



— Township of —

SEVERN

Severn Recreation Master Plan

Township of Severn
September 2022

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Prepared by thinc design in association with Mehak, Kelly and Associates, TCI Management Consultants Inc and Oraclepoll Research Ltd.

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Figure 1-1: Washago Centennial Park playground

1.0 Introduction

The Severn Recreation Master Plan is a high-level document that provides direction on municipal recreation services for the next 15 years. The Plan contains needs assessments and recommendations for three distinct service areas: Programs and Events; Facilities; and Parks, Trails, and Boat Launches. It also provides direction on service delivery and a detailed implementation plan including timing, cost estimates, and related considerations. The Master Plan is a living document, and should be reviewed and updated every five years.

Community Context

Geographic Context

The Township of Severn is located in Simcoe County, and is bordered by Oro-Medonte, Bass Lake, and Orillia to the south, Lake Couchiching and Ramara to the east, Georgian Bay to the west and Severn River to the north (Figure 1-2). Severn is also within a 15 to 45 minute drive to Midland, Gravenhurst, Orillia, and Barrie, and is a 90-minute drive to GTA. In addition to the extensive coastline along Lake Couchiching, the Trent-Severn Waterway runs through the Township, and there are many small lakes and waterways. From east to west, the Township is bounded by Highway 11 on the east and Highway 400 to the west – both major traffic arteries.

Severn is geographically large at 523 square kilometers, and contains seven settlement areas in a rural setting: Severn Falls and Area, Burrows/MacLean Lakes, Coldwater, Marchmont, Westshore, Ardtrea, and Washago. Westshore is undergoing rapid development, and along with Coldwater, has been identified in the draft Official Plan as a designated growth area. There is approximately half an hour's drive between Westshore (in the east) and Coldwater (in the west). Washago is also an established settlement area, approximately a half-hour drive from Coldwater and ten minutes from Westshore.



Figure 1-2: Township of Severn geographic context

Population Considerations

A comprehensive socio-demographic profile was provided in the Recreation Master Plan Preliminary Report. This section provides a brief overview of the content from that report. As shown in Table 1-1, in comparison to both the County and the Province, Severn’s median income sits between the other two jurisdictions. The proportion newcomer population is lower, and the Indigenous population figure (595, or 4.4%) is comparable to Simcoe County. Partial data has been released from the 2021 census, including an updated population figure of 14,576, representing growth of 8.3% since 2016.

In terms of seasonal and permanent residents, as of 2016 approximately 33% of the population was seasonal, and this proportion is expected to decrease slightly

over the term of the Plan (to 2036) to about 28%. The combination of overall population growth and a decrease in seasonal residents indicates a combination of seasonal dwelling conversions to permanent homes, and new residents.

Table 1-2 presents the Simcoe County age distribution projections from 2020 to 2036. The County’s population is aging, and over time the proportion of population below 75 years will decrease, while the proportion of population over 75 years will increase. This is a province-wide trend, so the same pattern is expected in Severn.



Figure 1-3: Coldwater Grist Mill

Table 1-1: Socio-demographic highlights

Data Description	Severn	Simcoe County	Ontario
Population	14,576	479,650	13,448,494
Median after-tax income of households in 2015	\$66,996	\$67,022	\$65,285
Prevalence of low income base on the Low-Income Measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (%)	11.1%	11.4%	14.4%
Non-immigrants	12,440 (of 13,390) 92.9%	407,880 (of 471,130) 86.6%	9,188,815 (of 13,448,494) 68.3%
Immigrants	950 7.1%	407,880 13%	3,852,145 29.1%
Indigenous Population	595 (of 13,390) 4.4%	21,960 (of 471,130) 4.7%	374,395 (of 13,242,160) 2.9%

*At the time of this writing, only partial data from the 2021 census has been released, including the updated 2021 population figure of 14,576. The remaining figures in the table are all from the 2016 census.

Table 1-2: Simcoe County projected populations and age distribution

Year	0-4	5-14	15-54	55-74	75 +	Total
2020	27,142 (5.0%)	57,753 (10.7%)	270,801 (50.3%)	139,427 (25.9%)	43,035 (8.0%)	538,188
2025	28,772 (4.9%)	60,736 (10.4%)	286,498 (49.2%)	150,873 (25.9%)	55,673 (9.6%)	582,552
2031	30,132 (4.8%)	64,635 (10.3%)	303,410 (48.2%)	158,279 (25.2%)	72,383 (11.5%)	628,839
2036	31,368 (4.7%)	67,358 (10.1%)	318,817 (48%)	157,740 (23.7%)	89,630 (13.5%)	664,913

Source: Ontario Population Projections 2019 - 2046, Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2020.



Figure 2-1: Washago Centennial Park

2.0 Trends in Parks and Recreation Service Provision

This section discusses a number of prevalent trends in the provision of community parks and recreation services. It is not an exhaustive review of ever-emerging and evolving changes in the field, and some of those presented may not be immediately relevant to the Township of Severn. At the same time, they represent directions that might be applicable today on some level or may present opportunities as the Master Plan is implemented over time. The topics covered are presented under three main headings:

1. overarching trends
2. substantive service trends
3. healthy active living

2.1 Overarching Trends

Urban Out-migration

So long Toronto: COVID-19 pandemic hastens Canada's urban exodus

OTTAWA (Reuters) - Canada's urban exodus picked up steam into the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, with tens of thousands of people leaving Toronto and Montreal for smaller cities or rural areas, official data showed on Thursday.

More than 64,000 people left Toronto for other parts of Ontario from mid-2020 to mid-2021, up 14% from the previous 12-month period, according to Statistics Canada population estimates, with another 6,600 moving out of province.

By Julie Gordon January 13, 2020

The Ontario Rural Institute webinar "Rural Ontario's Population Growth During COVID - 19: Fad or Trend?"¹ examined the accelerated movement of population from the GTA to primarily MNUs (non-major urban areas) that has apparently paralleled the pandemic. Research revealed that, as early as 2016, two trends were resulting in population movement to MNUs: retired/semi-retired baby boomers started moving out of the Toronto area and rising housing prices in the GTA were triggering a more general outmigration. Available data, which did not include the impact of COVID-19

on this trend, showed an outmigration of 50,000 in 2020. The researchers estimate of the outmigration including that prompted by COVID was up to 80,000. Some of this additional movement would have been those who were on the cusp of retirement when COVID hit, and fast-tracked plans to leave. Although a levelling off is anticipated within the next few years, growth in MNUs will remain strong at 1% to 1.5%.

Strategy Corp's white paper 'Small Towns, Big Opportunities' identifies both push and pull factors that have contributed to this trend. The push factor was strongest for those communities that were within commuting distance from the GTA and had house prices that were attractive to those who could not afford to buy in Toronto, especially households with young families were entering the housing market. The pull factor focused on the ability for some to move out of GTA and work from home as well as those returning home since they were no longer tied to a place-based job.

¹ <https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/knowledge-centre/visual-resources>

Pandemic Recovery

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) -led ReImagine RREC - Renew, Retool, Engage and Contribute is a multi-phase coronavirus (COVID-19) recovery initiative for the parks and recreation sector. In Phase 1 of this initiative CPRA and the ReImagine RREC Leadership Team identified the early outcomes learnings from surveys and focus groups. Some of these were already known factors that have accelerated or been exacerbated by the pandemic including sub-population groups being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and staffing challenges within municipal parks and recreation. Others are a direct result of the pandemic's impact on day-to-day life and are anticipated to continue influencing² service delivery over the long-term. Although not mutually exclusive, key themes are summarized below by service area.

Parks, Trails and Open Space

The report notes the public's increased recognition of the importance of outdoor activity during the pandemic as well as dramatic increases in the use of parks, paths and trails. This has stimulated support for renewal and expansion of these assets to make them more accessible for year-round use, as well as demand to address the complexity of managing visitor volumes and user conflicts. 2020 data revealed 70% of Canadians expressed an increased appreciation for parks and green spaces; 66% reported increased levels of walking/jogging outdoors, and there was a 25% increase in cycling.

