%)	104	25%
None (0%)	16	4%
Don't Know	10	2%

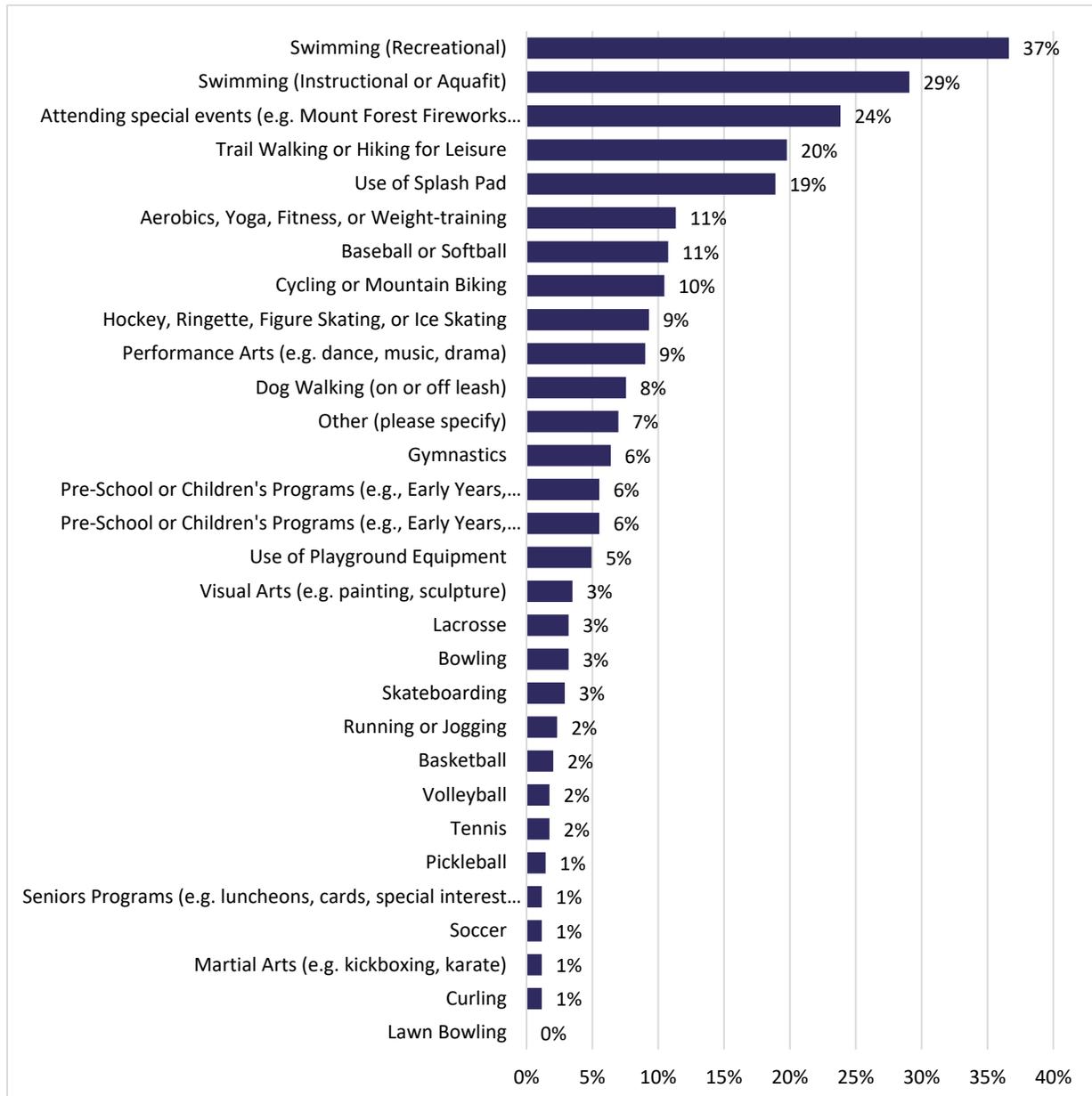
To determine reasons for participating in parks and recreation activities outside of Wellington North, respondents were asked why they participated in these activities outside of the Township.

**Figure 9: Reasons for not Participating in Parks and Recreation Activities in Wellington North (multiple responses allowed), n=187**



The most popular activity participated in outside of Wellington North was swimming (recreational), followed by swimming (instructional or AquaFit) and attending special events (e.g. Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.). The following graph illustrates respondents' answers.

**Figure 10: Activities Participated in Outside of Wellington North (n=344)**

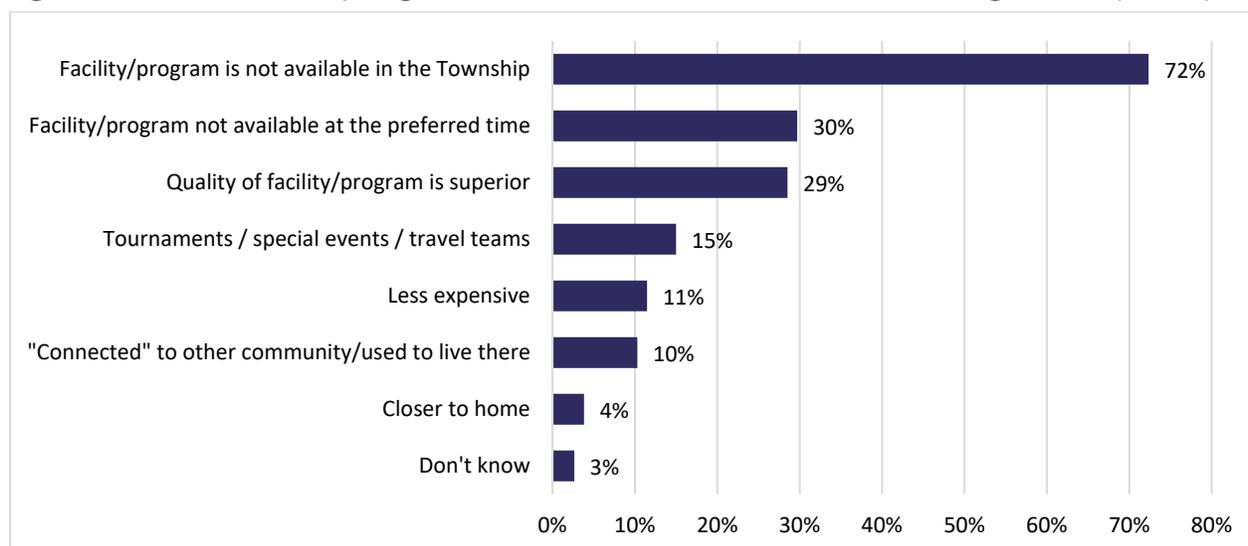


The following table identifies the top five recreational activities participated in outside the Township for residents living closest to Mount Forest and Arthur. A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (43%) reported travelling outside of the Township to participate in recreational swimming compared to Arthur respondents (23%). A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (33%) reported travelling outside of the Township to use a splash pad compared to Arthur respondents (4%).

**Table 7: Most common activities participated in outside the Township by location of respondent**

Activity (top five)	Mount Forest	Activity (top five)	Arthur
Swimming (recreational)	49%	Attending special events	29%
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	36%	Swimming (recreational)	23%
Use of splash pad	33%	Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	22%
Trail waking or hiking for leisure	20%	Trail waking or hiking for leisure	19%
Attending special events	20%	Baseball or Softball	19%

Reasons for participating in activities outside of Wellington North varied, but the most mentioned include that the facility/program is not available in the Township (72%), followed by the facility/program not available at the preferred time (30%) and the quality of the facility/program is superior (29%). The following graph displays all responses.

**Figure 11: Reasons for Participating in Parks and Recreation Activities Outside of Wellington North (n= 340)**

## Outdoor Pool Usage and Options

Respondents were then asked about their usage of outdoor pools and opinions regarding the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool and its future viability. Less than half of Township residents use outdoor pools – 43% used the Arthur Pool and 38% used the Mount Forest pool within the past two years. Since usage was strongly correlated with area of residence, the following analysis illustrates usage and satisfaction levels based on the opinions of those living closest to Arthur and Mount Forest.

When asked about their usage of the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool, most users in the area (66%) stated that used the pool “often” or “frequently”. The most common uses for the pool were recreational swimming (86%), swimming lessons (58%), lane swimming (14%), AquaFit (11%) and other (2%). One-quarter (25%) of local respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Mount Forest pool and 35% were not satisfied or not at all satisfied.

**Table 8: Usage of and satisfaction with the Mount Forest outdoor pool**

<b>Usage – Mount Forest Pool</b>	<b>Mount Forest</b>	<b>Arthur</b>	<b>Entire Township</b>
Used the Mount Forest Pool within the past two years	68%	2%	38%
<b>Satisfaction – Mount Forest Pool</b>	<b>Mount Forest</b>	<b>Arthur</b>	<b>Entire Township</b>
Very Satisfied	2%	n/a	2%
Satisfied	23%	n/a	24%
Neutral/Don't Know	40%	n/a	38%
Not Satisfied	31%	n/a	30%
Not at all Satisfied	4%	n/a	6%

When asked about their usage of the Arthur Outdoor Pool, less than half of local users (45%) stated that used the pool “often” or “frequently”. The most common uses for the pool were recreational swimming (86%), swimming lessons (28%), AquaFit (11%), lane swimming (3%) and other (3%). More than half (55%) of local respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Arthur pool and 19% were not satisfied or not at all satisfied.

**Table 9: Usage of and satisfaction with Arthur outdoor pool**

<b>Usage – Arthur Pool</b>	<b>Mount Forest</b>	<b>Arthur</b>	<b>Entire Township</b>
Used the Arthur Pool within the past two years	12%	75%	43%
<b>Satisfaction – Arthur Pool</b>	<b>Mount Forest</b>	<b>Arthur</b>	<b>Entire Township</b>
Very Satisfied	n/a	9%	12%
Satisfied	n/a	46%	48%
Neutral/Don't Know	n/a	25%	24%
Not Satisfied	n/a	14%	11%
Not at all Satisfied	n/a	5%	5%

Mount Forest outdoor pool is an aging and there have been discussions about its future. To better understand community preferences, a series of options were presented on the survey. More than two-fifths (44%) of respondents stated that the Township should replace the Mount Forest Pool with both a new outdoor pool and splash pad – this option was supported by 61% of respondents living in the Mount Forest area. The other options, ranging from closure to replacing the pool only, did not receive nearly as much support.

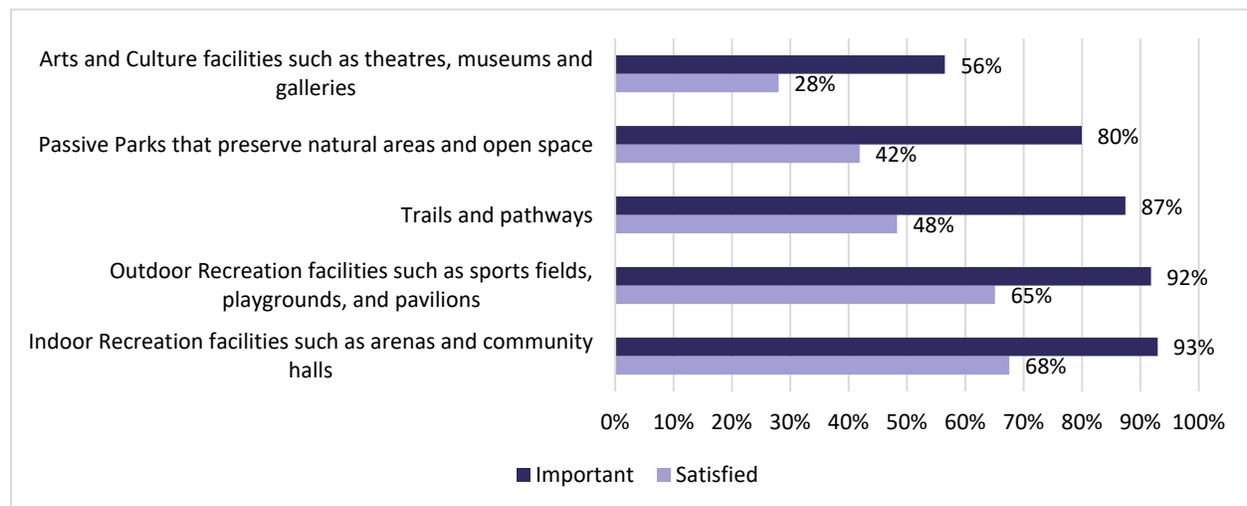
**Table 10: Opinions on the Mount Forest Pool**

<b>Mount Forest Pool Options</b>	<b>Mount Forest</b>	<b>Arthur</b>	<b>Entire Township</b>
Replace it with both a new outdoor pool and splash pad	61%	21%	44%
Replace it with a new outdoor pool	14%	13%	12%
Don't know	13%	40%	26%
Replace it with a splash pad	9%	4%	6%
Close the pool when it is no longer feasible to repair	4%	22%	12%

## Importance and Satisfaction

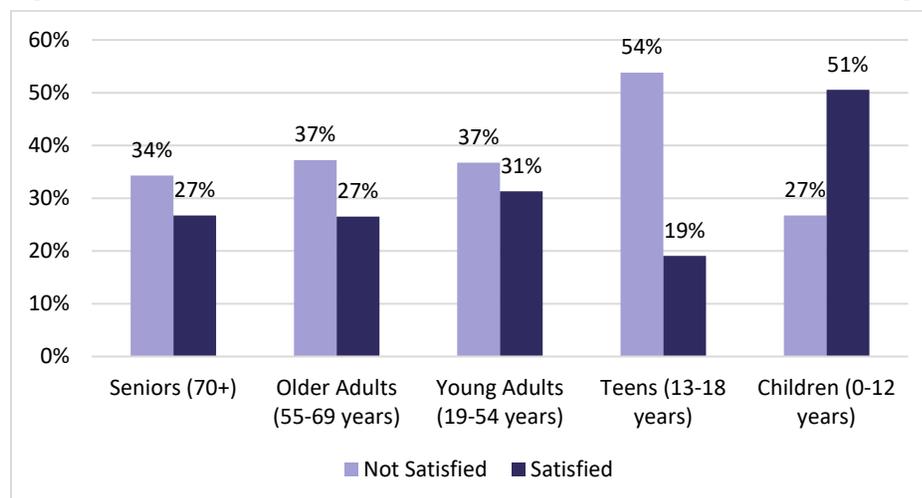
Respondents were asked about how important various types of parks and facilities, along with their level of satisfaction. Indoor and recreation facilities received the highest levels of importance and satisfaction, while arts and culture facilities received the lowest importance and satisfaction ratings (the majority of respondents were indifferent to arts and culture facilities, with 51% indicating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). The largest gaps between importance and satisfaction were noted for passive parks and trails/pathways, suggesting that greater attention is required in order to meet resident expectations in these areas.

**Figure 12: Respondents Importance and Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Facilities in Wellington North (n= 337)**



Respondents were then asked their levels of satisfaction with parks and recreation activities for various age groups. Strong satisfaction levels were identified for children's activities, however, respondents indicated much lower levels of satisfaction with services to all other age groups. Opportunities for teens were identified as the area requiring the greatest degree of attention, with 54% of survey respondents indicating that they were not satisfied.

**Figure 13: Levels of Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Opportunities among Various Age Groups (n=238)**



## Priorities

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of survey respondents indicated that they would like to see additional parks and recreation activities offered in the Township. The top responses were:

- Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training (24%)
- Use of Splash Pad (21%)
- Gymnastics (14%)
- Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit) (13%)
- Swimming (Recreational) (13%)
- Performance Arts (e.g. dance, music, drama) (13%)
- Teen Programs (e.g. summer camps, youth club) (12%)
- Trail Walking or Hiking for Leisure (11%)

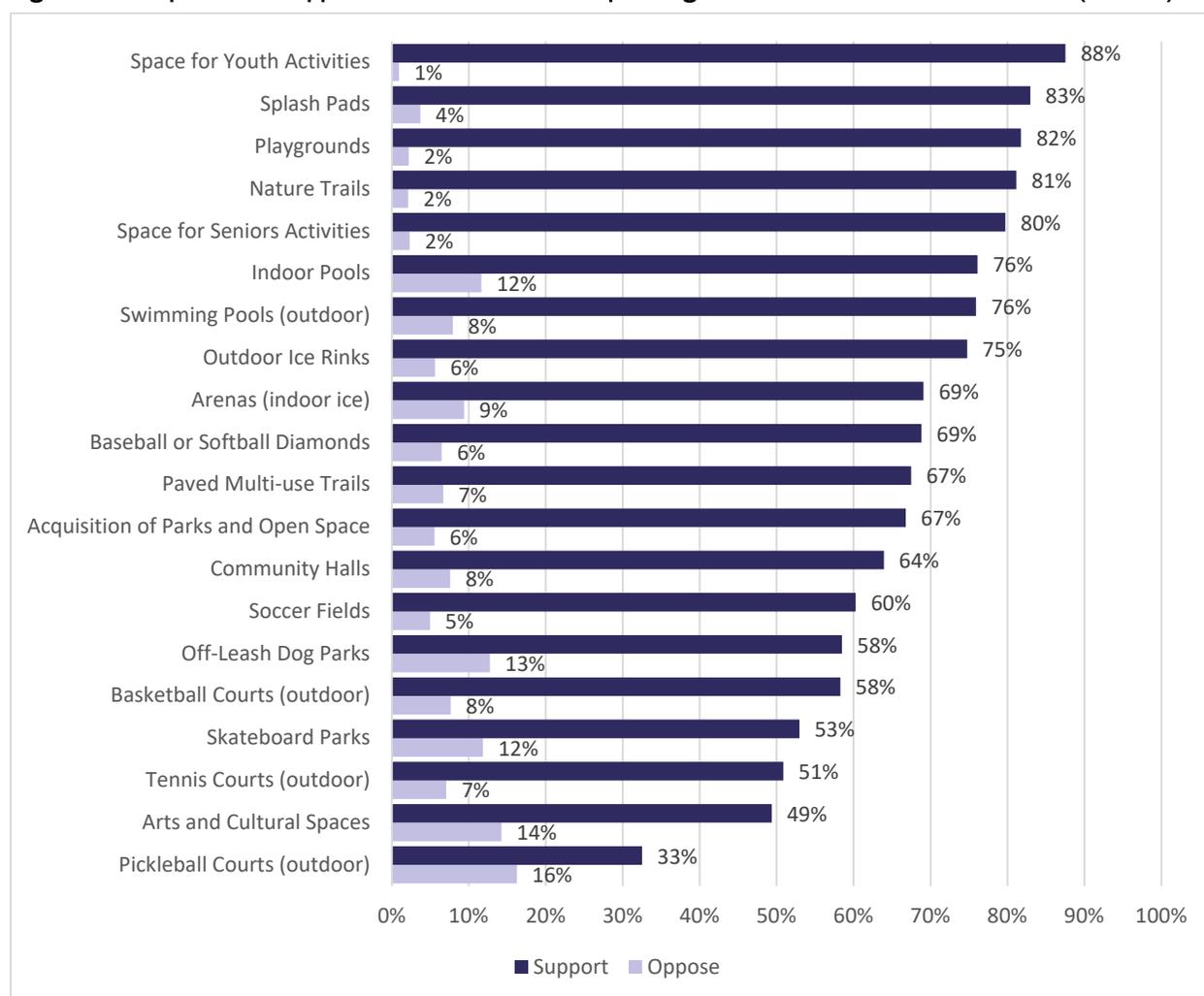
The following table identifies the top five most requested recreational activities for residents living closest to Mount Forest and Arthur. A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (42%) requested use of a splash pad compared to Arthur respondents (0%). A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (24%) requested recreational swimming activities compared to Arthur respondents (6%).

**Table 11: Most common activities requested to be provided in the Township by location of respondent**

Activity (top five)	Mount Forest	Activity (top five)	Arthur
Use of a splash pad	42%	Aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight training	31%
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	24%	Skateboarding	16%
Gymnastics	22%	Performance arts (dance, music, drama)	16%
Swimming (recreational)	20%	Dog walking (on or off leash)	12%
Trail walking or hiking for leisure	18%	(tie) Pre-school/Children's and Teen programs	11%

To determine respondents' priorities regarding municipal investment in parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked whether they opposed or supported additional public spending on various parks and recreation facilities. The following facilities yielded the greatest degree of support – these facilities all generally accommodate casual and unstructured activities:

- Space for Youth Activities (88%)
- Splash Pads (83%)
- Playgrounds (82%)
- Nature Trails (81%)
- Space for Seniors Activities (80%)
- Indoor Pools (76%)
- Swimming Pools, outdoor (76%)
- Outdoor Ice Rinks (75%)

**Figure 14: Respondents Support for Additional Public Spending on Parks and Recreation Facilities (n= 313)**

The following table identifies the top ten facilities for which residents living closest to Mount Forest and Arthur wish to see additional municipal investment. A greater proportion of Mount Forest respondents (87%) requested an indoor pool compared to Arthur respondents (67%). A greater proportion of Arthur respondents (71%) requested a skateboard park compared to Mount Forest respondents (41%).

**Table 12: Support for new and improved facilities by location of respondent**

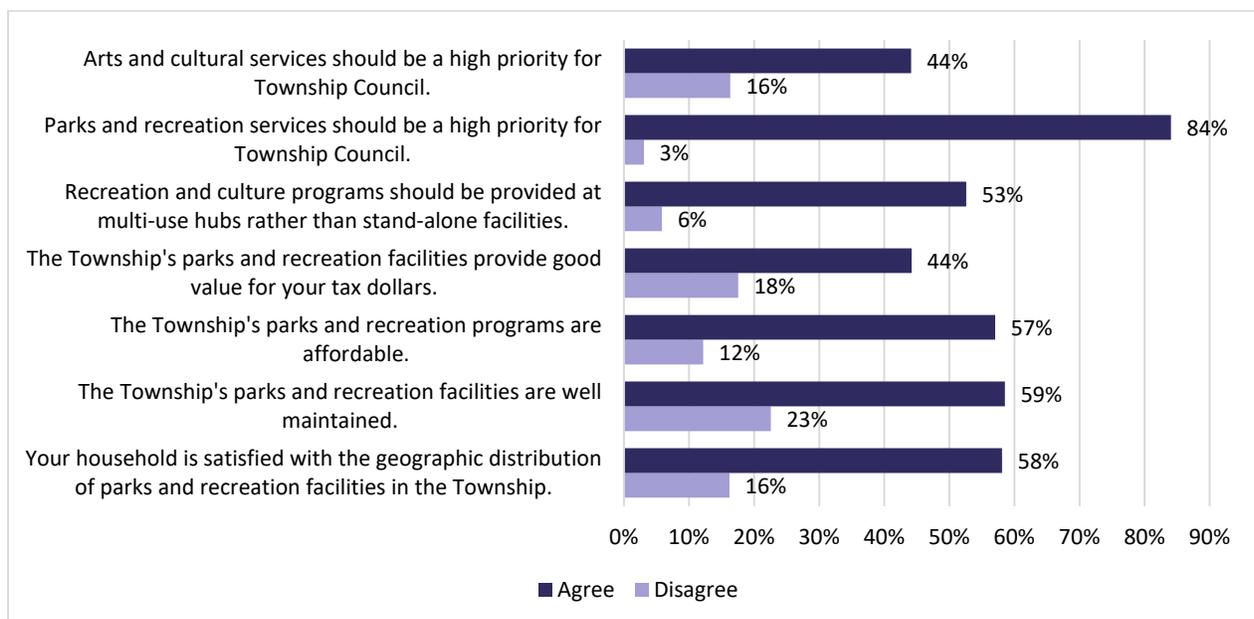
Activity (top ten)	Mount Forest	Activity (top ten)	Arthur
Space for youth activities	88%	Space for youth activities	88%
Indoor pools	87%	Nature trails	84%
Splash pads	84%	Playgrounds	83%
Playgrounds	83%	Splash pads	82%
Nature trails	79%	Outdoor ice rinks	79%
Space for seniors activities	78%	Space for seniors activities	79%
Outdoor pools	77%	Outdoor pools	76%
Outdoor ice rinks	74%	Arenas	72%
Arenas	72%	Acquisition of parks and open space	71%
Baseball or softball diamonds	72%	Skateboard parks	71%

## Opinions

Respondents were then asked about their levels of agreement with statements regarding specific parks and recreation topics in the Township. Notable findings include:

- 84% agree that Parks and recreation services should be a high priority for Township Council.
- 59% agree that the Township's parks and recreation facilities are well maintained; however, 23% disagree (the highest degree of disagreement to any statements).
- 58% are satisfied with the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities in the Township.
- 57% agree that the Township's parks and recreation programs are affordable.
- 53% agree recreation and culture programs should be provided at multi-use hubs rather than stand-alone facilities.
- 44% agree that the Township's parks and recreation facilities provide good value for your tax dollars.
- 44% agree that arts and cultural services should be a high priority for Township Council.

**Figure 15: Respondent Level of Agreement with Statements Regarding Parks and Recreation in Wellington North (n= 318)**



When asked if they were “satisfied with the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities in the Township”, Arthur respondents were more likely to disagree (30%) than Mount Forest respondents (7%).

When asked if “arts and cultural services should be a high priority for Township Council”, Arthur respondents were more likely to disagree (25%) than Mount Forest respondents (8%). 68% of Mount Forest respondents indicated that arts and culture facilities such as theatres, galleries and museums are important to their household, while only 50% of Arthur respondents felt the same.



# Section 4.0 Strategic Framework

This section identifies the vision statement and guiding principles that guide the development and implementation of the Master Plan's recommendations, as well as future decision-making relating to recreation, parks and culture services and facilities for the Township of Wellington North.

## 4.1 Framework for Recreation in Canada

In 2015, the Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015) was developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association together with provincial/territorial Parks and Recreation Associations, and Provincial/Territorial Governments. The Framework supports coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related sectors in Canada. Its aim is to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and natural environments. The goals and related actions of the Framework should be considered by the Township of Wellington North in the establishment of its strategic actions and decision-making related to recreation, parks and cultural services.

Specifically, the Framework for Recreation in Canada:

- Presents a renewed definition of recreation and explores the challenges and benefits of recreation today;
- Provides the rationale for investing in an evolved recreation strategy and describes the need for collaboration with other initiatives in a variety of sectors; and
- Describes a new vision for recreation in Canada and suggests common ways of thinking about the renewal of recreation based on clear goals and underlying values and principles.

The goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada are listed below:

- **Active Living:** Foster active living through physical recreation.
- **Inclusion and Access:** Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.
- **Connecting People and Nature:** Help people connect to nature through recreation.
- **Supportive Environments:** Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.
- **Recreation Capacity:** Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

## 4.2 A Vision for Wellington North

A 'vision' is an inspiring statement describing an ideal future state. Setting a vision for the Township in the delivery of recreation services is the initial step in setting a strategic path forward. A vision statement depicts how the Township wants to be viewed in the future and compels Council, staff and residents to work together to achieve the vision over time.

The vision set out in the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan 2015-19 exemplifies the path forward for the corporation as a whole: "The Township of Wellington North will continually strive to provide the best service(s) possible, within the available resource base, with a focus on proactively identifying and meeting key community needs, investing in our team, and communicating broadly with property owners, residents, employees and visitors."

To guide the development of a vision for the Recreation Master Plan, a visioning exercise was undertaken with the Master Plan Steering Committee. The Committee felt that positioning recreation

services as a defining aspect of the Township's quality of life and ensuring affordability were the two most important objectives for the Master Plan. In addition, they wish to ensure that an emphasis is placed on engaging people of all ages and abilities, as well as working in partnership with others.

The following vision statement will guide the development and implementation of this Master Plan:

**Ensuring affordable, inclusive and high quality recreation,  
parks and cultural opportunities through effective  
communication and combined community efforts.**

Over time, this vision will allow the needs of all residents to be considered and a wide variety of individual and community goals to be achieved.

### **4.3 Guiding Principles for Wellington North**

The Master Plan's development and implementation are guided by a series of principles that reflect the goals, values and aspirations articulated by the Township and community at large. The principles are also aligned with several foundational documents, including the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan and the Framework for Recreation in Canada. Together, the principles articulate the core beliefs, values and overall directions that the Township and its partners should strive to achieve over time.

#### **1. Opportunities for All**

Foster community and individual wellbeing through accessible and inclusive leisure opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

#### **2. Meaningful Engagement & Communication**

Effectively share information and involve residents in decisions impacting their community.

#### **3. Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals**

Engage and support volunteers and community partners in the coordinated delivery of initiatives that enhance public access to needed services and facilities.

#### **4. Responsive Facilities, Parks & Trails**

Provide a range of thoughtfully-designed amenities that respond to demonstrated needs, with a view toward maximizing public access, utilization and sustainability.

#### **5. Customer-Focused Services**

Demonstrate accountability by upholding consistently high standards in customer service, programs and policies, and maintenance practices.

#### **6. Commitment Toward Financial Sustainability**

Provide value through the efficient use of resources, balanced application of user fees, integrated decision-making and pursuit of non-municipal funding sources.



## Section 5.0 Service Delivery Assessment

This section of the Master Plan identifies current strengths in the Township's service delivery model, in addition to areas that could be improved through the adjustment of management practices, policies and operating techniques.

## 5.1 Township Role

In terms of parks and recreation services, the primary role of the Township of Wellington North is to provide facilities that serve a wide range of community interests, such as arenas, halls, sports fields and playgrounds. In some cases, this role is supplemented by other providers such as schools and community organizations. The Township manages and maintains these parks and facilities and administers their use by others through rentals. In only a small number of cases – such as aquatics – does the Township directly deliver programming. In Wellington North, program delivery is a core function of volunteers (e.g., minor sports, special events, etc.), public agencies (e.g., Community Education, etc.) and the private sector (e.g., fitness, etc.).

The success of the Township's recreation system is directly related to the Township's ability to work in partnership with the community to provide residents and visitors with high quality programs, facilities and events. Through effective partnerships with local non-for-profit groups and other sectors, the Township can concentrate on its current role as a provider of parks and facilities while benefitting from the expertise of volunteers and organizations.

The current service delivery model is dependent upon effective collaboration between all stakeholders, including sports associations, service clubs, community organizations, schools, conservation authorities and others. However, the Township's Parks and Recreation Department has not had a strong community development mandate in the past, working proactively with some groups but reactively with others. To maximize community resources and to ensure that priorities are aligned, the Township will need to take on a more pronounced and defined role in community development, facilitation and coordination. As the community grows and expectations rise, this is the next step in the Township's evolution.

To truly act as a facilitator of services, the Township must solidify and strengthen its community development approach, recognizing the unique attributes of each community. This model relies on the support of volunteers and the community at large to continue to be the main providers of programming, while the Township fills gaps. This approach recognizes that the Township will not be the sole provider and facilitator of recreation programming and spaces and is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Lastly, as municipal operations become more sophisticated, it is important that the Township continue its efforts to formalize its approach to risk management and policy development. Unwritten policies and procedures can lead to an ad hoc approach that is not transparent or equitable to everyone. The Township should conduct a formal policy and procedure review at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.

The expanded role for the Township responds to the broad parks, recreation and cultural needs of the community. In activating this role, the following municipal service delivery responsibilities are proposed, which will require additional staff and/or staff training:

- Understanding local demographics, community issues, and emerging needs and trends;
- Ensuring that the Township’s parks, trails and facilities are available, safe, affordable, and meet the needs of residents and community organizations;
- Building and fostering relationships with community partners;
- Playing a supporting role to community organizations, partners and volunteer groups that are directly responsible for the delivery of programs and services;
- Encouraging parks, recreation and cultural opportunities that are inclusive of all groups, regardless of background, orientation and abilities;
- Advancing park and trail acquisition and development through parkland dedication and conveyance of land for pathways through the land development process;
- Ongoing staff training and development to provide exceptional customer service, compliance with legislative requirements, etc.; and
- Engaging the community in meaningful dialogue through planning, decision-making and service delivery processes.

## Recommendations

1. Adopt a **municipal service delivery role** that reflects the Master Plan’s guiding principles, with a primary focus on providing and maintaining core municipal assets, coordinating community-wide events and facilitating programming through a community development approach.
2. Review **policies and procedures** at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.

## 5.2 Community Development and Volunteers

As noted in the previous section, it is envisioned that the Township will evolve to take on a greater role in facilitating and fostering collaborations in the delivery of high quality parks and recreation services. Part of this requires the Township to implement a community development approach that builds the capacity of volunteers and local service providers to facilitate the delivery of responsive and sustainable programs.

Community development involves engaging and supporting local organizations so they may respond to the parks and recreation needs of their community. In Wellington North, this largely consists of service clubs, sports associations and volunteers, along with all the resources (e.g. fundraising capability, knowledge, skills, etc.) that they possess.

By emphasizing collaboration and cooperation, local expertise and assets can be optimized. For example, this community development role involves understanding the leisure needs of the community and mobilizing staff, volunteers and other service providers to collectively respond to these needs. If done effectively, this approach will encourage organizations and volunteers to grow to a point where they can function with minimal support from external agencies.

Examples of facilitating community development may include:

- Continuing to support organizing committees in the provision of special events;
- Helping groups to generate awareness of their services through marketing/ promotion efforts;
- Assisting local groups to maintain their services through access to grant programs;
- Assisting groups with volunteer recruitment, training and succession planning;
- Upgrading municipal parks and facilities through shared capital investment; and
- Facilitating collaborative arrangements to provide programs and access to parks and facilities.

The Township's community development role should be supported by guidelines that identify responsibilities of various parties. Part of this is already in place through the Township's Community Development Fund, which identifies how the municipality will participate in proponent-led events and capital projects. Full implementation and reporting on the effectiveness of the Community Development Fund over time is recommended.

Community development requires a continued reliance on the volunteer sector for program delivery. The Master Plan's public and stakeholder engagement process provided feedback as to the level of support required by various user groups and volunteers. For example, many of the Township's service clubs are very active, but there are concerns with aging and declining memberships. Should volunteer involvement decline in Wellington North, residents will look to the Township to assume many of these responsibilities, so it is in the Township's best interest to provide support where it can.

The Township's Municipal Cultural Plan also recommended strengthening Wellington North's support for volunteers and that the Township review their internal approach on how they engage and interact with volunteers. Additional support and volunteer recognition will be required to address these concerns.

Priority should be placed on the recruitment, selection, training, supervision and recognition of volunteers. It is recommended that the Township – in concert with its community partners – leverage existing volunteer information networks and explore options for enhancement. For example, the local Chambers of Commerce should be engaged as they have online volunteer tools and related resources.

Recognition of the achievements and efforts of volunteers is also important as it can serve as incentive for involvement as well as aid in the retention of existing volunteers. Many municipalities and organizations host annual breakfasts, banquets, networking events, etc. to show their appreciation for volunteers, along with a public listing of names and achievements. Recognition will help the Township to ensure that volunteers are respected and their commitment is rewarded.

## Recommendations

3. Employ a **community development approach** to service delivery. The Township should focus on building capacity within local organizations and becoming involved in the direct provision of targeted services only where suitable community partners do not exist.
4. Collect **registration data** annually from all organizations that use Township parks and facilities and **monitor facility utilization** to assist in tracking trends, changing demands and allocation.
5. Create a **volunteer recognition and awards program** to celebrate outstanding achievements and contributions to recreation services in the Township, and lend support to volunteer information networks where possible.

### 5.3 Programming and Events

The Township of Wellington North currently offers a limited suite of programming, with a focus on promoting basic skill development and maximizing municipal facilities:

- Ice Skating (public skating, parent and tot skating, etc.)
- Swimming (public swim, family swim, aquafit, lessons, etc.)

There are a host of other providers in the Township, as documented throughout this Master Plan. Notable providers include the Wellington County Library and Continuing Education. The latter offers a wide range of courses out of schools in Mount Forest and Arthur. The Continuing Education courses are very similar to those that are directly provided by larger municipalities, such as sports (e.g., pickleball, badminton, curling, basketball, etc.), fitness and dance, arts and crafts, computers, food prep, babysitter training, CPR and first aid training, language classes and special interest courses.

Other non-profit groups and private organizations providing valued community programming include (but are not limited to) minor and adult sports, Canadian Centre for Activity & Aging, Ontario Early Years, churches, clubs and more. The Township offered summer camps for children in the past, but these are now delivered largely by local churches.

A table illustrating the local program and service providers in Wellington North, along with the primary markets they serve and programs/services provided is shown on the following page.

There are a number of interesting findings related to programming from the online survey. Special events are a popular local activity, with 74% of online survey respondents indicating participation in the past twelve months. Trail walking, swimming, ice sports, baseball and fitness were also among the most popular activities. The survey found that a lack of desired facilities or programs was the most common barrier to participation.

Requests for several new or enhanced programs were received through the Master Plan's public consultation program, including:

- fitness activities
- gymnastics
- March Break and summer camps
- performing arts (e.g., dance, music, drama)
- activities for teens (see Section 3.4 for additional ideas from local youth); more than one-half (54%) of respondents were not satisfied with parks and recreation opportunities for teens – the Township's Youth Action Council is working to enhance programming for teens
- seniors' programming, including seniors mentoring youth; it is noted that there is no one group that coordinates seniors' activities in Mount Forest, which may be an opportunity given the aging profile of this community
- animation of parks and year-round use of parks, including water-based activities in the Saugeen River

Table 13: A Sampling of Program and Service Providers in Wellington North

SECTOR	ORGANIZATION	PRIMARY MARKETS						PROGRAMS & SERVICES					
		Preschool	Children	Youth	Adults	Older Adults	Persons with Disabilities	Sports	Other Recreation	Social & Leisure	Arts & Culture	Community / Event-based	Special Interest
Public & Quasi-Public	<b>Township of Wellington North</b> <i>(e.g. Mount Forest and District Sports Complex, Arthur Pool, etc.)</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
	<b>Wellington County Library</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x				x		x
	<b>Mount Forest Family Health Team</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x						
	<b>Continuing Education</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x
	<b>Grand River Conservation Authority</b>		x	x	x				x				
	<b>School Boards</b>		x	x				x	x		x		
Not-for-Profit & Volunteer	<b>Service Clubs</b> <i>(e.g. Optimists, Lions, Athletic Associations, etc.)</i>	x	x	x					x	x			x
	<b>Community Service Organizations</b> <i>(e.g. Arthur Horticultural Society, Mount Forest Agricultural Society, Ontario Early Years, Happy Healthy Families, etc.)</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
	<b>Minor Sports Associations</b> <i>(e.g. Arthur Minor Ball, Mount Forest &amp; District Soccer Club, etc.)</i>		x	x				x	x				
	<b>Arts &amp; Cultural Associations</b> <i>(e.g. Arthur and Area Historical Society, Mount Forest &amp; District Arts Council, etc.)</i>			x	x	x				x	x		
	<b>Other Recreational Associations</b> <i>(e.g. Curling Clubs, Senior's Group, Shuffleboard, etc.)</i>		x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x
	<b>Special Events</b> <i>(e.g. Optimist Canada Day Weekend, Mount Forest Fireworks, etc.)</i>	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Private	<b>Fitness Clubs</b> <i>(e.g. Saugeen Fitness &amp; Spa, VMax Fitness Mount Forest, etc.)</i>		x	x	x	x			x				
	<b>Other (for-profit) Recreational Enterprises</b> <i>(e.g. Arthur Goju Karate Dojo, etc.)</i>		x	x	x	x			x				

As community expectations increase, particularly as new residents move to the area, enhanced programming and events may be required. Many new residents have lived in larger communities that have a greater range and sophistication of services and programs. This expectation gap is particularly evident in the areas of program delivery. To address one aspect of program delivery, the Municipal Cultural Plan recommended the strengthening of festivals and events through cross-promotion and collective marketing efforts, and the establishment of a new ‘signature’ festival or event – these and other initiatives are being pursued through the Cultural Roundtable.

### Recommendations

6. Work with community organizations (e.g., Youth Action Council, etc.) to **maximize existing facilities through no to low-cost informal, unstructured activities and inclusive programming** for children, teens and seniors.
7. Assess the viability of offering **March Break and/or summer camps** for children.
8. Support and seek opportunities to **enhance community events** that promote social cohesion, community pride and increase awareness of local traditions and talents, including initiatives that animate parks and open spaces (e.g., concerts and plays, outdoor fitness, nature appreciation, etc.).
9. Encourage greater **coordination and expansion of seniors’ activities** in Mount Forest.
10. Maintain and publicly promote an **inventory of local recreation and culture programs and events** through the Leisure Calendar and other vehicles.

## 5.4 Partnerships and Working with Others

Partnerships are critical to the effective delivery of recreation services and efficient use of tax dollars. The Township has recognized this through several guiding documents. For example, the exploration of strategic partnerships was identified as a priority by the Township in its 2015 Corporate Strategic Plan.

The Township occasionally works with various partners to ensure that residents have access to services that are beyond its scope, such as the Wellington County Library, Continuing Education, school boards, advisory committees, volunteer groups (such as sports associations, service clubs, special interest clubs, etc.) and private businesses. The Township also has a Recreation Service Agreement (consisting of a capital contribution and ongoing operating funds) with Southgate Township for access to “ice oriented activities” at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex, which opened in 2008.

It can be anticipated that additional partnership opportunities will be presented throughout the life of this Master Plan. Depending on the scope and nature of the partnership, the Township’s Community Development Fund and criteria for community-initiated projects may provide effective direction and role clarity. As Wellington North enhances its role in community coordination, Township-initiated partnerships will become more common. This will require a more proactive approach and a willingness to work with others. One example recommended in the Community Growth Plan is increased coordination with regional tourism interests, such as Guelph-Wellington tourism and RT04.

### Recommendations

11. Seek **strategic partnerships** that are consistent with the Township’s objective of accessing additional resources when pursuing projects that respond to demonstrated needs.

## 5.5 Communications

Spreading the word to all residents in a community as dispersed as Wellington North can be difficult, but the Township and others have made considerable attempts to do so, as guided by the Township's Communications Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the Leisure Calendar that is mailed to all households once a year, a recently updated municipal website and an expanded social media presence (which helped to raise the profile of the Master Plan's online survey). The development of a consistent "Brand and Identity" was also identified as a priority by the Township in its 2015 Corporate Strategic Plan – the Township's "Simply Explore" website ([www.simplyexplore.ca](http://www.simplyexplore.ca)) is the product of the cultural mapping exercise and is an excellent resource for community information.

The Township must continue to ensure that consistent and accurate messages are delivered to the community in formats that are as accessible to as many residents as possible. While the Township should be praised for its efforts in enhancing communication, there is always more that can be done. For example, stakeholders suggested additional updates to and promotion of the Township's online calendar. The Municipal Cultural Plan also recommended strengthening promotion and marketing through options such as print materials, brochure swaps and displays, and community radio.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for enhanced communication with the Township and other organizations to increase awareness of capital projects, policy changes and local initiatives. Open communication between all parties will ensure that issues, ideas, concerns, suggestions and needs are voiced and addressed. To activate the Township's facilitation role, it is recommended that regular forums be held with local organizations and the public to collectively discuss issues and opportunities related to recreational service delivery, community needs, marketing and communication. This action is supported by the Municipal Cultural Plan, which recommended networking events like those held by the Chambers of Commerce, but specific to the creative cultural sector.

### Recommendations

12. Promote local programs, events and spaces by **working collaboratively with community organizations** (e.g., schools, service clubs, community groups, sports associations, public library, etc.).
13. Continue to distribute the annual **Leisure Calendar** and seek opportunities to improve the Township's **online community calendar**.
14. Hold **regular forums** with community groups, organizations and the public to provide the ability to network and discuss issues and opportunities related to recreational service delivery, community needs, marketing, promotion and communication.

## 5.6 Funding and Fiscal Responsibility

As is traditional for community services, there is a subsidized element to parks and recreation services. To ensure affordability for both park/facility users and taxpayers, the Township must continue to work to ensure long-term financial sustainability through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate application of user fees and the securement of external funding (e.g., fundraising, grants, donations, etc.). To achieve this, the Township has historically used a wide range of funding tools, from debentures (e.g., Mount Forest & District Sports Complex) to development

charges (e.g., new parks) to fundraising (e.g., Arthur splash pad). The balanced and rationalized use of a variety of funding tools must continue to be a priority.

From a financial perspective, the preparation of a Master Plan helps to identify community needs and ensure that the Township is “grant-ready”. As recommended by the Community Growth Plan, growth-related capital projects should also be considered in the establishment of service levels and calculation of development charges.

Service clubs and other community organizations in Wellington North also have a long history of contributing funding towards capital projects, such as playgrounds, pools and more. The Township has been supportive of fundraising efforts and considers this to be a necessary requirement for new capital projects. To support these community efforts, the Township recently established a Community Development Fund that provides municipal grant funding that enables local non-profit community groups and organizations to plan, develop and implement community development-based projects and events. The underlying policy provides clarity on commitments and expectations of the Township and eligible community organizations. Funding is available to organizations through a competitive process, with an annual amount approved by Council. Council evaluates the applications based on the following measures:

- Professional standards
- Fiscal and overall accountability (a financial commitment from the applicant of at least 50% toward the entire project costs is required)
- Administrative accountability
- Economic impact
- Community service and participation
- Responsiveness to existing community need
- Degree of accessibility
- Level of risk to the Township-financial and otherwise

The Township’s criteria are fair and transparent and represent a sound approach to business planning. Moving forward, the Master Plan may be used as a resource in determining if a proposal serves a clearly identified community need that is not currently adequately addressed.

While fundraising is often associated with new and enhanced levels of service, municipal taxes are used to address a greater portion of the maintenance and renewal of facilities in Wellington North. This is notable because the Township’s parks and recreation infrastructure is aging and will require increased capital investment into the future. To ensure that Council is aware of the capital and operating cost implications, business plans should be developed for major projects, including consideration to alternate funding sources.

User fees and rental rates are commonly used to ensure that a portion of the cost to deliver services is borne by the individual or organization taking part. The Township of Wellington North has standardized its fees across all areas of the municipality, undertakes regular reviews and phases in increases over multiple years. The Township relies largely on past pricing levels and regional benchmarking to set its rates and fees. With some operating costs increasing faster than inflation, the Township may wish to adopt some pricing strategies linked to cost recovery targets to ensure that changing cost factors are properly shared by all parties. Regular reviews of the Township’s fees and charges are recommended, along with pricing categories and policies to ensure that they respond to the unique characteristics of facility users.