² <https://cpa.ca/initiatives/reimagine-rrec/>

Programs, Activities and Events

The report notes that some users are hesitant to return to organized sport and recreation programming, with a parallel increase in self-directed unstructured recreation and physical activity. At the same time, COVID-19 lockdowns have resulted in the widespread decrease of physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour, underscoring the importance of promoting the integration of health-enhancing physical activity into everyday living and capitalizing on the heightened interest in parks and outdoor green spaces. The demand for outdoor, holistic and self-directed programming, including winter programming, is increasing. "Animating" outdoor programming to attract existing and new users - including vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations - has been identified as a best or "next" practice by leaders.

The return to structured group programming, and particularly indoor activities, as well as community events and other mass gatherings are expected to slowly to occur. Online and on-demand programming will become a permanent component of recreation services, with a focus on improvements in quality and equity.

Facilities and Amenities

It was noted that during the pandemic, recreation centres were facilities that transitioned to a variety of emerging uses such as food banks and vaccinations centres. It will be important to ensure facilities are designed and built to maximize both adaptability for various uses and resistance to future contagions.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Accessibility Apps

Beyond The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Design of Public Spaces Standards, accessibility and, therefore, inclusion is being facilitated by digital technologies that assist with navigating the built environment and day-to-day participation in recreation. Two examples of these applications are MagnusCards and a CNIB project in Regina.

MagnusCards³

MagnusCards is a Canadian digital application dedicated to removing accessibility barriers. It is a tool that allows people with Autism and cognitive disabilities to live with independence and inclusion. MagnusCards comprises a library of digital guides (Card Decks) to destinations and activities. Each digital guide combines a proven method of instruction (applied behaviour analysis), visual cues and step-by-step instructions to map experiences, and prompts and positive reinforcement to support experiential learning. The Town of Halton Hills has developed three sets of MagnusCard decks for ActiVan, Halton Hills Public Library, and Recreation and Parks. The MagnusCards App and MagnusCards are free to download and use. The Recreation and Parks decks are as follows:

1. How to purchase a Recreation Pass
2. How to register for programs online
3. How to create a Recreation and Parks Online Account

³ <https://www.haltonhills.ca/en/news/town-launches-magnuscards-for-recreation-parks.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.spra.sk.ca/Blog/cnib-jrpm-2020/>

4. How to prepare to go swimming at a pool
5. How to prepare to go skating at an arena

Wascana Park Accessibility Project

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) recently completed a project in Regina's Wascana Park that installed more than 230 GPS points that speak to the BlindSquare Event app. The GPS points help mark amenities such as benches, park lookouts and monuments, but they also help mark the meandering trails which can be difficult to navigate. The project has resulted in Wascana Park, one of the largest urban parks in North America, becoming accessible for people with vision loss and is the third park in Regina to be installed on the app. CNIB is open to exploring opportunities with other communities to create accessible parks and recreation services.⁴

Gender-neutral Facilities

Gender-neutral facilities are becoming the norm in recreation centres, advancing inclusivity while increasing flexibility in the use of space. Gender-neutral changerooms and washrooms contain private change cubicles and washroom stalls within the larger space. Designated gender washrooms are smaller and fewer.

Environmentally-focused Parks Planning and Management

In recent years, and particularly as a result of restrictions on indoor activity due to COVID-19, natural spaces have become much more attractive to people seeking recreation and physical activity. In some communities this has led to a large influx of visitors looking for more rural/natural settings, creating concern over the ability of some spaces to support a significant increase in use. While this trend may abate somewhat post-COVID as previous routines are resumed, it is likely that some of these 'undiscovered' places will continue to attract user levels beyond historic levels. Establishing appropriate boundaries around human encroachment on natural ecosystems is essential to avoid causing irreparable harm to the environment we want to experience for our enhanced well-being.

EcoHealth Ontario is a research and public policy collaborative made up of professionals in the fields of public health, medicine, education, planning and the environment, which focuses on the connected and interdependent issues of mental and environmental health. Their vision is: "that everyone benefits from the provision of well-distributed, high quality greenspace, is aware of its contributions to health and well-being, and has access to its benefits." EcoHealth reports (e.g. A Conceptual Framework to Understand the Business Case for EcoHealth in Ontario; Conserving Biodiversity: A Public Health Imperative, and Leveraging the Benefits of Green Space) and tools can help municipalities achieve their own ecohealth related goals.

There are many opportunities to incorporate stronger environmental practices in parks and recreation service development and provision. In addition to the need to restore, protect and enhance the natural environment, municipalities can demonstrate leadership in how to take practical steps in this direction.



Figure 2-2: Bass Lake Woodlands Park

2.2 Substantive Service Areas

Developing Arts, Culture and Heritage

Public Art

Public art is often used to increase the vibrancy and attractiveness of parks, while supporting local artists and artisans. Public art can include both stand-alone commissioned pieces and art integrated into parks and trails. Commissions may include artwork for interpretive programs on local history. Another option is to provide an outdoor gallery - a space for local artists to display their works in art exhibitions on a rotating basis. Public art should be supported by a policy that includes, for example, art selection, acquisition and commissioning methods, site selection, and roles and responsibilities.

Infrastructure such as, but not limited to paving, fencing, lighting, seating, signage/wayfinding and planting can also be designed in an artistic way while still accomplishing their utilitarian functions. Municipalities and public agencies will often mandate (through policies, design guidelines, etc.) that art be part of all projects as either as stand-alone art or integrated with a pre-determined percentage of the construction budget being assigned to public art.

Events, Festivals, and Performances

To support arts, culture and heritage programming and events (e.g. musical events, theatre performances etc.), appropriate venues should be available – both indoor and outdoor. Outdoor venues have the added benefit of supporting and encouraging outdoor recreation, as

discussed above. Outdoor venues need not be complicated, but should at minimum provide power, parking, washrooms, and shade. A simple venue could use a portable stage for performances and allow guests to bring their own lawn chairs, and a more permanent venue could include a permanent stage and stepped seating area. The choice would depend on available space, budget, and site considerations.

Built, Natural, and Cultural Heritage

As urban development in southern Ontario continues on a large scale, there is increasing interest in preserving both built and natural heritage in communities. Each community has unique heritage features that contribute to creating a sense of place, and can be highlighted to residents and visitors through programming and events with a heritage focus. Some examples of these programs include self-guided heritage walks, providing a free pamphlet outlining a predetermined route on a map passing various historic buildings and sites with small write-ups accompanying each site. Guided tours are a similar option with the added opportunity to monetize the tour and incorporate add-ons (e.g. horse carriage ride, a meal or food tasting, etc.). For those looking for more interactive programs, participants can be taught skills such as cooking, weaving, or building, using historical tools and methods particular to a certain time or place.

Natural heritage programs could include educational walks or sessions to learn about the flora, fauna, landscapes, and stewardship practices particular to a certain area. The forest school programs in the

Frontenac Arch Biosphere exemplify this type of program:

Furnace Falls Farm and Forest School:

“Lyndhurst is a beautiful area, in the middle of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. The relationship between people and their environment is very special here. Food production and agriculture is an important part of this community, as is time spent outdoors on the many lakes and hiking trails. At Furnace Falls Farm, we learn the importance of growing good, local food WITH nature. It is here that we will find the gentle balance between human needs and those of Mother Nature.”⁵

This type of program combines natural heritage (the biosphere), cultural heritage (agriculture), and environmental stewardship (growing food naturally). The opportunities for these types of programs are extensive, and also appeal to a wide range of age groups.

Cultural Tourism

Tourism is an essential sector of today’s service economy, creating a competitive environment in which communities must secure their place in the market. Moreover, as the world becomes progressively more homogeneous on many levels, people are expressing greater interest in that which remains different. Every community is different in some way from all others, and these differences are the foundation of its unique story.

Given these factors, there needs to be something unique or special that differentiates the community from others - and it must be different enough to provide a reason or reasons for people to visit. To this end, a unique identity that captures the essence of this particular place needs to be developed, fostered and aggressively marketed.

The notion of ‘place-based’ attractions is typically tied to cultural tourism in building destination-related visitor experiences (Thorne, S. 2012; Smith, S. 2013).⁶ It comprises those elements of culture and heritage that are intrinsically tied to a geographic place, and so cannot be replicated elsewhere.