## Recommendations

15. Use the Recreation Master Plan as a resource in developing the Township's **annual budget, long-term capital forecast and Development Charges Background Study**.
16. Use the Township's **Community Development Fund** to guide municipal involvement and fundraising requirements for community-initiated projects.
17. Continue to seek **alternative funding sources** (e.g., fundraising, cost sharing agreements, sponsorships, grants, etc.) to address outstanding capital and operating requirements. The full implementation of this Plan may require increases to the Township's budget if funding cannot be offset by other sources.
18. Ensure that parks and recreation infrastructure is properly considered through the Township's **asset management planning**. Advance planning is required for major capital projects.
19. Update **rates and fees** (including categories and associated policies) on a regular basis to provide a reasonable balance between true costs and public benefits.

## 5.7 Staffing

Recreation Departments are at their best when they are working proactively to address community needs. However, residents and stakeholders have noted that the Township's current structure is focused largely on park and facility maintenance – it does not place sufficient emphasis on the customer service role that is necessary to activate the community development model recommended in this Master Plan.

Several stakeholders also expressed concern regarding the Township's current staffing levels and responsibilities. A key contact that can reliably be reached to respond to operational concerns was requested. Stakeholders are also seeking enhanced facility maintenance and accountability from the Township. While some felt that this is shaped by the Township's reliance on part-time staff, meaningful action toward instilling a customer-focused mandate can be effective in addressing these concerns and needs to be made a priority. A modified staffing structure that is designed to maximize leadership, coordination, accountability and transparency is recommended. Greater attention should be paid to proactive planning, community development and coordination, partnership development, facility maximization and cross-departmental coordination.

The Township's Recreation Department is currently being restructured to support the human resources plan identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan. The current staff complement consists of a facility manager and full-time facility operator in both Arthur and Mount Forest, an administrative assistant (shared with Building Services), part-time operators/park maintenance workers (including seasonal students), concession staff (coordinator and students), pool supervisor, and head guards and lifeguards at each pool. The Recreation Director role was recently vacated and a Director of Operations position has been developed through a restructuring initiative; the Director of Operations will assume the Recreation portfolio.

Based on the input that was received through this Recreation Master Plan, as well as successful models in similar communities, it is recommended that the Township consider the creation of a full-time Community Recreation Coordinator position that would report to and work alongside parks and

recreation staff. The Community Recreation Coordinator would be expected to assume many customer-service and operational roles such as (but not limited to) the following:

- Coordinate and maximize usage of the Township's recreation, parks and culture facilities;
- Develop and implement citizen engagement, promotion and outreach tools;
- Facilitate volunteer development opportunities within the sector;
- Ensure effective communication amongst service providers and community groups;
- Assist with the coordination and marketing of special events and community initiatives;
- Assist in the development of policies and procedures;
- Regularly maintain and update the Township's recreation, parks and culture services calendar and database;
- Provide support to groups seeking grant funding for initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles and effective asset management; and
- Assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Recreation Master Plan.

A strong link between the Community Recreation Coordinator and the Township's Economic Development Officer is also required, as both would frequently communicate with similar organizations. The Municipal Cultural Plan identified a need to strengthen linkages between cultural and recreational opportunities, with the goal of leveraging community assets and activities.

With the Township having several senior staff qualifying for retirement, succession planning for the future is of utmost importance. Furthermore, as the community grows, the Township must adapt to servicing a larger population. This may trigger the need for additional staffing to care for new facilities and administer services. It is recommended that the Township establish a succession plan to proactively plan for retirements and the transition of employees into new roles.

Community expectations are rising and quality services are a must. To this end, it is imperative that Township staff are well trained and equipped with the required skills to carry out actions with competence. A staff development and training plan is not in place currently and is a requirement to ensure that services are delivered by a qualified and high performing staff team. In addition, training sessions with all staff (both full and part-time) should be prefaced with a review of the mandate, planning priorities and customer service standards of the Department to ensure that staff understand their role in delivering high quality services. The Township should also consistently invest in professional development opportunities, ranging from on-the-job training, seminars, symposiums and conferences, etc. as a means to improve internal skill sets and capabilities and to provide a supportive professional network.

## Recommendations

20. Create a **Community Recreation Coordinator** position to act as a liaison between parks and recreation stakeholders and the Township, enhance communication and implement the Recreation Master Plan.
21. Regularly **assess the staff complement** in relation to current and projected service levels, including a review of the use of part-time staff.
22. Develop a **succession plan** to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.
23. Develop a **staff training and development plan** to articulate the skills and competencies needed to deliver on the Departmental objectives and set out an annual training program.

## 5.8 Governance / Committee Structure

The Township has a **Recreation & Culture Committee** that acts as an advisory committee to the Recreation Department, particularly with regard to budget preparation and policy development. The Committee consists of Township staff, three Wellington North Council members and one Council member from the Township of Southgate. The Committee meets approximately every two months on weekday mornings.

In addition, the Township has established a **Cultural Roundtable** that serves as an advisory committee to Council on matters related to cultural development. The establishment of this Roundtable – which is made up of various individuals from the community with interests and expertise relevant to cultural actions – was a key recommendation of the Municipal Cultural Plan.

There are also **trails committees** in both Mount Forest and Arthur, as well as **ad hoc committees** that are struck from time to time to address specific community projects and initiatives such as the development of splash pads, skateboard parks, etc.

Stakeholders identified challenges with the current governance structure in Wellington North. Some questioned the accessibility of the Recreation & Culture Committee given its infrequent meeting schedule and lack of community representation. Others identified that the Recreation & Culture Committee and Cultural Roundtable both have mandates that involve culture.

The Recreation & Culture Committee – as it is currently constructed – is not effective. Best practices from other similarly-sized communities involve committees that:

- serve as an advisory body to Council (no delegated authority) by providing advice, information and recommendations on matters related to parks and recreation, including policy development, community partnerships, programming, and capital matters referred to the Committee by Council from time to time (recommendations with budget, staffing or legislative implications must first be considered by staff and/or Council);
- actively promote, encourage and support the use of local parks and recreation assets, as well as support the Recreation Master Plan's guiding principles and recommendations;
- provide a forum for citizens to raise concerns or ideas regarding parks and recreation, as well as actively engaging community groups in advocacy, coordination and collaborations;
- have an established mandate or terms of reference to guide their role and selection of members (including code of conduct policies);
- include seven to nine members, comprised of approximately five to seven public/lay representatives (appointed by Council), up to two Council representatives, and a staff representative (non-voting);
- generally meet monthly (eight to ten times a year) at a time that is publicly acceptable, with formal agendas and minutes posted online;
- serve the entire municipality, with terms of two to four years;
- establish sub-committees where necessary to address project-specific items; and
- report annually to Council on their accomplishments and future work plans.

It is recommended that the Township's Recreation & Culture Committee be formalized as an advisory body of Council. A terms of reference is required to guide the reconstitution of the committee, which should include community representation, improve transparency and convenience, and generally elevate the profile of the Committee as an advisory-body for the Township and community. Lay appointees must include a cross-section of residents that demonstrate a strong commitment to the terms of reference; ideal candidates would possess relevant technical and professional expertise as well as strong advocacy, communication and organizational skills.

This Master Plan provides an excellent opportunity to refocus the Committee and engage them in meaningful dialogue and action. The setting of an annual work plan should also be considered to provide guidance on short-term priorities.

### Recommendations

24. **Reconstitute the Recreation & Culture Committee** as an advisory body of Council. Develop a terms of reference that confirms the Committee's mandate and guides the selection of members, which should include lay appointees from across the Township. Reference should be made to the best practices identified in the Recreation Master Plan.
25. Ensure **alignment between the Recreation Master Plan and Municipal Cultural Plan** through the ongoing work of the Wellington North Cultural Roundtable and Recreation & Culture Committee.



## Section 6.0 Facility Assessment

This section examines the current state of the Township’s recreation and parks facilities, with recommendations for improvement and growth-related requirements.

Needs are assessed using a blend of factors, including the Township’s historic rate of provision, industry standards, public input, demographics and growth, and local participation and utilization factors. In many cases, statements of need are expressed through the use of Township-specific provision targets (e.g., one facility per “x” population/participants) and/or geographic distribution (e.g., “x” metre service radius). Although the focus of this Master Plan is the entire Township, the analysis also examines the provision of local facilities on a community-basis, where appropriate.

It is important to note that, given the size and composition of Wellington North, it is not feasible nor realistic for the Township to provide the same complement of facilities and services typically offered in large urban communities. The type of facility and the level of competition will affect catchment areas, with people generally being more likely to travel greater distances to participate in unique and elite-level activities. The Township’s small town charm and affordability are two of the key aspects that residents value, and these factors must continue to be balanced against new levels of service.

## 6.1 Overview of Facility Inventory

The following table contains a summary of existing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Township of Wellington North. Mapping of the parks system and key facility locations is provided in **Appendix B**.

**Table 14: Municipal Inventory of Parks and Recreation Facilities**

Facility	Supply	Location(s)
<b>Arenas (Ice Pads)</b>	2	Arthur & Area Community Centre, Mount Forest & District Sports Complex; <u>note</u> : the former Mount Forest Arena is leased to a church and is no longer used for ice activities
<b>Halls &amp; Multi-Purpose Space</b>	2 Halls, 5 Multi-use Rooms	<u>Halls</u> : Arthur Lower Hall, Mount Forest Community Hall <u>Multi-use &amp; Meeting Rooms</u> : Arthur Upper Hall, Mount Forest Lower and Upper Leisure Halls (2), Mount Forest Plume Room, Mount Forest Meeting Room
<b>Seniors Centres</b>	1	Arthur Seniors Centre (board-run)
<b>Outdoor Pools</b>	2	Arthur Pool, Mount Forest Pool
<b>Splash Pads</b>	1	Arthur Pool
<b>Playgrounds</b>	8	Arthur Opt-Mrs Playground, Arthur Lions Park, Birmingham Street Lions Park, Campbell deVore Park, Conn Park, Lions Roy Grant Pool Park, Murphy Park, Bill Moody Lions Playground
<b>Ball Diamonds</b>	5	Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park (2), Mount Forest Fairgrounds (2), Campbell deVore Park – all lit
<b>Soccer Fields</b>	4	Campbell deVore Park (1 full size lit, 1 intermediate), King Street Fairgrounds Park (2 minis); <u>note</u> : school fields are used in Arthur
<b>Skateboard Parks</b>	1	Campbell deVore Park
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	1	Murphy Park (half court)
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	0	<u>note</u> : there are three multi-use courts at Wellington Heights SS
<b>Outdoor Rinks</b>	1	Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park (natural ice)
<b>Pavilions</b>	6	Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park, Campbell deVore Park, Conn Park, Damascus Community Centre, Murphy Park, Bill Moody Lions Playground <u>note</u> : some sites may contain more than one pavilion/shelter

Supplementing this inventory are a number of quasi-public and private venues that are used to varying degrees for recreational pursuits (but most are not under municipal agreement and may not be broadly accessible to the public), such as:

- **schools**, most of which include gymnasiums, classrooms and sports facilities (e.g., soccer, tennis, etc.)
- **public agencies** (e.g., other municipal properties, conservation authority, County forests, cemeteries, etc.)
- **churches**, including many with meeting rooms and some with halls and gymnasiums
- **residential communities** (e.g., retirement homes, etc.)
- **service clubs** (e.g., Legion, etc.)
- **private clubs** (e.g., golf courses, bowling, lawn bowling, fitness, karate, dance companies, campgrounds, etc.)

## 6.2 Arenas

### Current State

The Township currently has two (2) ice pads – one located at Mount Forest & District Sports Complex and one located at Arthur & Area Community Centre. Both are single pad arenas with attached halls and activity spaces. They are described as follows:

- Mount Forest & District Sports Complex: Opened in 2008, the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex contains an NHL sized ice pad (200' by 85'), walking track and numerous rooms for rental.
- Arthur & Area Community Centre: The Arthur & Area Community Centre contains a 185' by 85' ice pad with a large area for spectators. The arena is a regional hub for lacrosse in the summer.

There are many arenas in the broader region, several of which are believed to have available prime time ice. Further, there are two private curling clubs in Wellington North– the Arthur & Area Curling Club and the Mount Forest Curling Club (each with four sheets). The Township has no involvement with the curling facilities, though they are both co-located with parks.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 53% of survey respondents had one or more family members participated in hockey, ringette, figure skating or ice skating, while 17% indicated participation in both curling and lacrosse. 69% of survey respondents supported or strongly supported additional municipal investments in arenas, while 9% of respondents opposed or strongly opposed spending.

Declining registration was noted by minor hockey groups. Skating clubs are also dealing with fluctuating participation. Some groups indicated an interest in expanding their programs, including the addition of synchronized skating and three-on-three hockey in Arthur. Groups in Mount Forest also expressed a desire for additional prime time and shoulder season ice, while users in Arthur identified a number of capital improvements that should be considered by the Township to increase the longevity of the arena. Enhanced communication between user groups and Township staff for ice allocation, scheduling and concession hours was also suggested.

Ice sports have traditionally been popular pastimes for many generations in Canada. However, participation in minor hockey across Canada is slowly declining due to competing activities, rising participation costs, extended travel and safety concerns. Declining registration was also noted by Wellington North's two minor hockey organizations. This is being partially offset by increasing female registration and increasing ice time requests for competitive teams and skill development.

Compounding these trends, shoulder hours – such as early mornings, later afternoon and late evenings – are becoming more difficult to rent in many communities. Some municipalities are keeping arenas closed during the daytime to lower operational costs, while others are expanding daytime programming and drop-in skating. Arena closures are becoming more prominent due to declining usage and aging infrastructure, and some organizations are amalgamating to pool players and resources.

## Analysis

### Existing Arenas

The Arthur & Area Community Centre was built in 1977 and is now over 40 years old. Older facilities tend to be characterized by increasing capital repairs, rising operating costs and decreased user comfort. Arenas of this era were not built to today's standards and tend to have smaller ice surfaces, fewer and smaller change rooms, and a lack of multi-use spaces (e.g., dryland training, meeting rooms, walking tracks, etc.). These issues all apply to the Arthur arena to varying degrees.

Of immediate concern is Arthur arena's ice slab, which is original and is requires replacement – this should be a high priority for the Township in the short-term. A new slab also creates an opportunity to consider a “refresh” of the arena, including items such as dasher boards, flooring, change rooms/washrooms, etc. Larger change rooms, more storage and an indoor walking track were also requested by user groups; however, this would likely require an expansion project, the viability of which would need to be examined further. It. As discussed below, the community will likely continue to require one ice pad for the foreseeable future; therefore, is recommended that the Township place a high priority on extending the lifespan of the Arthur arena through strategic capital planning. A reassessment of arena needs and/or replacement strategies should occur as part of the next Master Plan Update.

The Mount Forest & District Sports Complex was built in 2008 and is an example of modern facility construction, with a large and open lobby, spacious change rooms and a variety of multi-use spaces (including a walking track). Suggestions for paving the parking lot were heard during the public consultation program, as well as reconsidering the walking track policy. From an operational standpoint, the Township has been experiencing ice quality issues during times of warmer weather, but is currently taking steps to address this, including additional training for part-time staff. This concern aside, this facility is poised to serve the Township well for decades to come.

Ice utilization and registration data were examined to create a profile of arena demand in the Township. The following table depicts ice utilization data for a typical week. The analysis shows that 81% of prime time ice is rented on a regular basis (along with 20% of non-prime time) between the two arenas. On average, there are approximately 20 prime time hours available each week across the two arenas. It should be noted that a 100% usage rate is not typically attainable due to scheduling and user requirements.

**Table 15: Ice Utilization at Wellington North Arenas, 2017**

Organization Type	Arthur Arena		Mount Forest Arena	
	Prime Time Hours	Non-Prime Time Hours	Prime Time Hours	Non-Prime Time Hours
Minor (e.g., minor hockey, figure skating)	37	0.5	46	6
Adult (e.g., rec hockey, shinny)	8	3.5	3	3.5
Public (Parent and Tot, Public Skate)	2.5	6.5	1.5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b>Total Hours Available</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Usage Rate</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Prime time hours (for the purpose of this Plan) are defined as M-F 5pm-10pm and S-S 7am-10pm.

Source: Township of Wellington North, 2017

Utilization at the arena in Mount Forest is stronger than the Arthur arena, where ice revenues have been declining. Use of weekday morning ice is not occurring on a regular basis, which would be a sign of an arena that is operating at capacity as these hours are increasingly difficult to rent.

### Future Demand

A market-specific provision target is used to determine ice pad requirements. Such a target is able to consider local participation trends, accepted standards of play, population growth, demographic factors and other inputs. A typical ice pad within a small community should be able to accommodate 400 to 450 youth users during prime-time hours (youth tend to receive priority during these hours), with the bulk of adult usage occurring during non-prime hours and Sunday mornings.

As shown in the following table, there are over 600 youth participants using the Township’s two arenas. This represents approximately 28% of youth ages 5 to 19 living in the Township, which is higher than rates typical of communities in Southwestern Ontario, but reflects the fact that there are some non-residents playing for local organizations (this percentage drops to 17% if Southgate residents are included).

**Table 16: Wellington North, Ice Sport Registration**

Organization	Primary Market	Registration (2017/18)
<b>Arthur</b>		
Arthur and Arena Skating Club	Youth	57
Arthur Minor Hockey	Youth	147
Arthur Saturday Rec Hockey	Adult	60
Shinny Hockey (6 groups) - estimated	Adult	180
<b>Subtotal – Arthur</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>444</b>
<b>Mount Forest</b>		
Mount Forest Minor Hockey	Youth	300
Skate Canada Mount Forest	Youth	20
Mount Forest Patriots	Youth	80
Wellington North Ringette	Adult	12
Shinny Hockey (5 groups) - estimated	Adult	150
<b>Subtotal – Mount Forest</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>562</b>
<b>Total – All</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,006</b>
<b>Total – Youth</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>Total – Adult</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>402</b>

Source: local user groups, 2017

**Table 17: Wellington North, Floor Sport Registration**

Organization	Primary Market	Registration (2017)
Arthur Minor Lacrosse	Youth	150
Arthur Women's Lacrosse	Adult	16
Wellington Roller Derby (Mount Forest)	Adult	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>180</b>

Source: local user groups, 2017

Even at the lower end of the typical range (one ice pad per 400 youth ice registrants), the Township's arenas have capacity to accommodate more usage, especially in Arthur. The Mount Forest arena is currently accommodating 400 youth users, suggesting that it is running at or near capacity during prime time (although that some organizations are renting ice time in the Town of Minto out of convenience, thus local demand may be slightly overstated).

**Table 18: Forecasted Demand for Municipal Arenas, 2018-2031**

	2018	2031*
Youth Participants (ages 5-19), based on 28% participation rate	604	760
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 ice pad per 400 registered youth participants</i>	
Required Ice Pads	1.5	1.9
Existing Ice Pads	2	2
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>

\* assumes that the youth population will grow at a slightly lower rate than the overall population

The Township's two arenas are projected to be sufficient to meet local demands for ice time until 2031. This finding assumes that ice sports will retain the same level of popularity amongst youth and that the regional supply of arenas will remain steady. Beyond 2031, the Township may begin to experience demand that it is unable to meet and a review of long-term ice needs should be initiated if this is the case.

As is currently the case, demand in Mount Forest will be higher than in Arthur due current needs and its higher growth rate. A closer examination of future demand in Mount Forest suggests the need for approximately 1.3 ice pads by 2031 (based on the recommended provision target, current participation rates and age-specific projections). This demand level is not sufficient to trigger the need for an additional ice pad. However, it will mean that local organizations will need to seek additional ice time outside of the Mount Forest area, possibly in Arthur or nearby communities that have surplus ice (e.g., Town of Minto, etc.). Any change in the regional supply of arenas may have an impact on local needs a should be monitored by the Township.

Further, an ice allocation policy should be developed to establish a fair and transparent process for allocating ice time to current and new/growing groups, including annual scheduling meetings with the groups. These policies are especially useful when ice time is in short supply as they create a process through which all groups share equally in the burden of accepting less ice time or hours outside of their preferred times.

It is also noted that the Township's arenas accommodate a variety of dry floor activities during the summer, such as lacrosse, roller derby, events, etc. The Arthur arena is particularly well used for lacrosse. Should the Arthur arena be closed for an extended period for repairs, efforts should be made

to minimize the impact on summer users. Opportunities to increase usage during the non-ice season should be also encouraged (e.g., pickleball, floor hockey, etc.), particularly in Mount Forest.

### Recommendations

26. Undertake a “refresh” of the arena component of the **Arthur & Area Community Centre**, including replacement of the ice slab and other lifecycle requirements.
27. Create an **ice allocation policy** to develop a fair and transparent process for allocating ice time based on registration and accepted standards of play. The policy should include a requirement for annual ice scheduling meetings.
28. Monitor ice usage, demand and the regional supply of arenas. Assess **long-term ice needs** (beyond 2031) and facility replacement strategies through the next Master Plan Update (or sooner if indications of accelerated demand or deteriorating condition).
29. Encourage **usage of arenas year-round**, including summer events, activities and floor sports planned by the Township, community partners and stakeholders.

## 6.3 Halls and Multi-Purpose Space

### Current State

The Township owns several facilities containing halls and multi-use spaces. Halls are used for a variety of activities, such as community events, dinners, blood clinics, card tournaments, bingo, craft shows, etc., while multi-use rooms are often used for meetings, fitness activities and smaller functions. This list includes:

- two (2) large halls, including facilities at the Arthur & Area Community Centre and Mount Forest & District Sports Complex;
- five (5) multi-use rooms, including the Upper Hall at the Arthur & Area Community Centre and three rooms at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex (Lower Leisure Hall, Upper Leisure Hall, Plume Room and Meeting Room);
- one (1) enclosed seasonal venue at Conn Park; and
- three (3) other sites that are leased to third-party providers, including the Arthur Senior Centre (board-run facility), Damascus Community Centre (board-run facility), and Victory Community Centre (former Mount Forest Arena that is leased to a church group).

Other multi-use and meeting spaces exist within civic facilities (e.g., public libraries, fire halls, Township Office, etc.), community facilities (e.g., schools, churches, etc.) and private facilities (e.g., Legion, curling clubs, golf courses, seniors housing, etc.).

There are no municipal gymnasiums – schools are relied on for many indoor sports activities – although some halls or arenas can be used for sports such as pickleball, soccer, baseball training, etc. Some area churches – including Mount Forest United Church and First Baptist Church – have large halls or gymnasiums that can accommodate active sports and community events.

## Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, households responding to the online survey indicated the following levels of participation in activities that may occasionally require halls or multi-use spaces:

- 74% attended special events;
- 39% participated in aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight-training; and
- 6% to 18% participated in age-specific programs.

More than one-half (54%) of survey respondents were not satisfied with parks and recreation opportunities for teens, while 34% were not satisfied with opportunities for seniors. In terms of additional investment, the online survey found the following:

- 88% supported additional spending on space for youth activities, ranking first out of twenty facility types;
- 80% supported additional spending on space for seniors' activities, ranking fifth out of twenty facility types;
- 64% supported additional spending on community halls, ranking thirteen out of twenty facility types.

More than half (52%) of survey respondents agreed that recreation and culture programs should be provided at multi-use hubs rather than stand-alone facilities (6% disagreed). Further, through an open-ended question about additional opportunities, fitness activities were one of the most requested items on the survey.

Contemporary community facility designs place an emphasis on multi-use spaces that can be used for a wide variety of activities, often in conjunction with other facility components that create a destination with broader appeal. The Mount Forest & District Sports Complex is an example where multiple components have been provided at one location to enhance customer convenience, economies of scale, and maintenance and management efficiencies.