A Hills Strategy report summarizes the findings of online surveys of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Member States and cultural tourism experts around the world, and provides the following definition of cultural tourism:

“Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.”

Almost all responding countries to the survey indicated that their definition of cultural tourism includes both “tangible (e.g., national and world heritage sites, monuments, historic places and buildings, cultural routes, and others), and intangible heritage (e.g., crafts, gastronomy, traditional festivals, music, oral traditions, religious/spiritual tourism, etc.).” Most countries also consider “cultural tourism to include contemporary culture (e.g., film, performing arts, design, fashion, new media, etc.).”

Supporting All Season Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor programming provides a critical benefit to the health and well-being of people, particularly children and teens. Time spent outdoors has been shown to improve physical and mental health, boost confidence, reduce stress, and build understanding of, and respect for, the natural environment. Outdoor learning and activities are common aspects of life for children in many other countries (e.g. tropical and Nordic countries), and as awareness of the benefits have become more mainstream in Canada, there have been increased efforts by municipalities and schools to offer more outdoor programs for children and teens.

The Participaction Children and Youth Report Card (2018) identified the following for children in Canada:

“Physical activities and programs are well known to help to maintain a healthy brain, body weight, and heart, and helps to strengthens the bones and muscles of children. Outdoor physical activities and programs can also help to build multiple skills and abilities, such as thinking and learning, problem-solving ability, stress management, and attention and focus. Data shows that children in Canada on average are not participating in an adequate amount of physical activity to reach their full potential.”⁷

⁵ <https://www.frontenacarchbiosphere.ca/nature-programs/farm-forest-school>

⁶ <http://economicdevelopment.org/2012/10/place-based-cultural-tourism-a-new-planning-paradigm/>

⁷ <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/resources/report-card>

In practical terms, parks are significant assets that are often not optimized from a use perspective and so they offer the potential to increase recreation activity relatively inexpensively. While not supported by a review of available research, it also is reasonable to suggest that an active park is more likely to motivate onlookers to ‘join in’ than one that sits empty and idle.

For some time, municipalities in North America have been trying to encourage outdoor recreation in the winter, emulating approaches taken in many Nordic countries. Examples of initiatives include 8-80 Cities’ Wintermission project, and activities and events in Edmonton and Michigan, both of which have been successful with winter recreation. ‘Winterising’ cities in North America is not a new topic, but the uptake has been slow, for a number of reasons that mostly fall outside of the mandate of parks and recreation departments (e.g. perceived or real conflicts between designing for pedestrians versus snow clearing and emergency vehicles, liability concerns, insufficient staff or resources, etc.).

One way municipalities can contribute to encouraging people to recreate outside in the winter is to help change the prevailing negative view of winter’s cold and snow. Working across departments, municipalities can set the tone by framing winter as a season to look forward to, with many positive and fun opportunities for recreation.

On the other hand, with average summer temperatures increasing due to climate change, considerations must also be made for making outdoor activity in extreme heat safer and more comfortable.

Esports

The sheer growth in this sector suggests it would be folly to not investigate opportunities for municipalities to introduce Esports into recreation programming. In a recent commentary on trends shaping community recreation and sports facility design, D. Nardone discusses the topic of Esports or organized competitive video gaming. He notes it is the “hottest trend in sport and recreation”⁸ and a growing worldwide industry. Esports offer municipal recreation centres the opportunity to increase facility use with well attended, revenue generating entertainment programming, and can bring non-users into facilities for the first time. He notes, “Esports, previously crammed into ill-fitting convention centers, enjoy tremendous momentum right now and will require great spaces. New recreation design should accommodate this coming wave of recreational and competitive activity. If you’re investing in a new rec center be aware that Esports spaces, whether new or retrofitted, have tremendous power and data requirements - so plan accordingly.”⁸

A 2019 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) article⁹ discussed why parks and recreation organizations should enter the world of Esports programming. An important factor to consider is that the genre facilitates connecting with hard-to-reach audiences that have aged out of traditional organized sports or have no interest in these types of programs. Typically, these are teens and young adults - the age groups that parks and recreation departments struggle

to engage. Esports can also facilitate providing a youth-centred, safe space within a recreation centre.

The concern about sedentary lifestyles in relation to the traditional view of recreation’s mandate to be physically engaging can be minimized by selecting companies that provide team-based, virtual-reality experiences where participants also run, jump and move, while engaging in a multiplayer game. Criteria such as offering age-appropriate games and incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), and well as homework help and promoting health lifestyles can be applied to product selection.

Depending on the types and timing of programs offered, Esports may offer opportunities to increase underused facility spaces/times and generate additional revenues. While major dedicated Esports facilities are often not feasible to provide, an Esports room within a new or renovated community centre can likely be supported in many communities.

In Canada to date, Esports entry into the public sector appears to be largely limited to educational institutions. Research has provided evidence that Esports help students develop so-called soft skills that are a prerequisite to academic success and future marketability. Participation in Esports:

- Promotes leadership skills and teamwork
- Boosts social and communication skills
- Develops problem solving, decision-making and multitasking abilities

⁸ <https://www.stantec.com/en/ideas/topic/design-quarterly/from-the-design-quarterly-6-trends-shaping-community-sports-and-rec-facility-design>

⁹ <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/september/esports-the-next-big-thing-for-parks-and-rec/>

- Improves cyber, digital and other transferable skills
- Develops friendships and communities
- Improves reaction times, dexterity and concentration
- Increases perceptual and cognitive skills
- Improves resilience through winning and losing
- Can act as a motivator to improve attendance and behaviour¹⁰

Esport Canada is a not-for-profit organization that supports esports by providing community, competition, and resources for high school (14 to 18 year old) and middle school (11 to 13 year old) students and educators¹¹. Resources include guides on starting Esports Clubs from the ground-up and ways to limit investment in equipment during early club development.

Infrastructure and Equipment

The evolution of parks and recreation infrastructure and operations equipment encompasses many innovations. Some of these, such as designing facilities/spaces to be multi-purpose, co-locating synergistic facilities, and anticipating future changes in use, are not new but are taking different forms. The following highlights several singular trends that are emerging in the field.

Net Zero Emissions

“Achieving “net zero” emissions in Canada by 2050 is an ambitious goal. Our research indicates it is doable, but getting there will require implementing policy well beyond anything seen to date in Canada. It will also require navigating significant complexity and uncertainty. Ultimately, this country’s path to net zero will be defined by policy choices made by all orders of government, as well as technological innovation and factors beyond domestic control, such as global market shifts and changing energy demand.”¹²

Canada’s Net Zero Future categorizes ways to achieving this target into ‘safe bets’, which are low-risk solutions that are available today, and ‘wild cards’, which are high-risk, high-reward solutions that are still in the early stages of development. It notes that these two directions comprise distinct policy areas, which often get conflated and so can inhibit progress.

The report states that safe bets are emission-reducing technologies and solutions that are already commercially available and face no major constraints to widespread implementation. Under all the pathways considered, safe bets will be the major contributors to get Canada to net zero. They are especially important for getting Canada to its 2030 target, driving at least two-thirds of the required reductions.

Of particular importance to municipalities’ delivery of parks and recreation are service vehicles and buildings. The report discussed transportation in terms of ‘personal’ and ‘heavy- and medium-duty’ categories. It noted that the way to net zero in personal

transportation is clear cut, while that for other types of vehicular movement is less certain. At the same time, both categories include electric vehicles and biofuels as progressive pathways. Municipal service vehicles using these technologies are becoming more prevalent. There has been a recent noticeable increase, for example, in municipal purchases of electric ice-resurfacers. OFRA notes, “While an electric Zamboni still goes for about \$50,000 more than a gas-powered model...not having to pay for things like gas or oil changes makes the business case more palatable - with the environmental benefits a compelling ‘sidebar.’”¹³

The research report indicates that buildings can rely on technologies that are currently available, including increased energy efficiency, switching to electric heat sources (e.g., heat pumps) and switching to clean gases (e.g., RNG and hydrogen). In terms of facility development, net zero construction is a mode of building where the total amount of energy used by the infrastructure is roughly equal to the amount of renewal energy created on the site.