## Analysis

The various halls and rooms at the Arthur & Area Community Centre and Mount Forest & District Sports Complex are multi-functional due to their many sizes and amenities, and their co-location with other spaces. The presence of multi-use spaces within Wellington North provides a great deal of community benefit and ensures that affordable and accessible venues are available. These spaces should continue to be maintained and outfitted to meet local needs (e.g., kitchens, technical systems, etc.), in partnership with the community.

Usage data for various Township halls and multi-use is shown in the following table. A comprehensive analysis of utilization at all area halls is not possible as operating responsibilities and bookkeeping practices differ for board-run facilities.

The Township's two large halls have a 17% usage rate (26% during prime time). Three of the Township's five multi-use and meeting rooms are regularly used and have a 12% usage rate (19% during prime time). The highest levels of use are associated with the Arthur Community Hall and the meeting room at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex. Overall, the Township's room usage rates are comparable to similar facilities in other municipalities, although there is capacity for greater use, including usage by older adults and seniors.

**Table 19: Weekly Hall & Multi-use Room Utilization in Wellington North (average), 2017**

Facility	Arthur Community Centre Lower Hall	Mount Forest Community Hall	Mount Forest Leisure Hall	Mount Forest Plume Room	Mount Forest Meeting Room
Prime Time Hours (51 hours)	17	10	4	5.5	19
Prime Time Utilization	33%	20%	8%	11%	37%
Non-Prime Time hours (40 hours)	3	1	0	1	2.5
Non-Prime Time Utilization	8%	3%	0%	3%	6%

Note: There are no regular rentals/usage of the Upper Hall at the Arthur Community Centre or the Upper Leisure Hall at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex.

Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

There is capacity to enhance hall and multi-use room utilization. Discussions with stakeholder groups did not reveal an immediate need for additional indoor activity space at the present time, but suggested that lower rental rates may encourage greater use of existing spaces (particularly for seniors during the daytime), as would Township-led programs. The Township should continue to explore opportunities to increase utilization of its community spaces and consider options for promoting them for a diverse and flexible range of uses. Extended availability for youth, seniors and service providers such as Continuing Education are among the many opportunities that should be pursued (see also Section 5.3 Programming and Events).

The Township owns but does not operate a number of other hall facilities, including the Arthur Seniors Centre, Damacus Community Centre and Victory Community Centre (former Mount Forest Arena). These facilities play an important role for particular segments within the Township, as they are well used by seniors, rural residents, and religious groups. The arrangements for each facility varies, but they are generally cost effective to operate as they rely on volunteer boards and make use of existing venues. Updated agreements and annual reporting for these properties will help to protect the Township’s interests and identify roles and responsibilities, particularly for capital maintenance.

While volunteer-run facilities can be community-responsive, difficult decisions must be made when major capital investment is required. This is currently the case with the Arthur Seniors Centre, which requires significant roof and brick repairs, in addition to barrier-free accessibility improvements. The group – which currently has 62 members – has recently been approached by the Township to consider relocation to the upper hall at the Arthur & Area Community Centre. Such a move has the potential to make better use of an under-utilized space, located within an accessible community hub, and should be explored further. The long-term viability of the Arthur Seniors Centre, Victory Community Church and other leased facilities should be carefully evaluated in consultation with the community, with consideration to long-term needs and a cost-benefit analysis.

## Recommendations

30. Encourage the **community use of schools** (e.g., gymnasiums) for active recreation and sports.
31. Maintain **management agreements and annual reporting requirements** to ensure that existing community-operated facilities remain financially viable and sustainable, well managed, safe and accessible, and responsive to local needs.

32. Support initiatives to **enhance access to existing facilities for the growing senior's population in Mount Forest**. Dedicated space is not recommended, rather opportunities to maximize existing facilities should be sought.
33. Further explore the potential to relocate the **Arthur Seniors' Centre** to the upper hall at the Arthur & Area Community Centre, with consideration to long-term needs and a cost-benefit analysis.

## 6.4 Arts and Culture Facilities

### Current State

Local history museums and archives are maintained by the volunteers of the Mount Forest Heritage Society and Arthur & Area Historical Society. The Township has also offered support to the restoration of the Lynes Blacksmith Shop in Kenilworth. There are no public arts galleries, museums or theatres in the Township.

Many parks and recreation facilities are used for community and special events, including the Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, Arthur Fall Fair, etc. The special events and festivals held in Wellington North all benefit from the Township's parks and recreation system that offers scenic, inspirational and supportive locations for arts and cultural activities.

In Wellington North, cultural activities typically take place in other types of venues such as community centres and sporting facilities. Other cultural spaces may include some of the area's churches and schools that provide space for smaller cultural groups and activities, such as community choirs and art classes. The Wellington County Library – with locations in Arthur and Mount Forest – also offers programs such as technology classes, reading groups, chess, writing, music and more.

As part of Wellington North's rural and urban character, three categories of cultural assets contribute to the Township's sense of place: natural heritage; cultural heritage; and festivals and events. Natural heritage assets (such as trails, parks, conservation areas and waterbodies) bring forward natural experiences for both residents and visitors. Local opportunities are offered through walking and birding trails, as well as the mix of heritage and culinary experiences. Cultural heritage assets (such as plaques and monuments, public art and cemeteries) celebrate the past efforts and stories. Murals, such as the Patriotic Mural in Arthur, pay tribute to the local heritage of being Canada's Most Patriotic Village. Community events and festivals bring entertainment and economic gains to local organizations and surrounding businesses. The Mount Forest Fireworks Festival is an important signature event in and has grown rapidly, becoming a Top 100 festival in Ontario for several years running.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 16% online survey respondents had at least one household member that participated in performing arts (though additional dance and music opportunities were a common request) and 14% in visual arts. Nearly one-half of survey respondents (49%) supported additional investment in arts and culture facilities, ranking nineteenth out of twenty facility types.

More than half (56%) of survey respondents indicated that arts and culture facilities are important to their household, with only 21% of respondents not being satisfied with local arts and culture facilities.

Four-fifths (44%) felt that arts and cultural services should be a high priority for Township Council, substantially less than the 84% that felt the same about parks and recreation services.

The public and stakeholder consultation program for this Master Plan did not yield substantial interest in additional arts and cultural initiatives, but requests were received for additional programming (e.g., dance, music, etc.) that could make use of existing halls and multi-use spaces.

## Analysis

The Township of Wellington North recognizes the importance of cultural planning as an essential economic development tool, including its role in attracting economic investment, supporting creative talent and boosting tourism. In 2013, the Township completed a **Municipal Cultural Plan** that provides a strategy for utilizing local cultural resources to grow the economy, to improve quality of life and to build and sustain a sense of community cohesion and pride. To support the thirty recommended actions, four goals were established:

- Goal 1 – Broaden Municipal Roles and Partnerships
- Goal 2 – Leverage Cultural Resources to Grow the Economy
- Goal 3 – Build a Shared Identity and Increase Collaboration
- Goal 4 – Increase the Vibrancy and Aesthetic Appeal of Downtowns

The Cultural Plan included a cultural mapping process that identified, recorded and classified the community's tangible and intangible cultural resources. This exercise identified a total of 62 cultural enterprises in 2013 (including culture-based businesses and not-for-profit cultural organizations) in Wellington North. Since the Plan was developed, the Township has established an interactive web-based cultural map for Wellington North ([www.simplyexplore.ca](http://www.simplyexplore.ca)). The Wellington North Cultural Roundtable should continue to implement, review, update and monitor the success of the Municipal Cultural Plan.

One recommendation from the Municipal Cultural Plan was to address the need for performance spaces, possibly through the adaptation of existing spaces. Further action on this recommendation requires an audit of existing spaces and consideration of purchasing portable/moveable performance stage and seating with assistance from fundraising. The Township may consider these actions if supported by tangible opportunities to host new or larger cultural activities and events. Park design may also consider the integration of amenities (e.g., amphitheatres, open space, electrical service, etc.) that may support non-programmed use, animation and locally-appropriate events.

## Recommendations

34. Evaluate opportunities to accommodate **arts and cultural activities and events** within the Township's parks and recreation system through features such as portable stages, amphitheatres and support amenities.

## 6.5 Pools and Splash Pads

### Current State

There are two municipal outdoor pools in Wellington North: the Mount Forest Lions Roy Grant Pool (built 1950s, expanded 1967); and the Arthur Community Outdoor Pool (built 2006). Both locations

offer swimming lessons, aquafit and recreational swimming opportunities from late June to Labour Day (weather permitting). A swim team also runs out of the Mount Forest pool.

A splash pad was added to the Arthur Community Centre site in 2017, which can be accessed free of charge.

## Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, over half (52%) of online survey respondents had at least one household member participate in recreational swimming, 41% in splash pad activities and 31% in instructional swimming. Approximately 40% of survey respondents have used the Mount Forest and/or Arthur outdoor pools in the past two years. The most common uses are recreational swimming, followed by swimming lessons.

Satisfaction levels are much lower for the Mount Forest pool than the Arthur pool, which is newer and includes a nearby splash pad. Three-quarters (76%) support additional municipal investment in outdoor pools, ranking seventh out of twenty facility types – a similar rate of support was found for an indoor pool. Over four-fifths (83%) of survey respondents support additional municipal investment in splash pads, ranking second out of twenty facility types.

Demand for a splash pad in Mount Forest, along with a new outdoor pool, were among the most supported items identified through the public consultation program. More than two-fifths (44%) of respondents stated that the Township should replace the Mount Forest Pool with both a new outdoor pool and splash pad – this option was supported by 61% of respondents living in the Mount Forest area. Suggestions were also received for the development of an indoor pool; however, there was also opposition due to the high costs of construction and operation.

Pools are some of the most sought-after amenities due to their role in life safety (e.g. swim to survive programs) and their ability to accommodate a wide range of users of varying interests, ages and abilities. While backyard pools can provide similar experiences, public pools offer a broad range of aquatic programs and recreational experiences. Despite these benefits, municipal pools are one of the most expensive recreational facilities to operate, which can be financially challenging for many communities. For this reason, indoor pools are seldom provided in small communities, while aging outdoor pools are increasingly being closed to avoid capital renewal costs.

Splash pads are becoming increasingly common park features, but need to be properly justified due to their cost. They tend to be free, drop-in facilities that appeal mostly to families with young children. They are also more cost effective to build and operate than outdoor pools as they do not require lifeguards, and also generally have longer operating seasons.

## Analysis

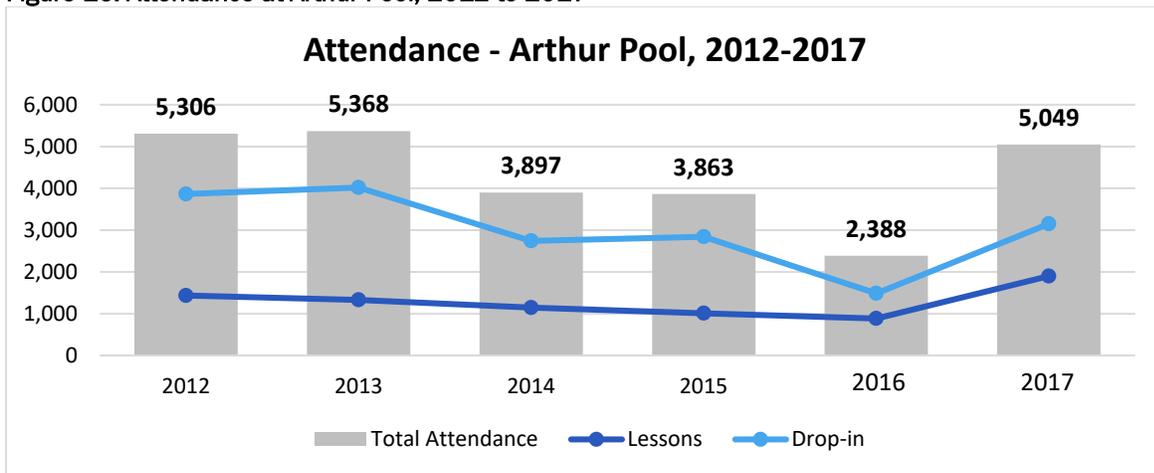
On average, each of the Township's outdoor pools typically attracts 5,000 to 7,500 visits per year and, from the public input received, appear to be well regarded facilities in the community. Visits to the Arthur Pool have been steady to declining (there has been a notable decline in lesson registration), while visits to the Mount Forest Pool have been steady to increasing (lesson registration has been growing), although there can be substantial fluctuation from year to the next due to the weather.

Table 20: Pool Utilization (Participants), 2012 to 2017

	Arthur Pool			Mount Forest Pool		
	2012	2017	Change	2012	2017	Change
<b>Registered Programs</b>						
Lesson Registrations	143	190	+47	150	313	+163
Number of Swims (x10)	1,430	1,900	+470	1,500	3,130	+1,630
Private/Semi-Private Sessions	1	n/a	n/a	14	n/a	n/a
Number of Swims (x5)	5	n/a	n/a	70	n/a	n/a
<b>Subtotal Swims (Programs)</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>+470</b>	<b>1,570</b>	<b>3,130</b>	<b>+1,560</b>
<b>Drop in Attendance</b>						
Public, Free, Family & Senior Swim	3,863	3,149	-714	5,202	4,461	-741
Aqua Fitness	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Subtotal Swims (Drop-in)</b>	<b>3,871</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>-722</b>	<b>5,202</b>	<b>4,461</b>	<b>-741</b>
<b>Total Swims/Visits</b>	<b>5,306</b>	<b>5,049</b>	<b>-257</b>	<b>6,772</b>	<b>7,591</b>	<b>+819</b>

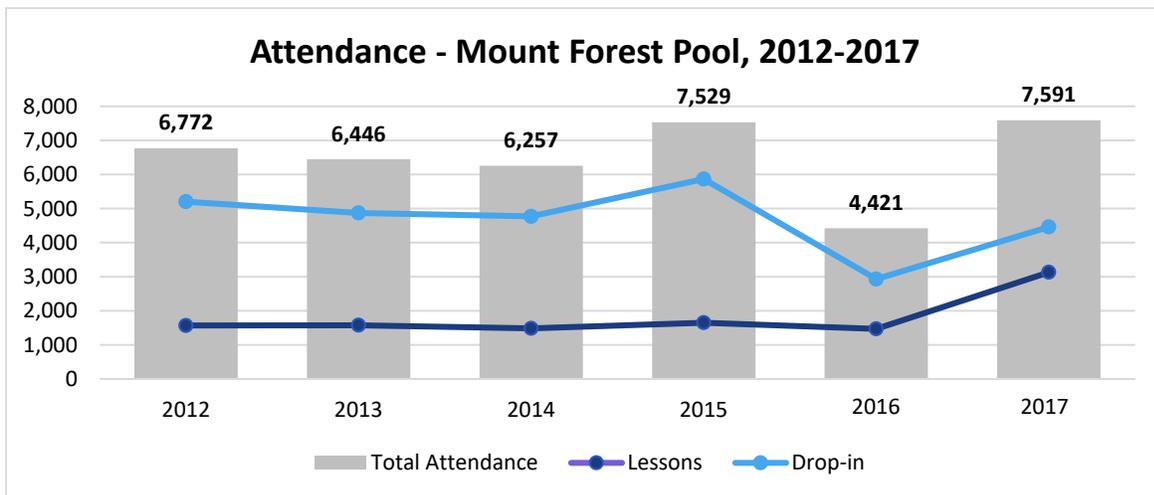
Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

Figure 16: Attendance at Arthur Pool, 2012 to 2017



Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

Figure 17: Attendance at Mount Forest Pool, 2012 to 2017



Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

A primary concern for Wellington North is the aging Mount Forest outdoor pool. Facilities of this age (1950s/60s) are predisposed to increased lifecycle maintenance costs and are generally not reflective of modern designs. The pool tank has developed major cracks and repairs have been increasing in their frequency and cost. In short, the pool and bathhouse are past their functional lifespan and a strategy is needed for the pool's replacement, which was strongly supported by the public consultation program. With Mount Forest being the largest of the Township's urban centres, combined with the distance to Arthur, the provision of an outdoor pool and a splash pad – which has been a resounding success in Arthur – can be supported.

The Township has recently formed a committee to consider pool and splash pad development in Mount Forest, with the assistance of local service clubs. Potential locations for these amenities are being discussed, and should seek to leverage existing amenities, such as washrooms, parking, play areas, etc. Redeveloping the pool at its current site is not recommended. One potential option includes relocating the pool to the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex / Park site and installing a splash pad at the Bill Moody Playground / Fairgrounds, which would enhance geographic equity across all of Mount Forest. The Township ensure that the new pool opens the year after the old pool closes so that the community is not without a pool for any summer.

In terms of indoor pools, the closest public facilities are located in Fergus and Hanover, generally a 20 to 30-minute drive for most residents. Despite some interest expressed by residents through the online survey, indoor pools are seldom provided by small to mid-sized communities. Municipal indoor pools require annual subsidies typically ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000 depending on the type of pool and the market it serves. Furthermore, depending on site and pool design, construction costs could exceed \$10 million. One alternative that has been raised by the public is the potential long-term enclosure of an outdoor pool; this option has been studied by many municipalities, and very few projects have been found to be financially or operationally feasible. In either case, the development of an indoor swimming pool would require substantial fundraising and would result in a sizable tax increase for residents.

From our experience, the Township lacks the population and tax-base to offset these substantial costs, thus an indoor pool is not recommended. This recommendation is offset by the recent and proposed investment in the Township's outdoor pools, which provide seasonal opportunities for swimming lessons and recreational use.

## Recommendations

35. Develop a **splash pad in Mount Forest**, potentially at Bill Moody Lions Playground / King Street Fairgrounds Park, with the assistance of community fundraising. Ensure the provision of appropriate support amenities, such as benches, shade and pathway/sidewalk connections.
36. Replace the Lion Roy Grant Pool with a **new outdoor pool in Mount Forest**, potentially at Campbell deVore Park / Mount Forest & District Sports Complex, with the assistance of community fundraising.

## 6.6 Playgrounds

### Current State

Playgrounds provide neighbourhood-level amenities that offer opportunities for early childhood activities and social interaction. The Township currently provides playgrounds at eight (8) locations: Arthur Opt-Mrs Playground; Arthur Lions Park; Birmingham Street Lions Park; Campbell deVore Park; Conn Park; Lions Roy Grant Pool Park; Murphy Park; and Bill Moody Lions Playground. School playgrounds may also be available for public use outside of school hours.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, almost half (49%) of online survey respondents had at least one household member use a playground. In terms of additional municipal investment, 82% of survey respondents supported additional investment in playgrounds, ranking third out of twenty facility types. Some stakeholders expressed a desire for continued playground upgrades, including features accessible to children with disabilities.

Playground design has evolved over time, from traditional elements such as slides, swings and climbers to more creative elements that involve interactive and challenging play. With most playground features having a lifespan of about twenty years, the Township has had an opportunity to install many new play structures over time, including newer amenities that have accessible elements (e.g., ramps, chair swings, etc.). In terms of trends, some communities are also beginning to install outdoor fitness equipment that can be used by people of all ages.

### Analysis

Equitable access to playgrounds in urban centres is important to providing leisure opportunities for children and families. Playgrounds should be located within 500-metres (about a 5 to 10-minute walk) of residential areas within urban centres, without having to cross major barriers such as highways, rail lines or waterways. The analysis indicates that there are no critical distribution gaps within the Township's urban centres, although future residential areas will likely require neighbourhood park and playground development.

The Township's playgrounds are generally in good condition, but residents have indicated that additional investment is needed. There are some structures that are due for replacement, including play features and supporting infrastructure in Campbell deVore Park (including the pathway) and Birmingham Street Lions Park (including flood control measures) that are nearing the end of their lifecycles. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Township phase-out sand surfacing in favour of engineered wood fibre or alternative low maintenance materials that provide enhanced impact attenuation and accessibility.

Several playgrounds are also partially accessible for persons with disabilities and it is expected that new play structures will be designed with accessibility in mind. The Township should continue to regularly inspect all playground structures on a regular basis to identify maintenance priorities.

### Recommendations

37. Strive to **provide playgrounds within 500-metres of new residential areas** within urban centres. Playground locations should be unobstructed by pedestrian barriers (e.g., highways, rail lines

and waterways) and be connected to surrounding residential areas (e.g., sidewalks, walkways and trails).

38. Establish a **playground replacement program**, with a short-term focus on playgrounds in Campbell deVore Park (including the pathway) and Birmingham Street Lions Park (including flood control measures). Regular inspections may identify other capital priorities or preventative maintenance requirements. Playgrounds should be designed to comply with AODA requirements and be welcoming and accessible to all families, including the phase-out of sand surface materials in favour of engineered wood fibre.

## 6.7 Ball Diamonds

### Current State

The Township maintains and rents a total of five (5) ball diamonds, located at Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park (2), Mount Forest Fairgrounds Park (2) and Campbell deVore Park (1). All diamonds are lit for evening play. With the assistance of a government grant, the Optimist diamond at the Mount Forest Fairgrounds Park is being redeveloped in 2017/18.

There is a scrub ball diamond at Conn Park, however it is in disrepair and not considered part of the active inventory, nor are school fields (though some may be used for practices and unstructured play). Mount Forest Minor Ball also rents diamond time in Southgate Township for practices.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 42% of online survey respondents had at least one household member participate in baseball or softball. Over two-thirds (69%) of survey respondents supported additional investment in ball diamonds, ranking tenth out of twenty facility types.

Stakeholders requested that a new youth diamond be developed at the Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park to meet growing demands. In Mount Forest, some suggested that the Township consider a long-term plan to group all ball diamonds at one location to enhance convenience and tournament potential. The installation of covered dugouts was also requested for the diamonds at Campbell deVore Park and Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park.

Current trends in ball registration across Ontario reflect an increase in participation in recent years, due partially to growing exposure from the Toronto Blue Jays and grassroots efforts to invest in the sport. These trends are also being experienced in Wellington North. Baseball (including hardball, softball and slo-pitch) remains a particularly popular sport in rural communities – there are about as youth ball players as soccer players in Wellington North. However, in comparison to soccer and other field sports, softball is more popular among adults than youth.

### Analysis

The following table illustrates an average weekly schedule for the Township's ball diamonds. This analysis suggests that existing diamonds are booked to capacity, with very little extra time available by typical standards of play.

**Table 21: Average Weekly Ball Diamond Utilization, 2017**

Park	Community	Hours per Week
Arthur Fairgrounds Park – Field 1	Arthur	26.5*
Arthur Fairgrounds Park – Field 2	Arthur	17.5*
Mount Forest Fairgrounds - Optimist	Mount Forest	27*
Mount Forest Fairgrounds - Kinsmen	Mount Forest	25.5*
Campbell deVore Park	Mount Forest	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>108.5</b>

\* figures include tournaments, which are not held every week

Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

Data provided by local groups indicates that there are 835 participants registered locally, nearly two-thirds (65%) of which are in Mount Forest. This equates to a 19% participation rate amongst youth (ages 5 to 19) and 11% participation rate amongst adults (ages 20 to 49 years) – both of these are very high percentages, highlighting the local popularity of the sport.