Facility Innovations

While it is now common to co-locate recreation facilities with, for example, libraries and arts spaces, emerging facility innovations go beyond these practices to encompass new partnerships between public, not-for-profit and business interests in meeting a wider range of community needs. These projects can involve an intricate mix of public funding, use-related agreements, community fundraising contributions, and services-in-kind donations. Two examples of such initiatives from a Rural Institute of Ontario report¹⁴ are described here.

Prince Edward County Food Hub Inc.: the Kitchen that Saved a School:¹⁵

The County Food Hub is a federally incorporated not-for-profit commercial kitchen in Prince Edward County. County Food Hub combines the objectives of local economic development with community service and education.

The Hub’s vision is to “Provide Ontario with a model approach to strengthening rural education that makes use of surplus school space to provide educational opportunities for students and social and economic opportunities for local economies.” The vision is supported by the following mission statements, two of which speak to the economic purpose of the Hub and two that focus on its social purpose.

- Provide food production and development opportunities so that local entrepreneurs can more efficiently take their ideas

¹⁰ <https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Esports-Leaders-Information-Sheet.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.esportcanada.org>

¹² https://climatechoices.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Canadas-Net-Zero-Future_Summary_FINAL.pdf

¹³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/electric-ice-resurfacers-zambonis-1.6233356>

¹⁴ https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/2_0%20Repurposing%20Public%20Space.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.countyfoodhub.com/aboutus>

to market, improving local economic development.

- Provide space and resources for food service training to support the fast-growing culinary industry in the region.
- Provide support for healthy food distribution and food training so that more and more under-served low income families have increased access to healthy food at reasonable cost.
- Develop innovative enhanced learning opportunities to encourage a life-time commitment to healthy eating, food sustainability and a keen appreciation of the opportunities present in the local food industry.

The County Food Hub is the result of a community-based initiative to find a way to preclude the closure of a Sophiasburgh Central elementary school while also meeting a need that would benefit the community. The area’s innovation and growth in the food, agriculture, service and entertainment sectors led to an identified need for a shared commercial kitchen space and food business incubation sites.

In September 2018, after demonstrating financial viability, the Prince Edward County Food Hub (PECFH) signed a five-year lease with the Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB). The PECFH pays the School Board on an annual basis enough to cover 85-90% of physical operating costs, not including teachers’ salaries. This lease has ensured the school will remain open and can co-exist with the Food Hub in a 5,800 square foot area in the west wing of the school.

The results of this initiative are three-fold:

- A local school was saved from closure and continues to serve its community

- A public health-certified shared commercial kitchen space is available to the general public, not-for-profit organizations, and area businesses, including three long-term leased spaces
- A developing program of food education and training for students, parents will be available to the Prince Edward County and Bay of Quinte community

United Church of Canada Community Innovation Hub:

The United Church of Canada is re-thinking the role churches play in a community, part of which is examining the use of their spaces or often lack thereof. Many facilities are not being used to their full potential, as much of the week they sit empty.

“The United Church has developed the Community Innovation Hub as a model for repurposing existing space, an idea that both community and church can come together around. The concept of a Community Innovation Hub is to provide space and programming to local entrepreneurs looking to create businesses that serve social and spiritual goals in the community and beyond. The Community Innovation Hub takes advantage of underutilized or vacant infrastructure and assets, as well as the expertise and community networks surrounding this already-central institution, to provide an environment designed to help entrepreneurs prosper” (Repurposing Public Space, p. 3).

A Community Innovation Hub can be either a church or community-driven initiative, based on the mutual interests of both in

collaborating and recognizing the budget limitations of these types of endeavors. To date, the Hub has produced Turnkey Kits on agrihoods, coworking space, and makerspaces as well as other resources to guide the process of collaboration. Moreover, the model is universally applicable to underused spaces in public facilities. The same resources (or principles found therein) that the United Church have curated to support their various congregations can be used in creative ways in facilities throughout rural Ontario including arenas, schools, agricultural societies, theatres, libraries, and services clubs.



Figure 2-3: Ian Crichton Park and Trails

2.3 Healthy Active Living

What is Healthy Active Living?

A broad definition of healthy active living encompasses two aspects. The first focuses on individual lifestyle choices that contribute to health, such as increasing physical activity, eating healthier foods, and/or spending more time outdoors and away from screens. The second focuses on providing a healthier physical environment for all, and involves initiatives that contribute to, for example, cleaner air and water, and restoring, protecting and/or enhancing natural ecosystems. The former aspect now represents the 'traditional' position in relation to the latter perspective - which has emerged in more recent years and aligns with more global imperatives around environmental sustainability, and takes some of the onus off individuals.

A Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing (2015)¹⁶ provides an approach to addressing healthy active living - in its fullest sense - in parks and recreation services. The Framework includes five goals and priorities:

- foster active living
- increase inclusion and access
- connect people and nature
- provide supportive physical and social environments
- sustain capacity in the recreation sector

The priorities that address people-oriented initiatives align well with health promoting frameworks put forth in other national and provincial initiatives. At the same time, the

Framework recognizes the importance of the built and natural environments in influencing health and well-being:

- Built form, street networks, and neighbourhoods can be designed to encourage walking and cycling, making it easier for people to integrate physical activity into their daily routines. The design of outdoor spaces can improve accessibility to increase their use and enjoyment by people of all ages and abilities. Beyond physical health, recreation facilities, parks, and public spaces also help people to achieve socially connected lives.
- The health and quality of the natural environment can be improved through tree planting, removal of invasive species, planting native plants, restoring habitat, restoring shorelines, introducing organic community gardens etc. These actions have a direct impact on air and water quality and create an overall healthier environment in which to live, work and play. They also create beautified, animated spaces that draw people to spend time in them. In addition, studies have shown greater stress and anxiety reduction in people when they spend time around trees, naturalized spaces, as opposed to urban environments. This encompasses the eco-health approach discussed above.

Example of a municipal Healthy Active Living strategy: Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy

The Healthy City Strategy adopted by the City of Vancouver represents an example of how municipalities can implement healthy active living goals in practice. It is a four-year action plan, that introduces tangible steps that the City will take in making progress on their Healthy City for All vision, and creates a comprehensive, integrated and measurable path forward for the City.

The framework contains a clear vision statement and three major areas of focus:

- Healthy People – taking care of the basics
- Healthy Communities – cultivating connections
- Healthy environments – ensuring livability now and into the future

The Strategy takes a holistic approach to healthy active living, based on Canada's social determinant of health.

From this understanding of the causes of illness, the Strategy addresses a broad range of municipal responsibilities that affect the health of the population:

- Housing and homelessness
- Mental health and addiction
- Food strategy
- Living wage
- Capacity building for entrepreneurship
- Poverty reduction
- Working with First Nations and urban Aboriginal people
- Improving relationships between residents

- Active transportation
- Active living design
- Public spaces
- Culture
- Biodiversity and toxin reductions

The Strategy then identified 2025 targets for each area, and indicators. It is a helpful example of how Severn could put into practice healthy active living goals, and the summary table is provided in Appendix A for reference.

Healthy Active Living in Severn

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has done some work regarding healthy active living in Simcoe-Muskoka, through Healthy Community Design: Policy Statements for Official Plans (2014)¹⁷. This document provides a series of suggested policy statements and implementation activities related to land use, community design and public health. The SMDHU offers these suggestions for policy direction in the hope that municipalities adopt them as part of their Official Plans, activities, and programs to improve the health of their residents. Given the diversity and the mix of rural and urban communities within the District of Muskoka and County of Simcoe, these suggestions have been developed to be as versatile as possible. The Health Unit suggests that incorporating the content of this document should be part of well-defined strategies and community engagement processes so that it can fit the physical and social context of the community.

The suggested policies are also closely aligned with the goals of the SMDHU's Building Healthy Communities initiative. Under this initiative, the health unit is working with partners to:

¹⁶ https://cpra.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FrameworkForRecreationInCanada_2016wcitation.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/jfy-communities/Healthy_Community_Design.pdf?sfvrsn=0

1. Act as a catalyst for change through programs, people and partnerships to achieve a shared vision of a built environment that promotes and protects health.
2. Provide strong public health leadership and expert health advice to key stakeholders to influence the design of new and existing communities to be sustainable and supportive of the achievement and maintenance of optimal health.