**Table 22: Baseball Registration, 2017**

Organization	Primary Market	Registration (2017)
<b>Arthur</b>		
Arthur Minor Softball	Youth	206
Arthur Merchants Fastball	Adult	24
Arthur Slo-Pitch	Adult	60
<b>Subtotal – Arthur</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>Mount Forest</b>		
Mount Forest Minor Ball	Youth	200
Mount Forest Slo-Pitch	Adult	345
<b>Subtotal – Mount Forest</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>545</b>
<b>Total - All</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>835</b>
<b>Total – Youth</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>406</b>
<b>Total - Adult</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>429</b>

Source: local user groups, 2017

A market-specific provision target is the preferred method to evaluate the need for ball diamonds. In smaller communities and where the ratio of youth to adult players is generally equal, a target of one diamond (with lights) per 140 participants is reasonable and allows flexibility for tournaments and rainouts. With a supply of five diamonds and an estimated total of 835 registrants, the Township is accommodating an average of 167 players per diamond. The current provision level is below the recommended provision target, suggesting a need for additional diamonds.

**Table 23: Forecasted Demand for Ball Diamonds, 2018-2031**

	2018	2031*
Youth Participants (ages 5-19), based on 19% participation rate	406	500
Adult Participants (ages 20-49), based on 11% participation rate	429	580
Total Participants	835	1,080
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 ball diamond (lit) per 140 registered participants</i>	
Required Ball Diamonds (lit)	6.0	7.7
Existing Ball Diamonds (lit)	5	5
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>(2.7)</b>

\* assumes that the youth population will grow at a slightly lower rate than the overall population, while the adult population will grow at about the same rate

There is currently an unmet demand of one (1) ball diamond. Due to the high number of youth players in Arthur, and the stakeholder request for another youth practice diamond, the development of an additional diamond (at the Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park, space permitting) should be a short-term priority.

Looking to the future, two (2) additional diamonds will be required to meet needs between 2021 and 2031. These diamonds should be provided in Mount Forest and should be outfitted with lights to accommodate a range of ages and opportunities. Land acquisition or park expansion will be required to achieve this as current parks sites do not have sufficient space to accommodate lit diamonds. Both diamonds should be located at the same site to realize efficiencies.

In terms of existing diamonds, the Township has recently rebuilt the Optimist Ball Diamond at the Mount Forest Fairgrounds to serve as the home field for minor ball – the batting cage at Campbell deVore Park should be moved to this location to support this premier diamond. The Township's diamonds in Arthur are well used, but will soon require lifecycle replacement of the lighting, fencing and/or netting – new fencing should be made a priority throughout the park, along with other necessary lifecycle repairs. The Township is encouraged to develop an itemized list of repairs, upgrades and improvements encompassing the entirety of the Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park.

## Recommendations

39. Develop **one youth ball diamond** at the Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park in the short-term.
40. Develop **two lit ball diamonds** at a future park site in Mount Forest to accommodate longer-term needs.
41. Relocate the **batting cage** at Campbell deVore Park to Mount Forest Fairgrounds to support the Optimist diamond.
42. Develop an **itemized list of repairs, upgrades and improvements for Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park** including (but not limited to) lifecycle replacement of the pavilion/washrooms and ball diamond lighting, fencing and/or netting.

## 6.8 Soccer Fields

### Current State

The Township provides four (4) soccer fields in Mount Forest at Campbell deVore Park (1 full size lit, 1 intermediate) and King Street Fairgrounds Park (2 minis). The Mount Forest and District Soccer Club (which offers both a house league and competitive stream, including two adult teams) also uses fields in the Township of Southgate as the club's membership covers this area. The Arthur Recreational Soccer Club (house league) uses fields at St. John Catholic School; the open space contains two (2) full size fields, which can be divided into approximately six (6) small fields.

Between the two communities, there are a total of six (6) to ten (10) public soccer fields (depending on the configuration), though not all are Township-controlled.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 14% of online survey respondents had at least one household member participate in soccer. Three-fifths (60%) of survey respondents supported additional investment in soccer fields, ranking fourteenth out of twenty facility types. Stakeholders were generally pleased with the level of provision, though the Arthur Recreational Soccer Club noted a desire for net storage at St. John Catholic School (they are transported to the site by volunteers).

Soccer is a popular sport – particularly among children and youth – due to low equipment costs, ease of play, worldwide appeal and its high fitness quotient. During the 1990s, soccer surpassed hockey as the most popular organized sport in Canada. Since then, soccer participation has levelled off across Ontario due to competing activities and an aging demographic. In Wellington North, the soccer clubs have reported stable to declining membership, which is consistent with this trend. In many communities (especially larger urban centres) an increase in adult recreational players has been observed. There is also growing demand for year-round play, which has led to many communities providing indoor leagues in school gymnasiums or indoor turf facilities.

### Analysis

There are approximately 393 soccer participants registered with local organizations, two-thirds (67%) of which are in Mount Forest. This equates to a 17% participation rate amongst youth (ages 5 to 19) and 1% participation rate amongst adults (ages 20 to 49 years) – these rates are similar to other communities we have researched, suggesting that the Township has an appropriate catchment rate.

**Table 24: Soccer Registration, 2017**

Organization	Primary Market	Registration (2017)
Arthur Soccer Club	Youth	128
Mount Forest & District Soccer Club	Youth and Adult	265
<b>Total</b>	–	<b>393</b>

Source: local user groups, 2017

A market-specific provision target is the preferred method to evaluate the need for soccer fields. A target of one field per 80 participants is reasonable and allows flexibility for tournaments and rainouts. With a supply of six fields (including permitted school fields) and an estimated total of 393 registrants, the current inventory is accommodating an average of 66 players per fields. This provision level is above the recommended provision target, suggesting that there is existing capacity within the system to accommodate greater use.

**Table 25: Forecasted Demand for Soccer Fields, 2018-2031**

	2018	2031*
Youth Participants (ages 5-19), based on 17% participation rate	360	445
Adult Participants (ages 20-49), based on 1% participation rate	33	45
Total Participants	393	490
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 soccer field per 80 registered participants</i>	

	2018	2031*
Required Soccer Fields	4.9	6.1
Existing Soccer Fields	6	6
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>

\* assumes that the youth population will grow at a slightly lower rate than the overall population, while the adult population will grow at about the same rate

There is currently a surplus of approximately one (1) field, which is reasonable given the fluctuating registration and need for geographic distribution. The current inventory is expected to be suitable for several years to come if participation rates remain stable. However, as many of the league’s players are young children, there is the potential for growth if they stay with the sport into their teens and beyond. Despite a projected demand for six fields in 2031, a closer look at the distribution of fields and participants suggests that one additional full-size field will be required in Mount Forest in the long-term. This field should be co-located with other fields to realize efficiencies, possibly co-located with the new ball diamonds recommended in Mount Forest (at a future site, to be determined).

Should the Arthur Recreational Soccer Club grow its membership to include a competitive stream – or if their access to St. John Catholic School is discontinued – additional fields will likely be required. If this is the case, fields could potentially be accommodated at the East Ridge Subdivision Park. Ongoing consultation with local sports clubs will assist in anticipating changing requirements over time.

### Recommendations

- 43. Develop **one full size soccer field** at a future park site in Mount Forest to accommodate longer-term needs.

## 6.9 Sport Courts (basketball, tennis, etc.)

### Current State

The Township has one basketball court in its parks inventory – a recently constructed half-court at Murphy Park. Basketball hoops are also available at several schools. Although not part of the Township’s offerings, there are three “multi-purpose” courts at Wellington Heights Secondary School, consisting of three tennis nets and six hoops. Both Mount Forest and Arthur used to have public tennis courts that have since fallen into disrepair and are no longer used for organized tennis.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 7% of online survey respondents had at least one household member participate in basketball, 3% in tennis and 3% in pickleball. Additional municipal investment in any of these activities was identified as a low priority through the survey. The public input sessions yielded some suggestions for pickleball (an emerging sport amongst older adults and seniors), and basketball hoops and tennis courts in Arthur.

Interest in tennis has declined over the years, but is seeing a resurgence in some communities with the success of high profile Canadian players and the fact that many baby boomers now have more leisure time and are returning to a sport that they played in their youth. Those seeking an alternative to tennis have discovered pickleball, which has become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada.

Pickleball is a lower intensity adaptation of tennis which involves the use a paddle and is played on a modified tennis court (a badminton-sized court and a slightly lower net).

Basketball is a popular activity for youth and young adults – the sport is easy to learn, safe, affordable and can be played individually or in small groups. Courts can be provided in a variety of configurations, from full courts to half courts and even single hoops. Half courts have a smaller footprint and are typically a better fit for neighbourhood-level parks.

## Analysis

Wellington North’s population is aging, which may lead to an increased demand for low impact sports, such as tennis and pickleball. Furthermore, the number of basketball courts in Township parks is limited. While needs appear to be met at the present time, these factors suggest that the township should consider the provision of outdoor courts in future park development, where supported by public input and demonstrated needs. Courts should be situated in locations that are accessible to the public and that minimize disruptions to neighbouring properties. Multi-use courts with various paint markings can increase the flexibility and range of uses on a court.

Indoor pickleball can be played within gymnasiums, halls and arena floors and may be an opportunity for the Township to consider in boosting daytime usage of its facilities. Removable and customizable nets may be used to convert indoor spaces into courts for year-round play.

## Recommendations

44. Consider the development of **multi-use courts** (tennis, pickleball, basketball and/or ball hockey) within future park development.

## 6.10 Skateboard Parks

### Current State

The Township provides one skate park (located at Campbell deVore Park in Mount Forest) that is unsupervised and available for a variety of wheeled sports.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 6% of online survey respondents had at least one household member participate in skateboarding. Over one-half (53%) of survey respondents supported additional municipal investment in skateboard parks, ranking seventeenth out of twenty facility types.

The desire for a skate park in Arthur gained momentum while this Master Plan was being developed, as a service club identified it as a priority for fundraising. Input from local students also supported the desire for a skate park in Arthur, as they are often unable to travel to Mount Forest to use the Township’s only facility. Some students also requested upgrades to the Mount Forest skate park to make it more like ones that they have used in larger communities.

The low cost and unstructured nature of skateboarding appeals to many different types of users, including youth, children and a growing number of young adults. To minimize damage to public infrastructure and private property, many communities have chosen to provide a designated venue for

skateboarding and associated activities (e.g. BMX, scooters, etc.). Skate parks can vary in their design, with some being permanent structures and others containing modular parts.

## Analysis

Demand for a skate park in Arthur has led a local service club to lend its support to this initiative. The provision of a skate park in this community would improve geographic equity and provide opportunities to engage local users that are not otherwise participating in the sport.

If this initiative moves forward, site selection and design should comply with municipal standards. Locations should be visible and have buffers to deter inappropriate behaviours and mitigate noise. Skateboard facilities should not be placed directly adjacent to playgrounds. Input from local skaters is essential in the design of skateboard parks and helps to create buy-in to the final product.

## Recommendations

45. Develop a **skate park in Arthur** in the short-term, with the assistance of community fundraising. Site selection and design should comply with municipal standards and youth should be engaged in the design process.

## 6.11 Pavilions

### Current State

The Township maintains a total of six (6) pavilions located at Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park, Campbell deVore Park, Conn Park, Damascus Community Centre, Murphy Park and Bill Moody Lions Playground. The pavilions in Conn and Damascus are available only as part of the hall rental. In addition, there are smaller shelters or gazebos in parks that are available for casual use.

### Public Input and Trends

Usage and support for municipal pavilions was not explored directly through the online survey. Some respondents noted the deteriorating condition of the pavilion at Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park and suggested that it be a priority for repair and/or improvement.

Pavilions are in demand for a variety of structured and unstructured uses, such as family gatherings, community events, tournaments, barbecues, and as sun and rain shelters. The casual use of park spaces for social activities, especially on weekends, is increasing in many communities and pavilions respond directly to this trend.

### Analysis

Pavilions play a supporting role in the parks system and are generally provided in conjunction with sport/tournament sites, event parks or as shelters in naturalized parks. Some of the Township's pavilions are rented frequently (e.g., Murphy Park), while others are not (e.g., Campbell deVore Park) but provide support for events and sporting activities.

**Table 26: Number of Pavilion Rentals, 2017**

Park	Community	Number of Rentals (2017)
Arthur Fairgrounds Park	Arthur	11

Park	Community	Number of Rentals (2017)
Campbell deVore Park	Mount Forest	0
Conn Park	Conn	8
Damascus Community Centre	Damascus	n/a
Murphy Park	Mount Forest	20
Bill Moody Lions Playground	Mount Forest	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>39</b>

Source: Township of Wellington North, 2018

The continued maintenance of the Township's pavilions is recommended as they provide valuable spaces for local events. While pavilions are not typically required for neighbourhood parks, they are often provided in community parks (to support sports fields and events) and open space parks that are destinations for passive uses and gatherings. Many of these spaces can also be used to support arts and cultural activities.

## Recommendations

46. Consider the installation of **pavilions** within future community parks and open space parks.

## 6.12 Off-Leash Dog Parks

### Current State

There are no designated public off-leash dog areas in the Township.

### Public Input and Trends

Over the past twelve months, 42% of survey respondents had participated in dog walking. When asked what parks and recreation activities they would like to see offered, 9% of responding households stated dog walking (on or off leash). In terms of additional municipal spending, 58% of survey respondents supported or strongly supported spending on dog parks (13% opposed or strongly opposed spending), ranking fifteenth out of twenty facility types. The consultation process yielded some requests for an off-leash area in Mount Forest, possibly at Campbell deVore Park.

Communities typically do not allow dogs to be off leash on public property, as regulated by municipal by-laws. Off-leash dog parks – which provide dogs and dog owners the opportunity to exercise and socialize in a controlled area – are becoming more common within municipal parks systems, particularly in urban areas where there is less private land for dogs to run freely. This is in line with national trends that suggest that pet ownership is on the rise. Dog parks provide opportunities for social interaction for residents (especially those living in isolation) and should not be viewed only as places for pets.

### Analysis

Off-leash dog parks can be a polarizing topic and their provision is often conflict-driven (e.g., to alleviate safety concerns, unauthorized use of public spaces, etc.). From our experience, off-leash dog parks can be effective in urban areas, but tend to be under-utilized in smaller rural communities. Aside from population, other success factors include park design, management (a community organization should be encouraged to take stewardship of the site) and site selection. Selecting an appropriate site that is supported by residents and respects property rights can be difficult. Many factors must be considered,

including the safety of users, setbacks from residential and other sensitive uses, and the provision of amenities (e.g. parking, benches, garbage containers, shade, etc.).

Although there is a range of opinion on dog park provision in Wellington North, they are low cost facilities and there may be value in developing one on a trial-basis if the Township can identify an appropriate site and a local organization to manage it. The park should be conveniently located for as many residents as possible and should be setback from schools, residential areas and high traffic areas within parks. Campbell deVore Park may have sufficient open space to accommodate a small fenced dog area, but should be evaluated further by the Township.

## Recommendations

47. Begin planning to create an **off-leash park as a trial project**. This will require: (a) a site evaluation exercise to consider appropriate site characteristics, compatibility and impacts, and design; and (b) identification of an organization to sponsor the park and oversee its management.

## 6.13 Other Recreation Facilities

There are several additional recreational pursuits that are not explicitly evaluated within the scope of this Master Plan. Some of these are currently provided in Wellington North (often by the non-profit or private sectors), such as curling, lawn bowling, fitness, bowling and more. The findings of the online survey indicate that many of these are lower participation club sports in Wellington North.

For those facilities that have not been addressed previously in this section, the public consultation program yielded the following capital requests:

- a fitness centre at the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex; it is understood that this has been examined in the past and the Township has found this option not to be feasible;
- an outdoor skating rink in Mount Forest; 75% of online survey respondents supported additional municipal investment in outdoor ice rinks, ranking eighth out of twenty facility types; and
- a community garden in Mount Forest (with some raised beds); some felt that this would be a good fit with the aging population.

The Township is encouraged to pursue any of the aforementioned projects if supported by additional research and appropriate sources of funding. It is very common for municipalities to receive requests for new and/or non-traditional parks and recreation facilities. Often these requests deal with emerging activities or facilities that are not part of the Township's core service mandate. The Township's Community Initiated Project Guidelines provides a guideline for evaluating enhancements to Wellington North's parks and recreation facilities and services. The following considerations are identified in the Township's guidelines:

- Professional standards
- Fiscal and overall accountability (minimum 50% of Project Costs required to be considered)
- Administrative accountability
- Economic impact
- Community service and participation
- Responsiveness to existing community need

- Degree of accessibility
- Level of risk to the Township-financial and otherwise

This Master Plan may be used as one resource in determining if a proposal serves a clearly identified community need that is not currently adequately addressed.

## Recommendations

48. Utilize the Township's Community Initiated Project Guidelines to evaluate municipal participation in **partnerships or unsolicited proposals** involving facilities not specifically identified in this Master Plan.



## Section 7.0 Parks & Trails Assessment

The Township's parkland, open space and trail systems are examined in this section, along with future requirements and policy considerations. Specifically, this section seeks to assist the Township in:

- Planning the appropriate function and use for the parks system;
- Achieving a satisfactory distribution and supply of parks to ensure that they are easily accessible and maintain the integrity of natural heritage systems;
- Ensuring a high degree of walkability and connectivity among parks through active transportation infrastructure, key linkages, etc.; and
- Maintaining and enhancing active and passive features within parks – from benches and pathways to playgrounds and sports fields – to ensure that they embody high quality standards and are responsive to the needs of all residents.

## 7.1 Parkland Classification

As parks are typically secured by municipalities through the land development process, it is important to consider parks planning within a policy context. Land use planning in the Township is guided by the County of Wellington Official Plan, which contains broad policies regarding the provision and development of parkland. A review of Official Plan policies reveals the absence of a local parkland classification system, which is commonly used to assist communities in defining the functional hierarchy of a municipal parks and open space system.

A classification hierarchy is essential in advancing the sustainable planning of active and passive forms of parkland by directing many aspects of park usage as defined through size, form, function and/or level of amenity. The identification of these characteristics and functions help to ensure compatibility with neighbouring land uses, while providing the community, developers and planners with an understanding of what a new or redeveloped park may include.

For a variety of reasons, some uses are more appropriate in certain types of parks. For example, playgrounds (considered to be a basic unit of most park construction) are appropriate in most park types, but lit sports fields should not be contained in neighbourhood parks due to their significant size and impacts (e.g. lighting, parking, hours of use, etc.). Community parks that are capable of accommodating a broad range of activities are generally in demand, as are neighbourhood-level parks that provide close-to-home opportunities for young children. Passive parkland (e.g., woodlots, open space, etc.) are often received through voluntary dedication, but need to be thoughtfully provided and managed.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the Township consider the following parkland classification system (consisting of Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks and Public Open Space Lands) in the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces.

**Table 27: Proposed Parkland Classification Hierarchy**

Classification	Service Area	Permitted Facilities/Amenities	Size (ha)
<b>Neighbourhood Park</b> (example: Murphy Park)	Individual settlement areas; parks should be located within walking distance of the service area (generally 500m)	Active and passive opportunities, including play equipment and informal playing fields/courts for unorganized activities	0.5 to 2.5
<b>Community Park</b> (example: Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park)	Entire Township; may also satisfy functions set out under Neighbourhood Park classification	Range of recreational facilities and amenities including playing fields, pavilions and other community-serving amenities.	3 to 10+
<b>Public Open Space Lands</b> (example: Angus Smith Park)	Variable. Typically located in areas with naturally significant features, wooded areas and may consist of topographical variations.	May be undeveloped, but should generally be publicly accessible. May contain trails, informal picnic areas, storm water ponds and similar low intensity amenities. Should not be accepted as parkland dedication as they do not meet active parkland needs, but rather the protection and conservation of systems (e.g., hazard lands, environmental protection lands, land use buffers, etc.).	n/a

## Recommendations

49. Utilize the Master Plan's **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.

## 7.2 Parkland Supply

Parkland is a valuable component of the Township's landscape as it provides the land base that supports many recreation amenities and its presence enhances the quality of life for the community as a whole. Parkland can take many different forms, ranging from small parkettes to large sports complexes to undeveloped tracts containing natural heritage features.

As illustrated in the table below, the Township of Wellington North owns and maintains approximately 29.1 hectares (71.9 acres) of developed and undeveloped parkland. Based on a population of 12,490, this equates to a provision rate of 2.33 hectares per 1,000 residents

**Table 28: Municipal Supply of Parkland**

Municipal Parkland	Community	Area (Ha)
<b>Community Parks</b>		
Arthur Cenotaph Park	Arthur	0.1
Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park	Arthur	6.2
Campbell deVore Park	Mount Forest	3.8
King Street Fairgrounds Park (including Bill Moody Park)	Mount Forest	7.9
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>		
Arthur Lions Park & Playground	Arthur	1.0
Eastridge Landing Subdivision (undeveloped)	Arthur	2.2
Birmingham Street Lions Park	Mount Forest	0.5

Municipal Parkland	Community	Area (Ha)
Murphy Park	Mount Forest	1.1
Veterans Memorial Park Cenotaph (Lion Roy Grant Pool Park)	Mount Forest	0.6
Conn Park	Rural	1.1
Damascus Community Centre	Rural	0.35
Open Space Parcels		
McPherson Park	Arthur	0.4
Township Open Space (3 parcels)	Arthur	0.25
New Hope Buffer Zone	Arthur	0.9
Angus Smith Park	Mount Forest	2.7
<b>Total Parkland</b>		<b>29.1</b>
<b>Service Level (population = 12,490)</b>	<b>2.33 ha / 1,000 residents</b>	

In addition to municipal parks, residents benefit from a number of parks and open spaces provided at schools, conservation areas, County Forests and private parks (e.g., golf courses, campgrounds, etc.). For example, area schools are often used for recreational activities (such as soccer in Arthur and tennis in Mount Forest). Residents and visitors have access to the following open space properties:

- Luther Marsh (eastern edge of Township) – GRCA wildlife management area (fee for entry), containing boat launch, trails and authorized hunting areas
- Arthur Community Park (Wellington Road 109, Arthur) – private ownership, containing seating and a trail overlooking the Conestogo River
- McNamara Tract (Wellington Road 16, near Damascus) – County Forest, containing trails
- Mulhall Tract (Wellington Road 16, near Damascus) – County Forest, containing trails
- Victory Tract (Wellington Road 14, rural area) – County Forest, containing trails

*Note: While the Township is fortunate to have access to significant conservation lands such as Luther Marsh, for the purposes of this Master Plan, focus is placed on the supply of municipally-owned parkland as these are the primary locations for active recreational pursuits.*

### 7.3 Parkland Needs

Section 13.10.1 of the Wellington County Official Plan states that “Parkland and recreational facilities must be developed to meet the needs of the community. All councils shall ensure that adequate parkland is secured and used for the benefit of the community and that opportunities to add to the supply of parkland are pursued.”

Community input indicates that the local parks and open space system is highly valued by residents and efforts should be made to ensure that provision levels remain locally appropriate – 67% of survey respondents support additional spending on the acquisition parks and open spaces.

Public input and the facility needs assessment contained in the next section identified demand for additional park amenities, most notably sports fields (which require a substantial land base). A civic square in Mount Forest’s central business district was also suggested as a venue for performances and community gatherings, one that would help enliven the area through programs and events. These and other park uses may be contemplated for future parkland development in the Township.

Parkland supply can be measured through various methods, although many municipalities use population-based targets to calculate and plan parkland supply. The Township’s parkland provision is

currently 2.33 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents (based on a population of 12,490 residents). Of this amount, community parks (18.6 hectares) account for approximately 1.50 hectares per 1,000 residents, while neighbourhood parks (6.25 hectares) account for 0.5 hectares per 1,000 residents.

The Township of Wellington North is providing parkland below that of most comparable urban/rural municipalities, which typically have parkland provisions rates in the range of 2.5 to 4 hectares per 1,000 residents or more.