The purpose of this guide is to provide municipal elected officials, planners, engineers, and other stakeholders and partners in Simcoe Muskoka with suggestions for Official Plan policies and implementation activities to assist municipalities in creating healthy and complete communities while also meeting the Ontario policy requirements. The guide has five sections that are based on key health issues impacted by the built environment:

- Environment; Injury and Safety;
- Physical Activity and Sun Safety;
- Food Access; and
- Social Cohesion and Well-Being.

Each section contains an overall health related goal and rationale, a number of related objectives, suggested Official Plan policy statements to help achieve the objectives and a variety of suggested activities for implementation of the policies. Many of the concepts and principles within these sections overlap and it is recommended that municipalities review each section closely for supportive and inter-related policy suggestions.

The document is focused on policy statements for Official Plans, and with the broad nature of healthy active living (HAL), it makes sense for municipal strategies to be overarching, encompassing all relevant departments, not only parks and recreation. If Severn would like to develop a Healthy Active Living policy, it should be developed jointly with relevant departments, although parks and recreation can take a leading role in getting the policy off the ground.

Another option to support HAL in local communities is exemplified by the Town of Wasaga Beach Healthy Community Network. The Network is a committee of Council with the following mandate:

“The Healthy Community Network will act as a link between Council and the citizens of Wasaga Beach and advise Council on matters relating to active and healthy living, the environment– natural, physical, social, economic – and the creation of a sustainable and healthy future for the town.”

Committee members from various sectors of the community are appointed and must have knowledge of healthy active living related spheres. They inform Council on current topics, develop awareness campaigns and develop strategic goals and objectives based on best practices to be submitted to Council annually. The Committee’s Terms of Reference is included in Appendix A.

HAL1. Develop a Healthy Active Living Policy, or integrate Healthy Active Living policy statements in the Official Plan



Figure 3-1: Washago Centennial pump track

3.0 Programs and Events

3.1 Supply of Programs and Events

Severn provides sport, wellness and fitness, learning, and community activities/events throughout the year. Other providers include the Coldwater Public Library, volunteer sport organizations, non-profit groups and commercial enterprises. A sample of programs offered by these providers is provided in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Sample of programs provided in the Township

Sample of Providers	Sample of Programs Provided
Township of Severn	Public skating, shinny, home alone, t-ball, Zumba, camp, fitness classes, etc.
Coldwater Public Library	Crafts, tech help, story times, etc.
Coldwater Curling Club	Curling for all ages
Volunteer organizations and sports leagues	Slo-pitch, hockey, figure skating, pickleball, art clubs, music groups, seniors luncheons and activities, gardening, roller derby, etc.
Private providers	Martial arts, etc.

There are many events organized throughout the year, mostly provided by non-profits and volunteer groups such as ratepayers associations. Major events in the Township that draw visitors include the Fall Fair and the Steampunk Festival. Events are held throughout the year with most occurring in June and over the fall/winter. Table 3-2 provides a sample of events offered in the Township by community providers and organizations, and a full inventory was provided in the Preliminary Report.

Table 3-2: Sample of events provided in the Township

Sample of Providers	Sample of Events
Orillia and District Agricultural Society (ODAS)	Farmers Market, Fall Fair, Winterfest, Special Events etc.
Bayou Park Ratepayers Association	Halloween Pumpkin Carving, August Beach BBQ, Meet your Neighbour, Community Yard Sales, Waterfront Cleanups, Christmas Walk
Coldwater Lion's Club	Duck Race, etc.
Washago Lions Club	Canada Day Celebrations, Washago Lions Farmers Market, Washago Lions Club Open Music Jam, Family Day
Coldwater and District Agricultural Society	Coldwater Fall Fair
Coldwater Mill Heritage Foundation	Cutest Lil' Farmers' Market, Music Mondays, Christmas Market
Fierte Simcoe Pride	Pride Festival, Trans day of Remembrance, Winter Festival, Monthly Pride Socials, Online Queer Marketplace
Gloucester Pool Cottagers' Association	Canada Day Boat Parade, Kids Fishing Derby, Boating, Kayak and Swim Races, Canoe for Cancer, Fall Dinner, Family Day, Cycling Around Gloucester Pool, O'Hara Literacy Contest, AGM and Presentations
Steampunk Festival Organization	Coldwater Steampunk Festival

See Preliminary Report for full list.

3.2 Interest and Demand for New Programs: What We Heard

Resident Consultation

Results from a random telephone survey of Township residents were presented in detail in the Severn Recreation Master Plan Interim Report.

Roughly a third of respondents to the random telephone resident survey have participated in youth sport programming (such as ball and hockey), and roughly a quarter reported to have previously participated in children's preschool, or non-sport programming. Respondents reported the least participation in adult sport (20%), and adult/senior wellness (14%) programs.

When asked at which facilities or parks respondents attend programs/activities, the top responses were:

- The Coldwater and District Community Centre or Fairgrounds (random survey – 32%, online - 59%),
- Washago Centennial Park (random – 32%, online - 36%).

Almost half of online survey respondents also listed the Uthhoff Trail (45%).

Regarding participation in programs outside of Severn, survey respondents most often use recreation services in:

- City of Orillia (random – 59%, online – 77%)
- Barrie (random – 45%, online – 15%)
- Midland (random – 25% - online – 18%)
- Oro-Medonte (random – 5%, online – 30%)

When asked why respondents visit other communities for recreation, the top responses were that:

- activity is not available in Severn (random – 31%, online – 72%),
- leagues/tournaments are based outside of Severn (random – 23%, online – 28%),
- facilities/programs are better (random – 19%, online – 29%).

About a quarter of respondents to the online survey reported they are residents of a community outside of Severn (the random survey included only Severn residents), and this showed in the results, as 25% also indicated they use facilities outside of Severn because they are closer to home.

Sixty percent of respondents to the online survey indicated a need for additional programs, while less than a quarter (23%) of respondents to the telephone survey indicated the same. The top groups reported interest in both sport and non-sport programming include children and youth, adults between the ages of 35 and 54, and adults between the ages of 55 and 64 (Table 3-3). Needs differed considerably between the surveys, with youth as most interested from the random survey, and adults 35 to 54 years old most interested from the online survey.

Table 3-3: Top responses for which age groups are most interested in both active and non-sport programs (combined).

Age group	Random Telephone Survey	Online Survey
Youth 13 - 19	24%	71%
Children 5 – 12	16%	78%
Adults 35 - 54	4%	84%
Adults 55 - 64	9%	77%

Table 3-4 summarizes the responses from both the random telephone and online surveys with regard to which programs were of most interest to respondents. In both surveys, top responses were for water-based activities and wellness programs.

Table 3-4: Programs, events, and activities resident survey highlights

Question	Random Telephone Survey	Online
Additional Programs Needed	Yes - 23%	Yes - 60%
Sport Programs	Water-Based 40% Arena Ice 38% Court Sports 31% Outdoor Ice 27% Field Sports 24% Gym Sports 23%	Water-Based 63% Group Fitness 60% Arena Ice 43% Outdoor Ice 42% Field Sports 34% Gym Sports 50%
Non-sport Programs	Wellness 44% Before and After School 38% Camps 36% Social 34% Preschool Play 31%	Wellness 70% Social 48% Visual Arts 47% One-day/Weekend 45% Camps 45%

The surveys asked respondents about their willingness to fund recreation program development. Interest in contributing to recreation was higher in the online survey, through methods such as accepting an increase in property taxes (24%), volunteering to help run programs/activities (28%), and helping to organize local fundraising events (37%).

User Group Survey

As with the resident surveys, the user group survey results were presented in detail in the Severn Recreation Master Plan Interim Report (Appendix E), and this section highlights only the key points relevant to this assessment. Twenty-six groups responded to the survey (of 29 invited), representing mostly sports and arts and culture organizations, as well as others such as a BIA, ratepayers associations, seniors' groups and Lions' Clubs. When asked to select the types of programs the groups provide, the largest proportions of 18 respondents reported arena ice/floor activities (39%), club/social activities (44%), and 'other' (39%). 'Other' responses included activities using trails, art classes and sales, horseback riding, Devon teas, and a dart league. The groups provide a wide variety of events, mostly family-oriented, including holiday-based events, theatre productions, Witches Walk, Steampunk Festival, Fall fairs and events, craft and art sales and markets, fundraisers, tournaments, etc.

With regard to ages served by their events and programs, the largest proportions indicated that they serve either all-ages (50%), or adults aged 35-44 and 65-74 (38%).

When asked about participation levels (pre-COVID), responses showed a wide range, with membership/participation in ongoing/seasonal programs ranging from 30 to 8,000, and special events attracting 40 to 8,000 people. Events attracting the most attendees (between 1,000 and 8,000) include the Steampunk Festival, The Village Players of Coldwater productions, and events put on by the Coldwater BIA and Coldwater Lions Club.

User groups were asked about anticipated growth levels in program participation or event attendance in the next five to ten years. The largest proportion (25% or 6 groups) anticipate growth in the range of 5% to 10%, followed by five groups each (21%) expecting up to 15% growth. The top factors the groups identified as contributing to growth included population changes in the age groups served (52%), overall population growth in the area (60%), interest in their program/event (56%), and that their programs are socially engaging/fun (48%).

Focus Groups

Focus groups highlighted the wealth of opportunities in Severn for arts, culture, heritage, and outdoor recreation activities. Agritourism, winter sports such as snowmobiling, water-based sports, fishing, glamping and guided tours were some of the activities mentioned that could help attract visitors to the Township and increase the diversity of offerings. The Severn River was noted as a potential tourism opportunity for the Township to explore with respect to waterfront businesses such as restaurants and short-term stay accommodation. Arts, culture, heritage and tourism are discussed in greater detail in section 3.4.

The sports and recreation organization focus group highlighted the need for the Township to help the groups with communications, marketing, and improving facilities. The groups suggested that providing equipment rentals and other incentives could support programming.



Figure 3-2: Severn Falls dock

3.3 Assessment and Recommendations

Program Delivery

Short Duration Programming

A quarter of respondents to the online survey indicated they would be willing to volunteer to run programs. The Township can tap into this volunteer base by implementing short-duration program taught by residents with skills and knowledge to share. The Dovercourt Recreation Association in Ottawa has established such a programs, called The Westboro Brainery. The Westboro Brainery offers affordable, enriching single-session classes in food, art and DIY, as described on the website:

“Taught by quasi-experts, passionate enthusiasts, and seasoned pros, Westboro Brainery is community-driven and made possible by Dovercourt Recreation Centre. Classes are brief (usually no more than 3 hours at the most) and inexpensive (averaging \$15-\$60). Because the Brainery is a citizen-led affair, classes are largely determined by YOU, the public. You come to us with your idea, and provided it meets the basic criteria, you have yourself a class.”¹

Residents volunteer to teach their first session, and if it is successful and there is interest in additional sessions, they are paid for subsequent classes taught. Short-duration programming is an effective way to test out new programs and gauge community interests, while also providing the opportunity for local artisans, experts, etc. share their knowledge and build awareness of their skills. This is a good option for seasonal residents, as it does not require long term or on-going commitment.

PE1. Implement a short-duration programming model in addition to regular programming

Improving Participation

Events in the Township are quite well attended, with some attracting up to 8,000 people from within and outside of Severn. Programs are less well attended, and as a result they are sometimes cancelled due to low enrollment. Residents were asked in the surveys about barriers to participation, and in addition to program cancellations, a main barrier mentioned was distance to programs, as the Township is geographically large, with a dispersed population. Residents also use programs in other municipalities, particularly Orillia and Midland, which have comparatively more program offerings, and may be closer to residents in those areas of the Township. In order to improve participation in Township programs, the Township should improve communications about programs, activities and events in the community (marketing and communications is discussed further in the Implementation Section), and find ways to incentivize attending a program in Severn.

Incentivizing Participation

There is a strong sense of community in Severn, and the Township can harness this to encourage residents to attend local programs. Incentives could include for example, offering coffee/tea and simple snacks after programs to encourage people to stay and socialize and build connections. Another option is to partner with local businesses and artisans to provide goods (local artisan items such as painting or crafts, preserves, etc.) to raffle for program registrants.

In addition to these ‘front-end’ measures to improve participation (marketing and incentives), receiving program evaluations from participants after programs is also key to identifying potential improvements for programs/activities, and possibly result in more registrants in future programs. This is discussed further in the Implementation Section.

Reaching new residents

The Township is expecting increased growth over the term of this Plan, and as revealed by the 2021 Census, the population of Severn has grown by 8.3% since 2016 – much faster than the overall provincial average of 5.8% over the same time period. The net effect of all of this is that there is a significant base of new residents in the Township in the last 5 years who may not be aware of the arts, culture, and recreation opportunities available throughout the Township.

The Township should work with local neighbourhood volunteers to organize ‘Welcome Wagon’ packages for new residents. Other potential partners in this regard include the library, real estate agents active in the area, community groups likely

¹ <http://www.westborobrainery.ca/about/>

to come into contact with newcomers, etc. Welcome Wagon packages are delivered to new households and often include a range of information about a community (not only recreation-related), including for example information about garbage collection, health care resources, schools, social services, landmarks, and parks, facilities and recreation.

The Township should also develop relationships with local schools as another way to reach more residents and raise awareness of recreation opportunities. The Township can provide information to schools and ask them to share it with families. This can include asking the school to share information in their digital communications, providing schools with take-home flyers for students, and having Township staff set up booths during school 'open house' type events to promote recreation services.

- PE2. Explore opportunities to provide incentives for participants in local programs
- PE3. Work with volunteers to develop a Welcome Wagon program for new residents
- PE4. Approach schools to assist in communicating recreation opportunities

Events

There are many events in the Township, as described previously. Most events are intergenerational and welcome all-ages, providing recreation opportunities to the whole community. The focus for existing all age events should be to increase promotion and awareness to grow participation, and support community groups that provide events (as noted above in Program Delivery).

- PE5. Continue to provide Township-led all-ages events, and provide support to community groups that organize events

Outdoor Activity

While there is nothing to prevent people from being active outside on their own, there may be opportunities for the Township to increase participation in both structured and unstructured outdoor activities. For example, taking indoor programming outdoors during the late spring, summer and early fall can both activate park spaces and benefit participants, particularly in areas not close to indoor program options. Activities like yoga, Pilates, group fitness, tai chi, games for children, reading groups, educational workshops, short-duration programs, special events, etc. are amenable to outdoor provision in park settings.

In both surveys, for respondents that thought more programming is needed, water-based activities were at the top of the list of new/expanded activities that respondents would be interested in (random – 40%, online – 63%). Other outdoor activities with higher response rates in both surveys include court sports, outdoor ice

activities, field sports, special events, and environmental programs.

Severn's waterway system is well used by respondents according to the online survey (72%), and a third of the respondents to the random survey said they used lakes, rivers, and boating facilities (36%). Given the wealth of waterways in the Township, and the interest in expressed in the surveys, interviews and focus groups in expanding waterways activities, the Township should explore opportunities to do so.

One option is to approach local businesses (e.g., Kayak-ity-yak) to partner in providing water-based programming and events such as introductory lessons, "try-it" sessions, or tours at a promotional price point. It could be marketed as an experience/ outdoor excursion, suitable for all ages. The Township can also provide rentals (life jackets, kayaks, paddleboards, boogie boards etc.) at key waterfront locations, or develop an equipment lending library to offer more opportunities for residents to engage in these activities.

There are a number of environmental organizations in the Township/County with expertise in the local ecology that expressed interest in collaborating with the Township to provide more environmental education programs or events (e.g., Couchiching Conservancy, Severn Sound Environmental Association). Residents expressed interest in these types of programs, especially in the opportunity learn/become educated about water quality issues. This would be a non-active/sport outdoor activity that could be developed for various age-groups or all-ages.