The County of Wellington Official Plan does not establish a minimum level of service with respect to parkland, though it is noted that the parkland dedication provisions of the Planning Act do not allow most municipalities to receive parkland at levels similar to their current provision. Opportunities may exist through the subdivision process to negotiate with landholders to achieve greater parkland supplies, which is often in the best interest of all parties.

Parkland needs are influenced by several factors, such as distribution, non-municipal providers, urban density, local needs, and the types of existing parks and open spaces. In Wellington North's case, there are several reasons for the Township's lower than average parkland provision rate, including (but not limited to):

- many local sports organizations rely heavily on school grounds for fields (e.g., soccer), thereby reducing pressure on public parkland;
- most of the Township's community parks are built out, with very little room to add new amenities;
- nearly all of the Townships parks are located in urban centres, with very little parkland in rural areas; and
- the compact nature of the Township's urban centres allows for a high degree of accessibility, but fewer park sites.

To meet the needs of a growing population, the focus of the Township's future parks planning should be on neighbourhood and community parks capable of accommodating active recreational requirements (e.g., playgrounds, sports fields, courts, etc.). To achieve this, it is recommended that the Township strive to maintain a **minimum service level of 2.75 hectares of municipal parkland per 1,000 residents** (excluding conservation lands owned by the County, Conservation Authority, etc.). It is acknowledged that this target will take some time to achieve. Improving and enhancing existing parks to respond to new pressures and facility needs should also be a key point of emphasis moving forward.

Presently, the Township is short of this parkland target by 5.2 hectares. Future growth projections estimate that the Township will grow by 3,120 persons by 2031, which is equivalent to an additional 8.6 hectares of parkland (for a total of 13.8 hectares). Existing neighbourhood and community parks should not be declared surplus as they are vital in keeping the Township's provision rate from being further reduced.

Section 7.5.12 of the Wellington County Official Plan states that "Urban Centres shall provide adequate parks and open space areas to serve their population and may provide recreational opportunities for a larger regional population." To help guide the analysis of parkland needs, the following table examines parkland supplies against the current and projected populations living in proximity to Wellington North's two urban centres. In order to account for everyone in the Township, rural residents have been attributed to the nearest urban centre. Residents from outside Wellington North have not been included in this calculation, although it is recognized that they may use Township parks for various activities (and vice versa).

**Table 29: Current and Projected Parkland Needs by Geographic Area**

Geographic area	Current Park Supply (ha)	Estimated Population (2016)	Parkland Per 1,000 (2016)	Estimated Population (2031)	Additional Parkland Needs (2031), based on 2.75ha/1000
Arthur and area	11.4*	5,290	2.16	5,925	4.9 ha
Mount Forest and area	17.7**	7,200	2.46	9,685	8.9 ha
Entire Township	29.1	12,490	2.33	15,610	13.8 ha

\* includes Damascus Community Centre/Park

\*\* includes Conn Park

Note: Park supply excludes County Forests, Conservation Authority lands, schools and private parks

Source: 2016 Population – 2016 Census (dissemination areas), adjusted for undercount.

2031 Population – Wellington County OPA 99, adjusted to include rural residents.

Potential for future residential growth exists in both Arthur and Mount Forest. Applications received for plans of subdivision will have the opportunity to consider future parkland needs. To maintain a walkable park system, the Township should consider neighbourhood park development in residential areas that are of sufficient size and are beyond the recommended distance from existing parks (approximately 500 metres). Based on current settlement area boundaries, this may include new park construction in Arthur (southeast, west and/or north) and Mount Forest (northeast and/or south), pending approval of significant residential development.

Neighbourhood park development will not be enough to meet long-term needs, particularly for sports fields. An expanded and/or new community park will be required to address the long-term sports field needs in Mount Forest (a minimum of 6 hectares). The potential to expand Campbell deVore Park or the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex site for park purposes should be explored, along with other opportunities through a parkland acquisition strategy.

## Recommendations

50. Strive to achieve a **minimum municipal parkland service level of 2.75 hectares per 1,000 residents**, which would require an **additional 13.8 hectares of parkland by 2031** to meet current and future needs. To maintain a walkable park system, the Township should strive to provide a neighbourhood or community park within **500-metres** of all residential areas in urban centres, unobstructed by pedestrian barriers (e.g., highways, rail lines and waterways) and connected to surrounding residential areas (e.g., sidewalks, walkways and trails).
51. Secure **additional parkland (a minimum of 6 hectares) for sports fields in Mount Forest**, either through a park expansion or establishment of a new community park.
52. Establish a **strategy for long-term parkland acquisition**, consisting of neighbourhood park development in new subdivisions (through parkland dedication) and community park expansion/development (through a variety of means).

## 7.4 Parkland Policy

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland. The Ontario Planning Act establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives for the dedication of land for park and recreation purposes. The County of Wellington Official Plan sets out objectives for parks and public spaces, along with policies for parkland dedication and development. Relevant policies and their application to Wellington North are described below.

The County of Wellington Official Plan contains parkland acquisition policies guided by the Planning Act. Section 13.10 of the Official Plan identifies that local Councils may require the dedication of parkland in accordance with the Planning Act for all developments, redevelopment or plans of subdivision. The Planning Act identifies that municipalities may require the conveyance of lands for park or other recreational purposes at a rate of 5% of land for residential (2% for commercial and/or industrial) or 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units proposed. Under certain requirements, Council may also require cash-in-lieu of parkland, to be used towards future acquisition or development of parkland within the Township (note: the Planning Act has recently been amended to change the alternate requirement to 1 hectare per 500 units when the municipality accepts cash-in-lieu).

Section 13.10.2 of the Official Plan describes the locational criteria for evaluating potential lands for parkland dedication. It is identified that suitable municipal parkland shall be:

- Land adjacent to established parks, schools or storm water management ponds;
- Land within easy walking distance of the residential area served;
- Land located near the highest density residential areas;
- Land with adequate street frontage to provide for visibility and safety;
- Land that is level, regularly shaped and not susceptible to major flooding, poor drainage, or other environmental or physical conditions which would interfere with their development or use for public recreation.

In addition to these criteria, municipal parkland development shall be of an appropriate size and configuration to effectively utilize municipal resources and facilitate meaningful recreation activities. The Township must be thoughtful about the lands they acquire for parkland as these will serve resident needs for many years to come.

In cases where a 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 may consider accepting cash-in-lieu (see Section 13.10.3 of the County Official Plan). Neighbourhood parks less than 0.5 hectares are usually too small to provide adequate or satisfactory levels of recreation activity. Ensuring that parks are appropriately sized ensures that municipal resources are utilized effectively and efficiently.

Pursuant to the Planning Act, the Township may also accept undevelopable lands, storm water management areas and woodlots for the purposes of passive recreation and educational uses, although these lands should not be considered part of the required parkland dedication (as per Section 13.10.4 of the County Official Plan).

If there is a need to supplement parkland supplies beyond the mechanisms permitted by the Official Plan and the Planning Act, there are a number of other park acquisition strategies that the Township may pursue, including (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

53. Maximize **parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu** through as per the provisions of the County Official Plan and Planning Act.
54. Regularly review the Township's **fixed rate (per unit) for cash-in-lieu** to ensure that it reflects market conditions and current levels of service. Until such time as the Township meets its parkland provision target, cash-in-lieu should be used primarily for future parkland acquisitions, rather than park development.
55. Ensure that **parkland conveyed** to the Township is suitable for its intended use. Avoid developing or accepting neighbourhood park 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. Accepting undevelopable Open Space lands (e.g., storm water management ponds, woodlots, valley lands, floodplains, hazard lands, etc.) as part of the parkland dedication requirement is also strongly discouraged (the Township may assume these lands through voluntary dedication or easement if appropriate).
56. Where necessary, employ **alternative acquisition tools** to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.

## 7.5 Other Parkland Considerations

The Township of Wellington North parks are generally well-maintained with a growing variety of features that are indicative of evolving interests (e.g., splash pad, new playground apparatus, etc.). However, there are differences between a 'good' parks system and a 'great' one. Maintaining a parks system not only takes time and resources, but also thoughtful design and programming that includes age-friendly amenities, organized and non-programmed use, and best practices in beautification, environmental management and stewardship.

### Park Design

There are a number of key design features that the Township should consider as it acquires and redevelops parkland to ensure that parks are functional and responsive to current and emerging needs. Parks should be perceived by the community as destinations, where residents and visitors can engage in meaningful activities and events. This can be achieved by enhancing parks through unique

designs that allow for traditional activities to take place, yet are flexible in accommodating informal and emerging activities.

It is essential that parks are inclusive and barrier-free, as guided by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. To ensure that the parks system is able to serve people from all segments of the community, accessible seating, shade areas, parking, connections to key destinations and safety should become more prominent considerations. Where applicable, environmental protection and naturalization may be sought to preserve sensitive spaces. With very few open space or passive parks at present, the Township should place a priority on tree planting in future parks.

The Township should also continue to encourage the organized and non-programmed use of its parks and support its community partners in local beautification, environmental management and stewardship. The Township's two cenotaphs are good examples where community pride and volunteer efforts are evident – continued attention to the maintenance of these monuments and community gateways should be a priority for Wellington North.

## Park Renewal

Most of Wellington North's parks are in good condition, however, improvements and enhancements may be necessary in response to growth pressures, changing neighbourhood demographics, 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 rural settlement areas. The possibilities for parkland renewal are limitless, but may include enhanced landscaping, provision of shade structures and other comfort amenities, improved parking, facility upgrades and more. As required, 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 feedback from local residents, better understand opportunities and constraints, and obtain accurate costing associated with any capital works. The timing of this potential endeavor is based on the Township's discretion, based upon needs determined through consultation, demand indicators and the availability of funding.

## Signage & Gateway Features

The Township has not adopted a consistent visual identity for signage in parks, trails and facilities. Improved signage was a recommendation of the Municipal Cultural Plan, including gateway signage and signage improvement programs. Signage is an important element of the corporate communications and branding strategy and was identified as a shortcoming by stakeholders. Over time, the Township should install standardized signage at all parks, facilities and trail heads to improve wayfinding. The Township should also explore the use of technology, such as digital signs at major facilities that serve to advertise local events.

By ensuring that signage is consistent throughout the Township, a number of benefits are achieved, including:

- 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 also 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 community, 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 encouraging them to take interest in their surroundings.

A good sign is aesthetically pleasing, 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 its development.

Gateway features into urban areas can also be effective in creating a sense of place and community pride, as well as advertising local events. For example, the entry into Mount Forest from Highway 6 South is well known for the war monument and cenotaph. The Arthur Community Park on Wellington Road 109 at the south end of Arthur is a privately-owned property (but municipally-maintained) that may offer potential to serve as a gateway into Arthur if improved. If this site is to remain open to the public, opportunities to update the existing park features, add seating, and create a connection across the Conestogo River to McPherson Park (which would help to re-establish the Marvin Howe Trail) should be discussed with landowners and the business community.

## Recommendations

57. Maintain a commitment to **accessibility, safety and comfort** for all ages and abilities within the Township's parks system through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Greater commitment should be given to the provision of **support amenities** (such as washrooms, shade, benches/seating areas, bike racks, etc.) and **seamless connectivity** within the parks, open space and trails system.
58. Review **park maintenance and operational service levels** on a regular basis to ensure that they reflect community needs and effective operating practices.
59. Promote opportunities for **unstructured play, passive recreation and naturalization efforts** within the Township's parks system, where appropriate.
60. Consider **parkland renewal and redevelopment projects** in the Township's long-term capital plan to address aging infrastructure and future potential. Examples include playground replacement, support structures and amenities (e.g., benches, washrooms, etc.), park and sport field fencing, parking lots, tree canopy, etc.
61. Work with landowners and the business community to identify a long-term plan for the **Arthur Community Park** property (and Marvin Howe Trail) on Wellington Road 109, with consideration given to gateway and open space features.
62. Establish consistent and high quality **signage** at all municipal facilities, parks and along trail heads to enhance branding and wayfinding.

## 7.6 Recreational Trails

### Current State

As it relates to active transportation, this Master Plan focuses on off-road pedestrian and multi-use pathways, trails and routes that serve a recreational purpose. Excluded are on-road active transportation opportunities (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, sharrows, etc.) and trails without formal public access.

Existing pedestrian and/or multi-use trails in Wellington North include the following:

#### Municipal Trails

- Saugeen Valley Trail (approximately 5 km, off-road): This trail runs along the Saugeen River in Mount Forest and connects Campbell deVore Park (and Mount Forest & District Sports Complex) with Angus Smith Park (which has a bridge that crosses the river where the trail connects with local roads) and Murphy Park. A large portion of the trail is on-road (Martin and North Water Streets).
- Arthur River Trail (approximately 1.5 km, off-road): This trail originates at Lions Park at the northwest end of Arthur and winds its way down to the river, past the Arthur Wastewater Treatment Plant and concludes at Wells Street. There are also two loops, each about a half-kilometer long (Perfume Trail and Meadow Trail). Part of the trail is established on private lands through agreements with landowners. Wells Street and sidewalks along Smith Street (Highway 6) can be used to connect back to Lions Park.
- West Luther Trail (approximately 12 km): – This trail was recently established along an abandoned rail line in Arthur. It runs from Eliza Street to the East-West Luther Townline. At the East-West Luther Townline the trail connects with another trail that users can take to Waldemar. A less formal section of the trail extends west from Eliza Street, past Wells Street.

#### Other Trails

- Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area (km): Managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), this network of trails (Shoreline Trail, Bootlegger Trail and Mallard Pond) accommodates hikers and cyclists. The area is a destination for recreational trail enthusiasts interested in observing local wildlife.
- Victory Tract (1.5km): The trail is located within a County Forest on Wellington Road 14, adjacent to a tract owned by the GRCA, which combines to create a 3km long trail. The site is well used in the winter for cross-country skiing as well as hiking in the summer.
- McNamara Tract (1.5km): The trail is located within a County Forest on Wellington Road 16, south of Damascus.
- Mulhall Tract (1.5km): The trail is located within a County Forest on Wellington Road 16 and is adjacent to the McNamara Tract.
- Damascus Reservoir: There are informal trails encircling the Damascus Reservoir, which is owned and managed by the GRCA.

Note: The Marvin Howe Trail in Arthur is no longer a formally designated trail since the bridge over the Conestogo River was removed. Opportunities to reconnect this trail may be considered in the future.

## Public Input and Trends

Trail development has been a growing focus for the Township, but residents have indicated that more needs to be done. The public input collected for this Master Plan aligns with national trends as the online survey ranked walking and hiking for leisure as the most common physical activity, with 54% of respondents participating in the past twelve months. 87% of respondents felt that trails and pathways were important to their household. However, despite the importance of trails and pathways, only 48% of survey respondents were satisfied with the trails in the Township. This difference between importance and satisfaction suggests that there is a gap where expectations are not being met. This is further underscored by the 81% of survey respondents that supported spending additional public funds on new or improved nature trails (67% supported spending on paved multi-use trails), which ranked as the fourth highest priority out of twenty facility types.

The public open houses and stakeholder workshops also yielded several suggestions relating to trails, including the need for additional promotion (e.g., updating the trail maps in the Leisure Calendar), additional funding for trail maintenance and volunteer support, and the establishment of new trails, including improving the connection between Damascus and Luther Marsh.

## Trail Development and Design Principles

Providing an interconnected trail network is an important component of human health and ecological function. Linking destinations with a network of multi-purpose trails, sidewalks, cycling routes and roads provides choices for people to travel to these areas while also creating infrastructure for commuter, utilitarian and recreational uses. Trails are amongst the most desired features in a community and are a cost-effective investment in community health and wellbeing. Trails are an investment for all residents, including the aging population – a recent study found that when walking loops are present in parks, twice as many seniors are active<sup>12</sup>.

In considering the continued development of Wellington North's trails network over the next decade and beyond, the Township should have regard for the following guiding principles, which represent best practices observed in other communities:

- 1) **Connected:** The trail network should provide direct linkages to a broad range of destinations, such as schools, parks, commercial areas, residential areas and more. Where possible, routes should be designed to form continuous loops within parks and communities, and strive to connect to regional trail systems.
- 2) **Safe:** Trails and walking routes should be designed and maintained to minimize and reduce user risk and injury by emphasizing contemporary design and management principles, including adequate separation from and/or visibility to vehicular traffic.
- 3) **Multi-Modal:** Trails and walking routes should be designed to maximize a multitude of human-powered transportation options, such as (but not limited to) walking and cycling.
- 4) **Accessible:** Trails and walking routes should be designed to be free of physical barriers and be inclusive of persons with physical disabilities, wherever possible.
- 5) **Cost-Effective:** In developing and maintaining its trails network, the Township should make efficient use of resources, including the use of volunteers and alternate forms of funding.

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<sup>12</sup> City Parks Alliance. [The National Study of Neighbourhood Parks](#). 2016.

- 6) Value-added: The Township should have regard for supporting amenities such as informative and wayfinding signage, seating, parking and other features that provide the creature comforts users desire.
- 7) Partnerships: Relationships with new and existing community partners and land owners should be encouraged in the expansion, maintenance and promotion of the network.

Ensuring that trail routes are appropriately designed, constructed and maintained can minimize risk and offer the best protection against potential liability concerns. As such, the Township should ensure that all existing and planned trails are appropriately managed and maintained in accordance with best practices and leading guidelines.

When designing and maintaining public trails on municipal lands<sup>13</sup>, the Township and its volunteers should have regard to key documents, such as the County's Active Transportation Plan, Ontario Regulation 413/12 (Design of Public Spaces Standards – Accessibility for the Built Environment Standards) made under the 2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Ontario Building Code and accessibility standards prepared by leading municipalities. The AODA requires that municipalities must design new and redeveloped recreational trails (as well as sidewalks and boardwalks) to meet accessible standards (where possible), incorporating design elements including, but not limited to, appropriate grade, surface material, width and cross-slopes, as well as the need to consult with persons with disabilities and the local Accessibility Advisory Committee. It should be recognized that there may be unforeseen instances where terrain and other physical constraints pose challenges to comply with these standards and as a result, exceptions may be permitted.

## Trail Policies and Funding

The Wellington County Official Plan supports the establishment of pedestrian (Section 12.2) and cycling facilities (Section 12.3) as a means of travel and for recreation. Specifically, the Plan encourages the use of abandoned railway right of ways for the establishment of trails and the development of recreational trails that allow for cycling.

More detailed direction can be found in the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan, which was prepared in 2012 to guide the planning and development of on- and off-road cycling and trail routes. The Active Transportation Plan identifies a number of considerations for trail development and improvement, including extension of existing trails (through the use of abandoned rail lines and the creation of looped trails), as well as connections between communities and adjacent municipalities.

To achieve this, the Township should emphasize the construction of trails at the planning stage of development proposals. For example, Subsection 51(25)(b) of the Ontario Planning Act, allows for the dedication of land for “pedestrian pathways, bicycle pathways and public transit rights of way” as a condition of plan of subdivision approval, at the municipality's discretion. While this provision does not affect parkland supplies (it is over and above the prescribed parkland dedication), it is a useful tool for the acquisition of linear corridors and trails that support and link parks and natural features.

One particular challenge for the Township is the creation of trails in areas where there are no active development applications, such as existing neighbourhoods. With residents seeking enhanced trail connectivity, it is incumbent upon the Township and its partners to work to expand the trail network.

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<sup>13</sup> Excluding informal trails on private lands, wilderness and equestrian trails, trails for motorized recreational vehicles, portage routes or any other non-municipal facilities that do not support pedestrian activities.

One opportunity to achieve this is through Trails Committees, which can act as local champions and stewards of the trail system. Developing and managing trails in partnership with local service clubs, community groups, agencies and private businesses also provides an opportunity to leverage resources and form partnerships in trail development, management, promotion, etc. It is recommended that the Township regularly engage its Trails Committees (which are loosely formed groups consisting of community and municipal representatives) in processes to confirm trail routes, phasing options, and maintenance requirements and responsibilities. The Township's 2013 Municipal Cultural Plan recommended that the Township work towards a coordinated trails committee between Arthur and Mount Forest. While there may be merit in maintaining separate committees, benefits could be achieved through closer collaboration.

To date, trail development in Wellington North has largely been led by volunteers, with some support from the Township. Funding of trail development should consider all available sources, including Development Charges, fundraising and more. Guidelines should be established to articulate trail maintenance standards that are congruent with AODA standards and risk management practices; these standards should define responsibilities of all stakeholders, including volunteers.

## Trail Opportunities

Based on public input and a review of Township mapping and aerial photos, the following challenges, opportunities and priorities have been identified in connection with the improvement of the recreational trail network in Wellington North. These points are presented in no particular order and will require further examination at the implementation stage.

### Key Challenges

- Former rail corridors have been decommissioned and sold to adjacent property owners. Creating public access trails on these lands requires ongoing permission from landowners. Trails on private lands also have a greater potential to generate conflicts between landowners and trail users regarding access and liability.
- In the past, some residential development has occurred without any requirement for trail development, resulting in lost opportunities. Official Plan policies may need to be strengthened to maximize future opportunities.
- There has been a lack of dedicated municipal funding for trail development and maintenance in the Township. Combined with a reliance on volunteers, this creates difficulty in sustaining momentum and planning for the future.
- Many trails lack appropriate supporting amenities such as signage, seating, shade, etc., and are not accessible for persons with disabilities. Additional promotion of existing trails was identified as a barrier by stakeholders. Given the rising interest in walking and hiking for active fitness and experience-based tourism, it will also be important to market the local trails network to residents as well as visitors.
- The rural nature of the Township and distance between Mount Forest, Arthur and rural hamlets presents spatial challenges in linking communities together, as well as adjacent municipalities.
- Crossing uncontrolled Provincial Highways 6 and 89, particularly within urban areas, is a particular challenge.

- Sidewalks are not in place in all key locations. For example, the sidewalk network connecting to Campbell deVore Park in Mount Forest is partially incomplete.

### Key Opportunities

- Connecting residents to key destinations such as schools and commercial areas, as well as parks, recreational facilities and conservation lands. The Township's Community Improvement Plan is one tool that may assist in this regard.
- Use of abandoned rail corridors, unopened road allowances and river valleys for future trail development.
- Enhanced accessibility within parks through the establishment of hardscape pathways in high traffic areas and the development of looped trails (e.g., a walking circuit at the Mount Forest Fairgrounds).
- Identifying future trails and connection possibilities within draft and future plans of subdivisions.
- Formalizing partnerships with service clubs and volunteer organizations for the development and management of trails.
- Coordinating with the County and adjacent municipalities on the implementation of the Wellington County Active Transportation Plan (2012).
- Education on safe trail etiquette and trespassing is a key aspect of maintenance and enforcement, and can be achieved through various forms of signage, information and outreach.

### Trail Development Priorities

The Wellington County Active Transportation Plan recommended the following trail development projects for Wellington North, to be achieved over a period of approximately twenty-years:

- establishing a southeastern leg of the River Trail in Arthur (e.g., Marvin Howe Trail) and completing the Arthur trail loop through the use of signed routes;
- developing trails along abandoned rail lines in Mount Forest, as well as along the south shore of Saugeen River; and
- creating a better linkage between the West Luther Trail, Damascus and Luther Marsh.

The recommendations of this Recreation Master Plan are in alignment with the Active Transportation Plan, but provide additional support at the local level to assist with implementation of key objectives.

### Recommendations

63. Assign **high priority to the creation and promotion of trail and active transportation routes**, as guided by the Wellington County Active Transportation Master Plan, ongoing public input, and opportunities created by the development approvals process.
64. **Evaluate future trail development and connections** through the use of existing corridors (e.g., abandoned rail lines, unopened road allowances, utility corridors, etc.) and the land development process, including trails in new subdivisions (e.g., through dedication).

65. Where gaps exist in the trails system, consider the installation of **sidewalks and/or on-road signed routes** to connect pedestrians and/or cyclists to trail networks and destinations (e.g., Campbell deVore Park), where appropriate.
66. Seek **connections between communities, municipalities and regional trail networks** (e.g., Arthur to Damascus, Grand Valley, Elora-Cataract Trail, etc.). Coordinate with the Conservation Authority, County and adjacent municipalities for any projects that may extend beyond the Township.
67. Pursue the development of **looped trails**, including the renewal of the Marvin Howe Trail and connection to the River Trail in Arthur.
68. Continue to emphasize the proper design, construction and maintenance of the trail network. Utilize the **design standards and guidelines** in applicable provincial regulations as well as the County's Active Transportation Plan for all trail construction projects.
69. Maintain **Trail Committees** and engage them on a regular basis to confirm trail routes, phasing options, and maintenance requirements and responsibilities, recognizing that opportunities and priorities may change over time. Consult with the public and community stakeholders in advance of any trail development projects.
70. Formalize **agreements with private landowners** that own property containing public trails.
71. Work with the County and other partners to develop and distribute **mapping and promotional material** (in both hard copy and electronic versions, including the Leisure Calendar) on trail and active transportation routes in the Township. All future trails should include **appropriate signage** to delineate the network and enhance wayfinding for users.



## Section 8.0 Implementation

This section contains a summary of all Master Plan recommendations, along with their suggested priority and timing. Guidelines for reviewing and updating the Master Plan are also identified, as are potential funding options.

## 8.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

The Township should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of the Recreation Master Plan to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, tracking user 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 Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

Reviewing the Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of 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, emerging opportunities, etc.);
- cursory review of the 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.);
- communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the coming year; and
- budget requests/revisions as necessary.

### Recommendations

72. Implement a system for the regular **implementation, monitoring and review** of the Master Plan.
73. **Reconfirm the direction, priorities and accomplishments** of the Master Plan in 2023.
74. Undertake a **comprehensive review and update** of the Master Plan no later than 2028.

## 8.2 Funding Options

To assist with implementation, several potential funding opportunities – in addition to direct taxation – have been identified below.

### Development Charges

Development charges are fees that are collected through the building process in order to address the growth-related infrastructure needs of a community. Up to 90% of related parks and recreation capital projects may be funded through development charges, with the remaining 10% financed by the municipality through other sources. Funding limitations include replacement portions of facilities, arts and cultural facilities, historical service level deficiencies, or excess capacity as a result of the pre-emplacement of facilities. Many of the items identified in this Master Plan are partially or fully growth-related, thus will be eligible for Development Charge funding.

### Parkland Cash-in-Lieu

The Planning Act establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives, with implementation policies identified through county and local official plans. One such alternative is the conveyance of cash-in-lieu of parkland generated by development or redevelopment. At the Township's discretion, the cash-in-lieu may be used to purchase parkland, to acquire associated machinery or equipment and/or for parkland development. The Planning Act also allows municipalities to collect other parkland-related revenues through Section 37/45 (community benefits) and Section 42 (Alternative Rate cash-in-lieu); however, these are more applicable to urban communities with higher densities.

### Municipal Reserves

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

### Fundraising, Donations & Sponsorships

The capital and ongoing operational costs of constructing parks and facilities are substantial and will inherently place pressures on the municipal budget. Seeking assistance from the community to contribute resources towards the construction and/or operation of parks and facilities can be an effective way to provide services and spaces that are truly desired by residents. In the past, many local user groups have collected donations and/or participated in fundraising for new facilities and this practice is expected to continue. The Township's Community Development Fund provides guidance in this regard.

### User Fees & Surcharges

User and rental fees vary considerably based on the type of activity/facility in question. For example, ice rentals comprise the bulk of the revenue stream for an arena, but are less consequential for lower use spaces such as a meeting room. Nevertheless, increases in user fees – often achieved through a project-specific surcharge – can be used to offset the costs associated with capital upgrades.

### Debenture Financing

In cases where alternate sources of funding are unavailable, some municipalities have shown a willingness to finance a portion of major capital expenditures, as was the case with Wellington North and the Mount Forest & District Sports Complex. Depending on the municipality's credit rating, this can be a more expensive funding alternative and can impact the future borrowing rate and fiscal capacity.

### Ongoing Government Programs

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

### One-Time Grants

Municipalities often seek financial support from senior levels of government for major municipal capital projects. In 2017, the Federal budget made commitments towards infrastructure investments in the recreation sector through the "Investing in Canada" Plan – it is anticipated that the Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure funding stream (amounting to \$407 million across Ontario over 12 years, with up to 40% support for eligible municipal projects) will support new, expanded or renewed facilities. The presence of an approved Master Plan is often a requirement to securing grant funding.

### Partnerships

To maximize benefits to the community, the Township may consider engaging in collaborations or partnerships with the private sector, non-profit sector, or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services. Detailed feasibility studies and the development and use of agreements will be required to ensure that these arrangements yield the desired results.

### Cooperation between Municipal Neighbours

Cooperation between municipalities is essential to the effective delivery of parks and recreation services. Residents are not concerned about municipal boundaries as long as their access to and enjoyment of a recreational experience is unencumbered by local politics. Throughout Ontario, municipalities benefit from various types of cooperation, including joint services agreements that allow cost-efficient access to facilities by residents in another municipality (e.g., the agreement between Wellington North and Southgate).

## **8.3 Implementation Strategy**

Throughout the body of this Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or 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 this Plan, the Township is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather,

this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

The timing of the projects proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation and/or outside funding sources as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what is financially achievable by the Township at the present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects.

The Township has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the primary reasons for undertaking a Master Plan in the first place. Although Wellington North may be challenged in providing the appropriate financial resources to meet the Master Plan's recommendations, the Township should make every reasonable effort to implement these strategies through appropriate and acceptable means. The full implementation of this Plan will require the use of development charges, grants, fundraising and/or collaborations with community partners.

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Township's capital and operating budget development exercise. **It is expected that the Township will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the budget process.** In addition to funding availability, factors that might change priorities year to year may include:

- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;
- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in participation rates;
- availability of alternate providers; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

Priority is often, but not always, synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of facilities, parks, services, etc.). Generally, municipalities seek to address the widest range of needs and achieve maximum community benefit through the efficient use of resources.

Within the tables that follow, the priority and timing of recommendations are organized into the following categories, with key considerations and potential cost impacts identified for selected recommendations:

### Priority

High Priority: Immediate attention is recommended during the timeframe recommended.

Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.

Lower Priority: Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated/completed.

**Timing** (generally aligned with Council terms)Short-term: 2018 to 2022Medium-term: 2023 to 2026Longer-term: 2027 and beyondOngoing: Guidelines and practices to be followed on a continual basis**Considerations** (cost impacts, linkage to Master Plan principles, implementation factors, etc.)Potential Cost Impacts (all cost estimates to be confirmed through future study)

Minor (\$): estimated at \$50,000 or less

Moderate (\$\$): estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$500,000

Major (\$\$\$): estimated at \$500,000 or more

Best Practices/Guiding Principles (see Section 4.3)

Principle 1: Opportunities for All

Principle 2: Meaningful Engagement &amp; Communication

Principle 3: Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals

Principle 4: Responsive Facilities, Parks &amp; Trails

Principle 5: Customer-Focused Services

Principle 6: Commitment Toward Financial Sustainability

Note: In the following tables, the recommendations are numbered according to the order in which they are presented in the body of the Master Plan. They are not listed in priority order.

**Implementation Strategy: Township of Wellington North Recreation Master Plan**

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
<b>Service Delivery (Section 5)</b>			
1. Adopt a <b>municipal service delivery role</b> that reflects the Master Plan's guiding principles, with a primary focus on providing and maintaining core municipal assets, coordinating community-wide events and facilitating programming through a community development approach.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (all Principles)
2. Review <b>policies and procedures</b> at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 1)
3. Employ a <b>community development approach</b> to service delivery. The Township should focus on building capacity within local organizations and becoming involved in the direct provision of targeted services only where suitable community partners do not exist.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (all Principles)
4. Collect <b>registration data</b> annually from all organizations that use Township parks and facilities and <b>monitor facility utilization</b> to assist in tracking trends, changing demands and allocation.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 1)
5. Create a <b>volunteer recognition and awards program</b> to celebrate outstanding achievements and contributions to recreation services in the Township, and lend support to volunteer information networks where possible.	Medium	Short-term	Minor operating impact (\$)

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
6. Work with community organizations (e.g., Youth Action Council, etc.) to <b>maximize existing facilities through no to low-cost informal, unstructured activities and inclusive programming</b> for children, teens and seniors.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
7. Assess the viability of offering <b>March Break and/or summer camps</b> for children.	Medium	Short-term	Further study required
8. Support and seek opportunities to <b>enhance community events</b> that promote social cohesion, community pride and increase awareness of local traditions and talents, including initiatives that animate parks and open spaces (e.g., concerts and plays, outdoor fitness, nature appreciation, etc.).	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 1)
9. Encourage greater <b>coordination and expansion of seniors' activities</b> in Mount Forest.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 1); see recommendation 32
10. Maintain and publicly promote an <b>inventory of local recreation and culture programs and events</b> through the Leisure Calendar and other vehicles.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 2)
11. Seek <b>strategic partnerships</b> that are consistent with the Township's objective of accessing additional resources when pursuing projects that respond to demonstrated needs.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
12. Promote local programs, events and spaces by <b>working collaboratively with community organizations</b> (e.g., schools, service clubs, community groups, sports associations, public library, etc.).	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
13. Continue to distribute the annual <b>Leisure Calendar</b> and seek opportunities to improve the Township's <b>online community calendar</b> .	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 2)
14. Hold <b>regular forums</b> with community groups, organizations and the public to provide the ability to network and discuss issues and opportunities related to recreational service delivery, community needs, marketing, promotion and communication.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 2)
15. Use the Recreation Master Plan as a resource in developing the Township's <b>annual budget, long-term capital forecast and Development Charges Background Study</b> .	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 6)
16. Use the Township's <b>Community Development Fund</b> to guide municipal involvement and fundraising requirements for community-initiated projects.	High	Ongoing	Capital funding levels determined by Council (\$)
17. Continue to seek <b>alternative funding sources</b> (e.g., fundraising, cost sharing agreements, sponsorships, grants, etc.) to address outstanding capital and operating requirements. The full implementation of this Plan may require increases to the Township's budget if funding cannot be offset by other sources.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 6); external funding may accelerate implementation
18. Ensure that parks and recreation infrastructure is properly considered through the Township's <b>asset management planning</b> . Advance planning is required for major capital projects.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
19. Update <b>rates and fees</b> (including categories and associated policies) on a regular basis to provide a reasonable balance between true costs and public benefits.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 6)
20. Create a <b>Community Recreation Coordinator</b> position to act as a liaison between parks and recreation stakeholders and the Township, enhance communication and implement the Recreation Master Plan.	High	Short-term	Potential operating impact (\$\$) – further study required
21. Regularly <b>assess the staff complement</b> in relation to current and projected service levels, including a review of the use of part-time staff.	High	Ongoing	Potential operating impact (\$\$) – further study required
22. Develop a <b>succession plan</b> to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.	High	Short-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
23. Develop a <b>staff training and development plan</b> to articulate the skills and competencies needed to deliver on the Departmental objectives and set out an annual training program.	High	Short-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
24. <b>Reconstitute the Recreation &amp; Culture Committee</b> as an advisory body of Council. Develop a terms of reference that confirms the Committee’s mandate and guides the selection of members, which should include lay appointees from across the Township. Reference should be made to the best practices identified in the Recreation Master Plan.	High	Short-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
25. Ensure <b>alignment between the Recreation Master Plan and Municipal Cultural Plan</b> through the ongoing work of the Wellington North Cultural Roundtable and Recreation & Culture Committee.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)
<b>Facilities (Section 6)</b>			
26. Undertake a “refresh” of the arena component of the <b>Arthur &amp; Area Community Centre</b> , including replacement of the ice slab and other lifecycle requirements.	High	Short-term	Major capital impact (\$\$\$) – further study required
27. Create an <b>ice allocation policy</b> to develop a fair and transparent process for allocating ice time based on registration and accepted standards of play. The policy should include a requirement for annual ice scheduling meetings.	High	Short-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
28. Monitor ice usage, demand and the regional supply of arenas. Assess <b>long-term ice needs</b> (beyond 2031) and facility replacement strategies through the next Master Plan Update (or sooner if indications of accelerated demand or deteriorating condition).	Lower	Longer-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
29. Encourage <b>usage of arenas year-round</b> , including summer events, activities and floor sports planned by the Township, community partners and stakeholders	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)
30. Encourage the <b>community use of schools</b> (e.g., gymnasiums) for active recreation and sports.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
31. Maintain <b>management agreements and annual reporting requirements</b> to ensure that existing community-operated facilities remain financially viable and sustainable, well managed, safe and accessible, and responsive to local needs.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
32. Support initiatives to <b>enhance access to existing facilities for the growing senior's population in Mount Forest</b> . Dedicated space is not recommended, rather opportunities to maximize existing facilities should be sought.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3); see recommendation 9
33. Further explore the potential to relocate the <b>Arthur Seniors' Centre</b> to the upper hall at the Arthur & Area Community Centre, with consideration to long-term needs and a cost-benefit analysis.	High	Short-term	Potential minor capital impact (\$)
34. Evaluate opportunities to accommodate <b>arts and cultural activities and events</b> within the Township's parks and recreation system through features such as portable stages, amphitheatres and support amenities.	Medium	Ongoing	Budget impacts to be evaluated as opportunities arise
35. Develop a <b>splash pad in Mount Forest</b> , potentially at Bill Moody Lions Playground / King Street Fairgrounds Park, with the assistance of community fundraising. Ensure the provision of appropriate support amenities, such as benches, shade and pathway/sidewalk connections.	High	Short-term	Moderate capital impact (\$\$), partially offset by fundraising
36. Replace the Lion Roy Grant Pool with a <b>new outdoor pool in Mount Forest</b> , potentially at Campbell deVore Park / Mount Forest & District Sports Complex, with the assistance of community fundraising.	High	Short-term	Major capital impact (\$\$\$), partially offset by fundraising
37. Strive to <b>provide playgrounds within 500-metres of new residential areas</b> within urban centres. Playground locations should be unobstructed by pedestrian barriers (e.g., highways, rail lines and waterways) and be connected to surrounding residential areas (e.g., sidewalks, walkways and trails).	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
38. Establish a <b>playground replacement program</b> , with a short-term focus on playgrounds in Campbell deVore Park (including the pathway) and Birmingham Street Lions Park (including flood control measures). Regular inspections may identify other capital priorities or preventative maintenance requirements. Playgrounds should be designed to comply with AODA requirements and be welcoming and accessible to all families, including the phase-out of sand surface materials in favour of engineered wood fibre.	High	Short-term	Minor capital impact (\$) – site-specific evaluation required
39. Develop <b>one youth ball diamond</b> at the Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park in the short-term.	High	Short-term	Minor capital impact (\$)
40. Develop <b>two lit ball diamonds</b> at a future park site in Mount Forest to accommodate longer-term needs.	Medium	Longer-term	Moderate capital impact (\$\$)
41. Relocate the <b>batting cage</b> at Campbell deVore Park to Mount Forest Fairgrounds to support the Optimist diamond.	Lower	Short-term	Minor capital impact (\$)
42. Develop an <b>itemized list of repairs, upgrades and improvements for Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds Park</b> including (but not limited to) lifecycle replacement of the pavilion/washrooms and ball diamond lighting, fencing and/or netting.	High	Short-term	Moderate capital impact (\$\$) – site-specific evaluation required
43. Develop <b>one full size soccer field</b> at a future park site in Mount Forest to accommodate longer-term needs.	Medium	Longer-term	Minor capital impact (\$)
44. Consider the development of <b>multi-use courts</b> (tennis, pickleball, basketball and/or ball hockey) within future park development.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
45. Develop a <b>skate park in Arthur</b> in the short-term, with the assistance of community fundraising. Site selection and design should comply with municipal standards and youth should be engaged in the design process.	High	Short-term	Minor capital impact (\$), partially offset by fundraising
46. Consider the installation of <b>pavilions</b> within future community parks and open space parks.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
47. Begin planning to create an <b>off-leash park as a trial project</b> . This will require: (a) a site evaluation exercise to consider appropriate site characteristics, compatibility and impacts, and design; and (b) identification of an organization to sponsor the park and oversee its management.	Lower	Medium-term	Minor capital impact (\$); site and partner required
48. Utilize the Township's Community Initiated Project Guidelines to evaluate municipal participation in <b>partnerships or unsolicited proposals</b> involving facilities not specifically identified in this Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
<b>Parks &amp; Trails (Section 7)</b>			
49. Utilize the Master Plan's <b>parkland classification hierarchy</b> to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level and the amenities that they provide.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
50. Strive to achieve a <b>minimum municipal parkland service level of 2.75 hectares per 1,000 residents</b> , which would require an <b>additional 13.8 hectares of parkland by 2031</b> to meet current and future needs. To maintain a walkable park system, the Township should strive to provide a neighbourhood or community park within <b>500-metres</b> of all residential areas in urban centres, unobstructed by pedestrian barriers (e.g., highways, rail lines and waterways) and connected to surrounding residential areas (e.g., sidewalks, walkways and trails).	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4); majority of land to be acquired through development process
51. Secure <b>additional parkland (a minimum of 6 hectares) for sports fields in Mount Forest</b> , either through a park expansion or establishment of a new community park.	Medium	Medium-term	Potential moderate capital impact (\$\$) – further study required
52. Establish a <b>strategy for long-term parkland acquisition</b> , consisting of neighbourhood park development in new subdivisions (through parkland dedication) and community park expansion/development (through a variety of means).	High	Short-term	Best practice (Principle 4)
53. Maximize <b>parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu</b> through as per the provisions of the County Official Plan and Planning Act.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 6)
54. Regularly review the Township's <b>fixed rate (per unit) for cash-in-lieu</b> to ensure that it reflects market conditions and current levels of service. Until such time as the Township meets its parkland provision target, cash-in-lieu should be used primarily for future parkland acquisitions, rather than park development.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 6)

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
55. Ensure that <b>parkland conveyed</b> to the Township is suitable for its intended use. Avoid developing or accepting neighbourhood park 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. Accepting undevelopable Open Space lands (e.g., storm water management ponds, woodlots, valley lands, floodplains, hazard lands, etc.) as part of the parkland dedication requirement is also strongly discouraged (the Township may assume these lands through voluntary dedication or easement if appropriate).	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
56. Where necessary, employ <b>alternative acquisition tools</b> to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.	Lower	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
57. Maintain a commitment to <b>accessibility, safety and comfort</b> for all ages and abilities within the Township's parks system through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Greater commitment should be given to the provision of <b>support amenities</b> (such as washrooms, shade, benches/seating areas, bike racks, etc.) and <b>seamless connectivity</b> within the parks, open space and trails system.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
58. Review <b>park maintenance and operational service levels</b> on a regular basis to ensure that they reflect community needs and effective operating practices.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5); budget impacts to be evaluated
59. Promote opportunities for <b>unstructured play, passive recreation and naturalization efforts</b> within the Township's parks system, where appropriate.	Medium	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
60. Consider <b>parkland renewal and redevelopment projects</b> in the Township's long-term capital plan to address aging infrastructure and future potential. Examples include playground replacement, support structures and amenities (e.g., benches, washrooms, etc.), park and sport field fencing, parking lots, tree canopy, etc.	High	Ongoing	Potential moderate capital impact (\$\$) – site-specific evaluation required
61. Work with landowners and the business community to identify a long-term plan for the <b>Arthur Community Park</b> property (and Marvin Howe Trail) on Wellington Road 109, with consideration given to gateway and open space features.	Lower	Short-term	Further study and external funding required
62. Establish consistent and high quality <b>signage</b> at all municipal facilities, parks and along trail heads to enhance branding and wayfinding.	Medium	Medium-term	Minor capital impact (\$)
63. Assign <b>high priority to the creation and promotion of trail and active transportation routes</b> , as guided by the Wellington County Active Transportation Master Plan, ongoing public input, and opportunities created by the development approvals process.	High	Ongoing	Potential moderate capital impact (\$\$) – site-specific evaluation required

Recommendations	Priority	Timing	Considerations
64. <b>Evaluate future trail development and connections</b> through the use of existing corridors (e.g., abandoned rail lines, unopened road allowances, utility corridors, etc.) and the land development process, including trails in new subdivisions (e.g., through dedication).	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
65. Where gaps exist in the trails system, consider the installation of <b>sidewalks and/or on-road signed routes</b> to connect pedestrians and/or cyclists to trail networks and destinations (e.g., Campbell deVore Park), where appropriate.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
66. Seek <b>connections between communities, municipalities and regional trail networks</b> (e.g., Arthur to Damascus, Grand Valley, Elora-Cataract Trail, etc.). Coordinate with the Conservation Authority, County and adjacent municipalities for any projects that may extend beyond the Township.	Lower	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 3)
67. Pursue the development of <b>looped trails</b> , including the renewal of the Marvin Howe Trail and connection to the River Trail in Arthur.	High	Ongoing	Potential minor capital impact (\$) offset by fundraising
68. Continue to emphasize the proper design, construction and maintenance of the trail network. Utilize the <b>design standards and guidelines</b> in applicable provincial regulations as well as the County's Active Transportation Plan for all trail construction projects.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 4)
69. Maintain <b>Trail Committees</b> and engage them on a regular basis to confirm trail routes, phasing options, and maintenance requirements and responsibilities, recognizing that opportunities and priorities may change over time. Consult with the public and community stakeholders in advance of any trail development projects.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)
70. Formalize <b>agreements with private landowners</b> that own property containing public trails.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)
71. Work with the County and other partners to develop and distribute <b>mapping and promotional material</b> (in both hard copy and electronic versions, including the Leisure Calendar) on trail and active transportation routes in the Township. All future trails should include <b>appropriate signage</b> to delineate the network and enhance wayfinding for users	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 2)
<b>Implementation (Section 8)</b>			
72. Implement a system for the regular <b>implementation, monitoring and review</b> of the Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	Best practice (Principle 5)
73. <b>Reconfirm the direction, priorities and accomplishments</b> of the Master Plan in 2023.	High	Medium-term	Best practice (Principle 5)
74. Undertake a <b>comprehensive review and update</b> of the Master Plan no later than 2028.	High	Longer-term	Minor capital impact (\$)



**Appendix**

## Appendix A – Record of Public Input

### Public Open Houses (November 2017) – Notes and Comments

- Requests for a second ice pad.
- Provide opportunities for groups to be involved in ice allocation.
- Desire for a children’s day camp run by the Township.
- More unstructured, drop-in activities available after-school.
- Offer an off-leash dog park.
- Greater collaboration and communication between Township staff and groups.
- Enhanced maintenance of trails, parks and facilities.
- Consider building an indoor pool or covering the existing outdoor pool.
- More programs for youth and seniors.
- Improve the indoor walking track.
- Utilize community spaces for arts and culture programs and showcases.
- Provide a senior’s centre locally that offers a variety of services and programs.
- Utilize community facilities and spaces better and provide more affordable rates.