There are three outdoor ice rinks in Severn. The outdoor ice rink in Washago is operated by staff as part of the Washago Community

Centre. The rinks at Bass Lake Woodlands Park and at Marchmont Community Park are operated primarily by volunteers with staff performing ice thickness and ice conditions inspections for public safety purposes. The rinks have scheduled times for recreational skating and shinny hockey for drop-in/casual participation with no required registration or fees. The Township could consider providing registration-based children's/ youth learn-to-skate programs at outdoor rinks. Since programming at the Bass Lake and Marchmont rinks is contingent upon continued volunteer involvement in providing and maintaining the ice, the Township should work with volunteer groups to ensure the rinks can remain in operation.

- PE6. Explore opportunities to expand outdoor recreation programs/ activities, for example nature-based programming (e.g., local ecology, plant identification), water-based activities (e.g., canoeing, kayaking, SUP'ing, swimming, etc.)
- PE7. Support the development and sustainability of outdoor rink volunteer groups
- PE8. Provide children's/youth learn-to-skate programs at outdoor rinks where rinks are regularly maintained

Age-Specific Program Needs

Recalling the results from the resident surveys, less than a quarter (23%) of random survey respondents said additional programs are needed, but more than half (60%) of the online survey respondents said the same. Those that said more programs are needed were asked which age groups are most in need, and the top responses were for children and adults. Both active (e.g., sport, fitness) and non-active (e.g., arts, social) recreation programming were of interest to all age groups. The program types with highest response rates in both surveys are listed in Table 3-5, along with some examples of each type of program.

EarlyON Simcoe North is an important provider of preschool and parent programming in the County. Prior to the pandemic, they held programs at Washago Community Centre and at a church in Coldwater. They have recently booked the Coldwater and District Community Centre to restart their programs, and are working with the Township on potentially offering programs at the Washago Community Centre as well.

Youth can be a difficult age cohort to program for, as interests are frequently changing, and participation may decrease. Youth may respond well to drop-in active and social activities, such as drop-in shinny, ultimate frisbee, and basketball. A youth-centred social space where teens can ‘hang out’ would also likely be well received, based on survey results. Outdoor amenities, such as outdoor rinks, skateparks, etc. are also amenable for teen use, either self-directed or programmed.

Seniors were not identified as a top group in need of more programming, however, as the proportion of seniors is expected

to increase through the term of the Plan, it would be beneficial provide more opportunities for recreation, and to increase outreach to seniors in the Township. Many may not have access to, or be comfortable with technology, or have reliable internet, therefore there is a need to reach this age group through other means to communicate about recreation opportunities. Developing a senior’s recreation committee is one way to reach isolated seniors. The committee would be volunteer-based and supported by the Township (e.g., through offering administrative and subject matter support, grant funding, and promotional support, etc.), include helping to get the word out to seniors in Severn, particularly those in remote and rural areas, about recreation opportunities and help combat isolation and loneliness. A good place to start in setting up this committee would be to approach volunteers at local community centres and halls to discuss collaboration and interest in this initiative. Outreach activities can include targeted home visits, mail-outs, delivering information baskets, and possibly organizing shuttles for special excursions. The committee could also act in an advisory capacity to staff, to provide input on seniors’ program development. When developing/expanding programming options, suitability for seniors should be taken into account (e.g., seniors directed social gatherings, seniors fitness, arts and culture, Zumba gold, etc.). To start, the Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee can fulfill the basics of this committee by ensuring there are senior representatives on the Committee, and a seniors sub-committee can be formed with sufficient interest and volunteers.

Another consideration for adults and seniors is the timing of programs. When considering adults who have children, evening classes

Table 3-5: Examples of the program types most frequently selected in resident surveys

Program Type	Examples
Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Yoga · Meditation · Tai Chi
Water-based activities (also discussed under ‘outdoor activities’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Swimming · Paddle lessons · Environmental
Group fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Weight Training · Aerobics · Zumba, dance · HIIT
Gymnasium sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Basketball · Badminton · Children’s games
Court sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pickleball · Tennis
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Social activities for new families in the area · Youth drop-in sessions · Coffee/tea night · S’mores by the campfire
Outdoor ice (also discussed under ‘outdoor activities’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Outdoor shinny · Family and holiday events · Skate-at-night events (family or adult only) · Christmas/March break camp · Open skate
Camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Water-based, skate-based, outdoor/indoor games etc. · Summer, Christmas break, March Break
Visual art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Paint night sessions · Cell phone photography class · Introductory art classes for all ages

can be hard to attend due to family duties and/or taking children to their own activities which must be in the evening because of school during the day. This was typically the case for adults as well, who traditionally work during the day. However, with the pandemic many people have been working from home, and a work-from-home or hybrid approach to work may be here to stay. This presents the possibility that adults can attend a program during the day, on their lunch hour for example. For many parents, this would be ideal as it keeps their evenings free for family duties. Seniors are also known to prefer daytime activities when facilities are quieter, and to avoid travel at night. While in the past day-time programs may not have been well-attended, the Township should implement a small number at key locations to see if they are well received by the community.

The Township should provide or support others in providing expanded programming options over the term of the plan to meet the needs of the current population and the growth that is expected. Determining which programs, and who will provide them, can be determined in communication with local groups, by way of the annual or biannual provider roundtables discussed in the implementation section.

PE9. Offer new and expanded active and non-active programming in the Township for each age cohort (preschool, child, teen, adult, senior)

PE10. Pilot adult and senior classes during the day and gauge community interest and attendance through program evaluation

PE11. Ensure seniors' representation on CRAC, and consider developing a senior's recreation sub-committee

3.4 Arts, Culture and Heritage

This section presents recommendations to further the arts, culture and heritage life of the Township of Severn. First, underlying principles that we espouse in arts and culture planning in communities are outlined, followed by a brief overview of relevant trends in municipal cultural planning across Canada. Next the 'supply' of arts, culture and heritage assets in the Township is reviewed, followed by an assessment of demand – i.e., what the community wants and will need in future. Finally, recommendations to enhance the arts, culture and heritage assets and opportunities throughout the Township in light of all these findings are advanced.

Principles in Municipal Arts and Culture Provision

Our approach to arts and culture planning in municipalities is predicated on the following seven principles:

1. Everyone can be an active creative individual. Every individual has the potential to be a creative person, and a well-balanced community will afford opportunities for this to happen.
2. The community creates its own culture and vitality. It is not up to the municipality to direct or dictate the cultural life of its residents – that is up to the community itself to determine. However....
3. ... the municipality's role is to demonstrate leadership through consultation and policy development. The municipality's role is to respond to what the community is saying about its cultural and recreation wants and needs.

The municipality provides appropriate facilities, programmes, and services, tempered by the wisdom of municipal staff and elected officials regarding what is affordable and reasonable at the time.

4. Municipalities (as well as other levels of government) have a responsibility to provide cultural facilities and amenities for their residents in response to demand. Just as a healthy community needs to provide outdoor, recreation and sports programs and services to its residents, so too should it provide arts and culture opportunities.
5. Investment in arts and culture is an economic development strategy. A community that provides for the arts, culture and creative needs of its residents is seen to offer a high quality of life for its residents and will thus attract new investments in businesses, creating jobs, and building the community's health and vitality
6. A return-on-investment orientation is critical. Any plan for investment in municipal infrastructure and services must monitor and evaluate progress and demonstrate the return on investment of the funding and staff time expended.
7. Investment in arts and culture facilities and amenities is not an inessential frill. Investment in such assets should not take a back seat to equally important community amenities such as parks, recreation and sports facilities. Especially now, in this period of post-pandemic recovery, the need is greater than ever before.

Trends in Municipal Arts and Culture Provision

Trends that are evident in municipal support for arts, culture and heritage activities in progressive communities across Canada are as follows:

- **Municipalities have increasingly been intentionally developing arts and culture plans:** Over the last two decades, many municipalities (like Severn) have realized that the arts and culture needs of their communities are as important as parks and recreation needs. Further to the principles articulated above, the ‘pendulum has swung back’ and many municipalities now either have separate arts and culture strategies, or arts and culture components as part of their overall parks and recreation plans.
- **Municipalities have discrete arts and culture support budgets:** Some municipalities (and increasingly so) have specific arts and culture line items in their budgets, recognizing the importance of supporting these types of creative activities. This also sends a strong signal to the arts, culture and heritage constituencies in communities that these activities are important and worth supporting.
- **Dedicated arts and culture positions:** Several municipalities, even ones very much smaller than the Township of Severn, have specific arts and culture development positions (either dedicated full-time positions or part-time ones) that have responsibilities such as working with arts and culture organizations; developing and coordinating festivals and events; ensuring communications and information flow across the sector; etc.