### Stakeholder Group Workshops (November 2017) – Attendance

#### Stakeholder Session Attendees – 34 groups participated (54 persons)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Arthur Agricultural Society           | • Mount Forest Horticultural Society             |
| • Arthur Christian School               | • Mount Forest Family Health Team                |
| • Arthur Horticultural Society          | • Mount Forest Lions                             |
| • Arthur Lions                          | • Mount Forest Optimist Club                     |
| • Arthur Merchants                      | • Mount Forest Minor Ball                        |
| • Arthur Minor Hockey                   | • Mount Forest Minor Hockey                      |
| • Arthur Minor Lacrosse                 | • Mount Forest Seniors                           |
| • Arthur Minor Softball                 | • Mount Forest Shuffleboard                      |
| • Arthur and Area Skating Club          | • Mount Forest Slo-Pitch                         |
| • Arthur Optimist Club                  | • Mount Forest Trails Sub-Committee              |
| • Arthur Public School                  | • North Wellington Bravehearts*                  |
| • Arthur Seniors                        | • St. John’s Catholic School*                    |
| • Arthur SU Sportz Camp                 | • St. Mary’s Catholic School*                    |
| • Arthur Soccer Club                    | • Saugeen Fitness                                |
| • Conn Pavilion Board*                  | • Skate Canada Mount Forest                      |
| • Conservation Authorities*             | • Trails Sub Committee*                          |
| • Continuing Education                  | • Victoria Cross Public School (submitted input) |
| • Curling Clubs*                        | • Wellington Heights                             |
| • Cultural Round Table Committee*       | • Wellington North Ringette                      |
| • Damascus Hall Board                   | • Wellington Roller Derby                        |
| • Mount Forest Agricultural Society     | • Youth Action Council*                          |
| • Mount Forest and District Soccer Club |  |

\*invited but did not attend

## Public Open Houses (March 2018) – Notes and Comments

Two public input sessions were held in March 2018 to present the draft Master Plan to the public and receive their feedback. The sessions were held in Arthur on March 27, 2018 and in Mount Forest on March 28, 2018. The following is a summary of feedback from both sessions and written correspondence. The Master Plan has been revised to address key input.

### Information Sessions

- Glad to see a Master Plan. Good for all of Wellington North. Would like to volunteer to help out.
- Would like to see our parks kept better. Empty the garbage, pick up the branches and rake the leaves.
- More grocery stores would be handy in Arthur. Also interested in an indoor pool (Arthur).
- Need a lighted and fenced soccer court in Mount Forest for multi-sport use (soccer, basketball, tennis and ball hockey). Near the fairgrounds would provide easy access to most of the community.

### Written Submissions

- Specific feedback provided on several recommendations – all supportive.
- Very impressed with the draft Master Plan – it supports improved health and wellness in the community. Hope that local groups, businesses and residents will work together to implement the Plan.
- Mount Forest Outdoor Pool – construct a temporary pop-up pool to substitute the outdoor pool until newly constructed
- Indoor playground area at Mount Forest Sports Complex
- Recreation usage of the Saugeen River at Murphy Park (water activities)
- Written submission from Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (summarized below):
  - Commended the Township for such a thorough review and mindful recommendations
  - Recommendations and plan implementation should be viewed with an “8-80 cities approach”, which considers community design that integrated health, safety, connectivity, accessibility and inclusivity for all residents
  - Consider ensuring both active (e.g., playground) and passive (e.g., benches, picnic tables) amenities are included in all park spaces
  - Accessibility for all ages and abilities is paramount and the Township should consider AODA requirements in any infrastructure updates, upgrades or additions
  - Consider a recommendation to develop a “strategy” for the provision of no-cost to low-cost programming or subsidized programming to ensure recreation is promoted to, and accessible by, all individuals
  - Consider a recommendation to create a Wellington North-specific Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan to: a) ensure seamless connectivity within and between communities in Wellington North for active transportation and recreational purposes; and b) to facilitate use of trails for all residents
  - Additional considerations were identified for specific recommendations

## Online Survey – Data Tables

See following pages

**Town of Wellington North Online Community Survey - Recreation Master Plan**

**Q1 In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in Wellington North or elsewhere? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participate, either at home or in public. (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training	170	39%
Attending special events (e.g. Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.)	320	74%
Baseball or Softball	182	42%
Basketball	31	7%
Bowling	76	17%
Curling	73	17%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	131	30%
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	182	42%
Gymnastics	29	7%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating, or Ice Skating	231	53%
Lacrosse	75	17%
Lawn Bowling	3	1%
Martial Arts (e.g. kick-boxing, karate)	45	10%
Performance Arts (e.g. dance, music, drama)	70	16%
Pickleball	14	3%
Running or Jogging	124	29%
Skateboarding	28	6%
Soccer	60	14%
Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit)	134	31%
Swimming (Recreational)	228	52%
Tennis	13	3%
Trail Walking or Hiking for Leisure	237	54%
Use of Playground Equipment	215	49%
Use of Splash Pad	179	41%
Visual Arts (e.g. painting, sculpture)	60	14%
Volleyball	28	6%
Pre-School or Children's Programs (e.g., Early Years, drop-in)	78	18%
Teen Programs (e.g. summer camps, youth club)	51	12%
Seniors Programs (e.g. luncheons, cards, special interest courses)	25	6%
Other	31	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	0	

**Q2 Are you and members of your household able to participate in parks and recreation activities (e.g. sports, fitness, outdoor play, etc.) as often as you would like?**

	#	%
Yes	219	50%
No	192	44%
Don't Know	23	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	1	

**Q3 Why are you and members of your household NOT able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like? (select up to 3 responses)**

	#	%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	75	40%
Lack of desired facilities or programs	127	68%
Program not offered at a convenient time	82	44%
Lack of money / Too expensive	31	17%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	49	26%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	29	16%
Health problems / Disability / Age	10	5%
Language / Cultural Barrier	0	0%
Lack of Child Care	8	4%
Don't Know	1	1%
Other	13	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	248	

**Q4 Generally, what proportion of your household's parks and recreation needs are met within the Township of Wellington North?**

	#	%
All (100%)	19	5%
Most (67-99%)	114	27%
About Half (34-66%)	156	37%
Some (1-33%)	104	25%
None (0%)	16	4%
Don't Know	10	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	16	

**Q5 What parks and recreation activities do you or members of your household participate in most frequently outside of the Township of Wellington North? (select up to 3 responses)**

	#	%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training	39	11%
Attending special events (e.g. Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.)	82	24%
Baseball or Softball	37	11%
Basketball	7	2%
Bowling	11	3%
Curling	4	1%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	36	10%
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	26	8%
Gymnastics	22	6%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating, or Ice Skating	32	9%
Lacrosse	11	3%
Lawn Bowling	0	0%
Martial Arts (e.g. kickboxing, karate)	4	1%
Performance Arts (e.g. dance, music, drama)	31	9%
Pickleball	5	1%
Running or Jogging	8	2%
Skateboarding	10	3%
Soccer	4	1%
Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit)	100	29%
Swimming (Recreational)	126	37%
Tennis	6	2%
Trail Walking or Hiking for Leisure	68	20%
Use of Playground Equipment	17	5%
Use of Splash Pad	65	19%
Visual Arts (e.g. painting, sculpture)	12	3%
Volleyball	6	2%
Pre-School or Children's Programs (e.g., Early Years, drop-in)	19	6%
Teen Programs (e.g. summer camps, youth club)	16	5%
Seniors Programs (e.g. luncheons, cards, special interest courses)	4	1%
Other	24	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	91	

**Q6 Why does your household participate in these activities outside of the Township of Wellington North? (select up to 3 responses)**

	#	%
"Connected" to other community/used to live there	35	10%
Closer to home	13	4%
Facility/program is not available in the Township	246	72%
Facility/program not available at the preferred time	101	30%
Less expensive	39	11%
Quality of facility/program is superior	97	29%
Tournaments / special events / travel teams	51	15%
Don't know	9	3%
Other	37	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	95	

**Q7 The Mount Forest Outdoor Pool is aging and may need to be replaced in the future. Which of the following options would best suit the needs of your household? (select one only) Please note that any major change to the existing pool would trigger additional public consultation - this question will provide preliminary input for future consideration.**

	#	%
Close the pool when it is no longer feasible to repair	44	12%
Replace it with a new outdoor pool	44	12%
Replace it with a splash pad	22	6%
Replace it with both a new outdoor pool and splash pad	158	44%
Don't know	92	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	75	

**Q8 Did you or members of your household use the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool within the past 2 years?**

	#	%
Yes	135	38%
No	218	61%
Don't know	7	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	75	

**Q9 What did you primarily use the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool for? (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Swimming Lessons	78	58%
Aquafit	11	8%
Lane Swimming	16	12%
Recreational Swimming	112	83%
Other	5	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	300	

**Q10 How would you characterize your usage of the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool?**

	#	%
Frequent	40	30%
Often	45	33%
Seldom	50	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	300	

**Q11 What is your level of satisfaction with the Mount Forest Outdoor Pool?**

	#	%
Not at all Satisfied	8	6%
Not Satisfied	40	30%
Neutral / Don't Know	51	38%
Satisfied	33	24%
Very Satisfied	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	300	

**Q12 Did you or members of your household use the Arthur Outdoor Pool within the past 2 years?**

	#	%
Yes	154	43%
No	202	56%
Don't Know	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	75	

**Q13 What did you primarily use the Arthur Outdoor Pool for? (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Swimming Lessons	39	26%
Aquafit	12	8%
Lane Swimming	5	3%
Recreational Swimming	129	85%
Other	10	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	284	

**Q14 How would you characterize your usage of the Arthur Outdoor Pool?**

	#	%
Frequent	23	15%
Often	44	29%
Seldom	85	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	283	

**Q15 What is your level of satisfaction with the Arthur Outdoor Pool?**

	#	%
Not at all Satisfied	8	5%
Not Satisfied	17	11%
Neutral / Don't Know	36	24%
Satisfied	73	48%
Very Satisfied	18	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	283	

**Q16 Are there any parks and recreation activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Township of Wellington North that are NOT currently available?**

	#	%
Yes	226	63%
No	35	10%
Don't Know	95	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	79	

**Q17 What parks and recreation activities would you like to see offered? (select up to three)**

	#	%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training	53	24%
Attending special events (e.g. Mount Forest Fireworks Festival, etc.)	17	8%
Baseball or Softball	6	3%
Basketball	10	4%
Bowling	5	2%
Curling	0	0%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	20	9%
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	21	9%
Gymnastics	32	14%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating, or Ice Skating	5	2%
Lacrosse	3	1%
Lawn Bowling	0	0%
Martial Arts (e.g. kick boxing, karate)	5	2%
Performance Arts (e.g. dance, music, drama)	28	13%
Pickleball	11	5%
Running or Jogging	4	2%
Skateboarding	16	7%
Soccer	3	1%
Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit)	29	13%
Swimming (Recreational)	29	13%
Tennis	9	4%
Trail Walking or Hiking for Leisure	25	11%
Use of Playground Equipment	3	1%
Use of Splash Pad	46	21%
Visual Arts (e.g. painting, sculpture)	16	7%
Volleyball	11	5%
Pre-School or Children's Programs (e.g., Early Years, drop-in)	13	6%
Teen Programs (e.g. summer camps, youth club)	27	12%
Seniors Programs (e.g. luncheons, cards, special interest courses)	6	3%
Other	71	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	211	

**Q18 In general, how important are the following items to your household?**

	Not At All Important		Not Important		Neither Important or Not Important		Important		Very Important		TOTAL #	Don't Know / Don't Use #	Skipped Question #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Indoor Recreation facilities such as arenas and community halls	2	1%	6	2%	16	5%	116	34%	201	59%	341	5	89
Outdoor Recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, and pavilions	2	1%	8	2%	18	5%	107	31%	207	61%	342	3	90
Trails and pathways	1	0%	9	3%	32	10%	125	37%	167	50%	334	5	96
Passive Parks that preserve natural areas and open space	2	1%	15	4%	51	15%	153	45%	118	35%	339	6	90
Arts and Culture facilities such as theatres, museums and galleries	16	5%	28	8%	100	30%	118	36%	69	21%	331	10	94

**Q19 What is your level of satisfaction with the following parks and facilities in the Township of Wellington North?**

	Not At All Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied		TOTAL #	Don't Know / Don't Use #	Skipped Question #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Indoor Recreation facilities such as arenas and community halls, but excluding schools	9	3%	37	11%	64	19%	172	51%	57	17%	339	5	91
Outdoor Recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, and pavilions	8	2%	45	13%	64	19%	173	52%	45	13%	335	9	91
Trails and pathways	14	4%	60	18%	95	29%	131	40%	27	8%	327	14	94
Passive Parks that preserve natural areas and open space	6	2%	41	13%	132	43%	112	36%	17	6%	308	35	92
Arts and Culture facilities such as heritage buildings and archives	14	5%	44	16%	140	51%	69	25%	8	3%	275	68	92

**Q20 What is your level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation opportunities in the Township of Wellington North for the following age groups?**

	Not At All Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied		TOTAL #	Don't Know / Don't Use #	Skipped Question #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Children (0-12 years)	12	4%	61	22%	62	23%	113	41%	25	9%	273	62	100
Teens (13-18 years)	32	14%	95	40%	64	27%	41	17%	4	2%	236	99	100
Young Adults (19-54 years)	18	6%	97	31%	100	32%	87	28%	11	4%	313	23	99
Older Adults (55-69 years)	8	4%	65	33%	71	36%	47	24%	5	3%	196	133	106
Seniors (70+)	11	6%	48	28%	67	39%	36	21%	10	6%	172	154	109

**Q21 To what degree do you oppose or support the Township spending additional public funds to improve or provide additional facilities, as listed below?**

	Strongly Oppose		Oppose		Neither Oppose nor Support		Support		Strongly Support		TOTAL #	Don't Know / Don't Use #	Skipped Question #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Acquisition of Parks and Open Space	3	1%	15	5%	90	28%	139	43%	78	24%	325	10	100
Arts and Cultural Spaces	14	4%	31	10%	115	36%	116	37%	40	13%	316	21	98
Arenas (indoor ice)	7	2%	24	7%	71	22%	129	39%	99	30%	330	6	99
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	4	1%	17	5%	80	25%	146	45%	77	24%	324	13	98
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	5	2%	19	6%	107	34%	147	47%	36	11%	314	24	97
Community Halls	4	1%	21	6%	94	28%	155	47%	56	17%	330	6	99
Indoor Pools	23	7%	16	5%	41	12%	71	21%	184	55%	335	4	96
Nature Trails	3	1%	4	1%	55	17%	141	43%	126	38%	329	9	97
Off-Leash Dog Parks	15	5%	24	8%	88	29%	107	35%	72	24%	306	31	98
Outdoor Ice Rinks	2	1%	16	5%	63	20%	134	42%	106	33%	321	15	99
Paved Multi-use Trails	6	2%	16	5%	85	26%	125	38%	97	29%	329	10	96
Pickleball Courts (outdoor)	9	4%	31	13%	126	51%	56	23%	24	10%	246	91	98
Playgrounds	2	1%	5	2%	51	16%	148	47%	112	35%	318	17	100
Skateboard Parks	11	4%	23	8%	101	35%	103	36%	49	17%	287	49	99
Soccer Fields	3	1%	12	4%	105	35%	135	45%	47	16%	302	30	103
Space for Seniors Activities	1	0%	6	2%	54	18%	158	52%	82	27%	311	37	97
Space for Youth Activities	1	0%	2	1%	37	12%	156	49%	125	39%	321	16	98
Splash Pads	6	2%	6	2%	43	13%	125	39%	143	44%	323	13	99
Swimming Pools (outdoor)	11	3%	15	5%	53	16%	134	41%	115	35%	328	8	99
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	2	1%	18	6%	119	42%	112	40%	32	11%	283	50	102

**Q22 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about parks and recreation in the Township.**

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		TOTAL #	Don't Know / Don't Use #	Skipped Question #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%			
Your household is satisfied with the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities in the Township.	13	4%	40	12%	84	26%	160	49%	30	9%	327	5	103
The Township's parks and recreation facilities are well maintained.	14	4%	60	18%	62	19%	162	49%	30	9%	328	3	104
The Township's parks and recreation programs are affordable.	4	1%	34	11%	96	31%	158	51%	20	6%	312	20	103
The Township's parks and recreation facilities provide good value for your tax dollars.	12	4%	44	14%	122	38%	123	39%	18	6%	319	13	103
Recreation and culture programs should be provided at multi-use hubs rather than stand-alone facilities.	5	2%	13	4%	128	42%	124	40%	38	12%	308	22	105
Parks and recreation services should be a high priority for Township Council.	3	1%	7	2%	42	13%	173	53%	101	31%	326	6	103
Arts and cultural services should be a high priority for Township Council.	14	5%	36	12%	121	40%	92	30%	43	14%	306	24	105

**Q23 Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding parks and recreation opportunities in the Township of Wellington North (maximum 100 words)**  
On file

**Q24 How many people, including yourself, live in your household?**

	#	%
1 person	13	4%
2 persons	73	23%
3 persons	58	18%
4 persons	110	34%
5 persons	40	12%
6 or more persons	30	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	111	

**Q25 Describe your household:**

	#	%
Couple with no dependent children	64	20%
Couple with one or more dependent children	203	62%
Single parent with one or more dependent children	16	5%
Adult living alone	13	4%
More than 1 adult sharing a residence	30	9%
Under 18 living alone (assuming 19+ is Adult)	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	109	

**Q26 Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.**

	#	%
Under 10 years	157	19%
10-19 years	155	18%
20-34 years	174	21%
35-54 years	215	25%
55-69 years	96	11%
70 years and over	50	6%
<b>Total All Ages</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	114	
<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>2.64</b>	

**Q27 What is your age?**

	#	%
Under 18 years	3	1%
18-24 years	17	5%
25-45 years	179	54%
45-64 years	111	34%
65 years or older	19	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	106	

**Q28 Are you a resident of the Township of Wellington North?**

	#	%
Yes	306	93%
No	22	7%
Unsure	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>100%</b>
Skipped Question	106	

**Q29 Which community do you live closest to?**

	#	%
Arthur	126	43%
Conn	5	2%
Conestoga Estates	3	1%
Damascus	10	3%
Kenilworth	10	3%
Mount Forest	140	47%
Riverstown	1	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>
Prefer not to say	11	4%
Skipped Question	129	

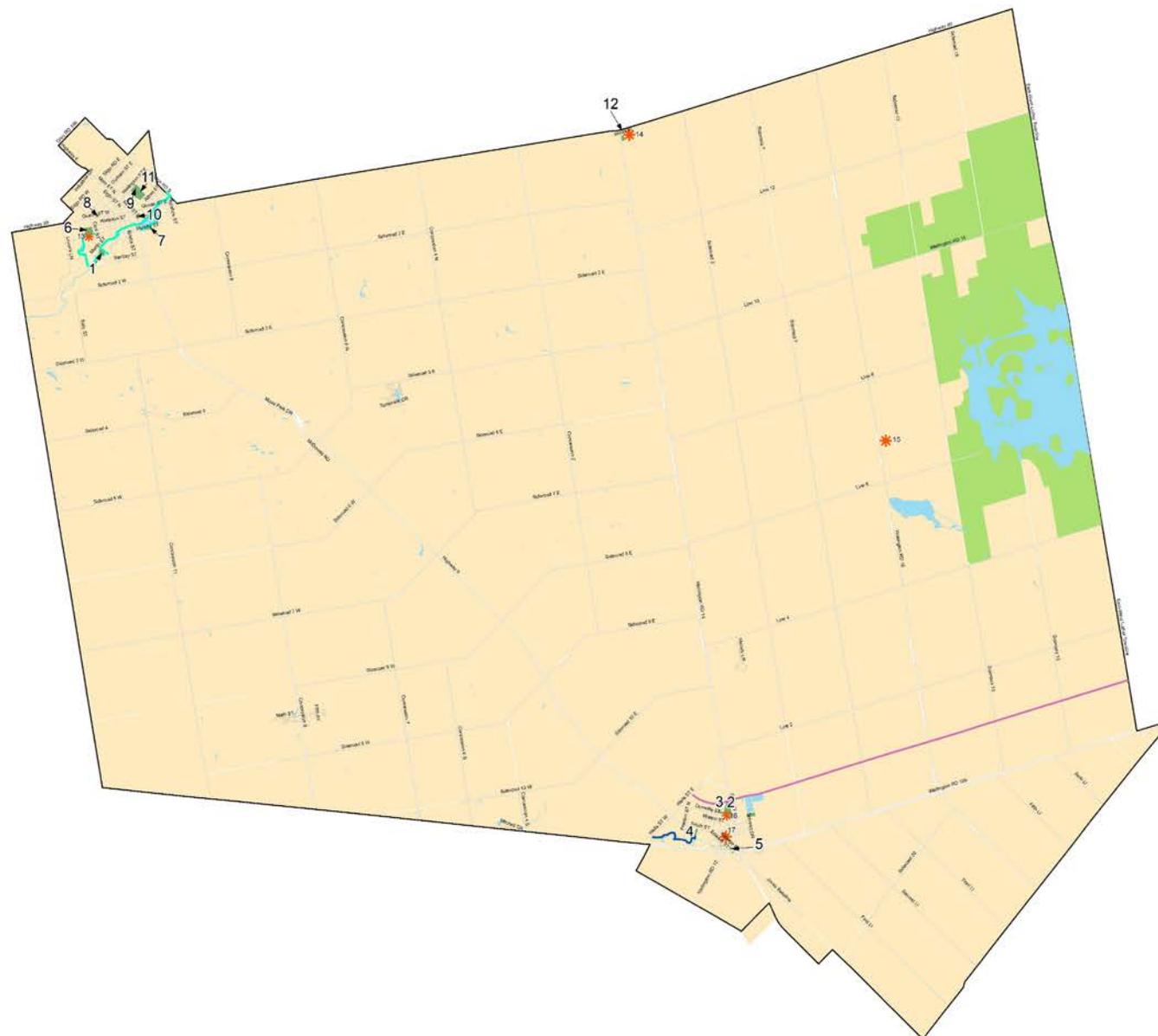
**Q30 You indicated you are not a resident of the Township of Wellington North. Where do you reside?**

	#
Southgate	15
Grey County	2
Holstein	2
Minto	2
Mapleton	1

**Q31 How did you hear about this survey? (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Township of Wellington North Website	24	7%
Township of Wellington North Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	230	71%
Newspaper	14	4%
From a Councillor	2	1%
Recreation / Sports / Community Organization	13	4%
Schools	3	1%
Poster at a Community Facility	4	1%
Word of Mouth	49	15%
Other	18	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Skipped Question	110	

# Appendix B – Mapping



**LEGEND**

- Parks**
  1. Angus Smith Park
  2. Arthur Community Centre and Fairgrounds
  3. Arthur Opti-Mrs. Playground and Pavilion
  4. Arthur Lions Playground
  5. McPherson Park
  6. Campbell deVore Park
  7. Murphy Park
  8. Birmingham Street Park
  9. Mount Forest Fairgrounds
  10. Veteran's Memorial Park
  11. William (Bill) Moody Park
  12. Conn Pavilion and Playground
- Community Facilities**
  13. Mount Forest and District Sports Complex
  14. Conn Pavilion
  15. Damascus Community Centre
  16. Arthur and Area Community Centre
  17. Arthur Seniors Centre
- Open Space**
- Trails**
  - River Trail
  - Saugeen Valley Trail
  - West Luther Trail