- **Integration of arts, culture and tourism:** In locations where there exists strong potential to draw upon or attract a tourism market (such as Severn) using the cultural resource base of the community we have seen the development of integrated cultural tourism strategies. These plans recognize that developing the cultural resource base has the twin benefit of developing cultural opportunities for residents and well as realizing the economic benefits of tourism.

Supply of Arts, Culture and Heritage Assets

Township of Severn is uniquely positioned geographically and as a result has a diverse history. Its position straddles the farmlands of the St. Lawrence Lowlands on the south with the Pre-Cambrian Canadian Shield to the north, which are very different settings. From east to west, the Township is bounded by Highway 11 on the east and Highway 400 to the west – both major traffic arteries. These factors provide unique opportunities and a range of organizations and activities, which is evident in the wide array of attractions and settings Severn contains.

Table 3-6 lists the major facilities and attractions that are the mainstays of Severn’s arts and culture base.

There is also a Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee that advises Council on various matters relating to arts, culture and heritage from time to time.

Table 3-6: Major cultural facilities, attractions and organizations

Facilities and Attractions	Sample of Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coldwater Canadiana Heritage Museum • Coldwater Mill Heritage Centre • Matchedash Community Heritage Centre • Township of Severn Public Library • Washago Community Centre • Big Chute Marine Railway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green River Book Club • Sparrow Lake Historical Society • The Village Players Coldwater • Washago Garden Club • Washago Art Club • Coldwater and District Agricultural Society • Coldwater Lions Club • Hampshire-Ardrea Women’s Institute • Pinegrove Westshore Woman’s Institute • Sparrow Lake Women’s Institute • Royal Canadian Legion Coldwater Branch 270

Demand for Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

Overview of Audiences and Market Segments

On the ‘demand’ side of arts, culture and heritage, there are several groups or constituencies to think about who are participants in, and/or consumers of arts and culture activities. These include:

- **Permanent Residents:** As of the current (2021) Census, there are nearly 14,500 permanent residents of Severn in 2021, up over 8% from the last (2016) Census (and a much higher growth rate than that for the province overall, which was only about 5%)
- **Seasonal Residents:** (i.e., ‘cottagers’: these households stay in the Township for only part of the year (primarily in the summer) and are not counted as part of the permanent population. As of the 2021 Census, 18% of all households (approximately 1,200 households) were seasonal.

- **Tourists:** Every year millions of tourists and visitor pass through Severn on Highways 11 and 400. A very few of them stop for any length of time in the municipality (popular spots would be Webers in Ardtrea; Coldwater; and the Big Chute Marine Railway). There are over 100,000 boaters who travel the Trent-Severn Waterway annually, on the municipality’s northern boundary.
- **New Residents:** If the current growth rate holds, over the next decade there will be on the order of 2,500 new residents of the municipality – the plan developed here (not only the arts, culture and heritage component but the entire plan) must take into account the fact that there will be a relatively large proportion of new residents into the community over the next decade.

The arts and culture component of this plan should be mindful of the needs and opportunities associated with all these constituencies.

Table 3-7: PRIZM Categories, characteristics and communities

PRIZM Category	Fundamental Characteristics (from PRIZM Descriptions)	Communities
"Happy Medium"	Happy Medium consists of couples and families living in the outer suburbs of large and midsize cities. The segment contains a mix of middle-income households of varied ages (maintainers range from 45 to over 75), educations (most adults have completed high school or college) and family types (including couples and families). But what many have in common are deep roots: three-quarters of residents are third-plus-generation Canadians. Residents typically hold blue-collar or service sector jobs in manufacturing, construction, mining and public administration. With incomes topping \$90,000, more than 80 percent own a home, typically an older, single-detached house built before 1980. In these suburban settings, nearly 90 percent of Happy Medium residents rely on their vehicles—typically domestic intermediate sedans or large pickup trucks—for commuting to work. On weekends, they'll hit the road to go snowboarding, canoeing or rowing. Many keep up with the latest trends in home and recreation by attending craft, boat, motorcycle and RV shows. As consumers on a budget, residents are keenly aware of the importance of price when making purchases.	Ardrea
		Buena Vista
		Happyland
		Hawkins Corners
		Unthoff
		Washago
"Country Traditions"	The second most affluent rural segment, Country Traditions is a collection of small communities scattered across the eastern half of Canada. Here, middle-aged and older couples and families work at well-paying blue-collar and service sector jobs. Most own a recently built, single-detached house, along with a large pickup for backcountry driving. With half the maintainers over 55, these third-plus-generation Canadians enjoy old-fashioned pursuits like gardening, boating, fishing, camping and swimming. Self-reliant, they like to work with their hands, doing ambitious remodeling projects as well as traditional home crafts. With their teenage children, they make a strong market for toys, pets and sporting goods; a big splurge is attending a professional baseball or basketball game. Vacations often involve a cottage stay.	Westshore
		Coldwater
		Fesserton
"Down to Earth"	The largest PRIZM segment with nearly 400,000 households, Down to Earth consists of older couples and families found in rural communities across the country. Nine out of ten adults are homeowners, typically living in modest, single-detached homes built before 1980. The majority of maintainers are over 55 years old.	Severn Bridge
		Mordolphin
		Mount Stephen

Table 3-7: PRIZM Categories, characteristics and communities (continued)

PRIZM Category	Fundamental Characteristics (from PRIZM Descriptions)	Communities
"Backcountry Boomers"	The householders in this segment are mostly older, empty-nesting couples and those living alone. Forty percent of maintainers are over 65, and nearly three-quarters of households contain only one or two people. Although most adults are out of the labour force, those still working hold a mix of blue-collar and service sector jobs in farming, natural resources, construction, transportation and the trades. The pay is modest—incomes are 25 percent below average—but it's enough to own an unpretentious, single-detached house. And pride of province holds a special place in this segment, where almost 85 percent are third-plus-generation Canadians and one of their top-ranked values is parochialism. Backcountry Boomers members like to fish, hunt and garden, for the camaraderie as much as the opportunity to put food on the table. Their hobbies are the old-fashioned, pre-Internet variety: making crafts, knitting and collecting coins and stamps. And their motorized vehicles are their prized possessions: large pickups, power boats, ATVs and snowmobiles—preferably made in Canada.	Port Severn

Psychographic Market Segmentation

One very useful perspective on the types of communities in Severn is provided through Environics Analytics' PRIZM psychographic market segmentation system. The PRIZM methodology identifies 67 household types across Canada and identifies each in terms of its unique characteristics and behaviour patterns, which can be very strategic information in identifying programs and services that might appeal to each group. (The Environics Analytics algorithm classifies each residential postal code in Canada as one of the PRIZM categories based upon the majority of the types of households living in that postal code that fall into that particular category. The fundamental theory underlying the analysis is that 'birds of a feather flock together' meaning that like-minded people

tend to cluster together and associate with one another.) The PRIZM categories are assigned memorable names that convey the essence of the nature of that particular psychographic group.

There are four PRIZM segments that appear to characterize the various communities the Township. Table 3-7 summarizes these four segments and shows which of the communities and hamlets in the Township are fall into each category.

Implications of the foregoing upon the arts and culture activities likely preferred by the community are:

- emphasis upon traditional arts and crafts activities, as opposed to highly innovative or avant garde creative activities

- likely strong emphasis upon tradition and heritage preservation
- while there are some affluent pockets, value for money will be important in making cultural choices
- home pride is likely to be high and activities that are oriented toward maintenance and beautification of the home will likely be favoured
- activities that foster a sense of community and belonging will be sought
- an older demographic (characteristic of many of these segments) will likely have more time to participate in activities as well as possibly volunteering in the community

While this analysis describes the current reality of the Township, it must be remembered that Severn may be expecting significant growth over the coming decade, and the new populations moving into the various hamlets and communities may have different needs and expectations from the more traditional residents (and this may affect not only arts, culture and heritage activities, but also other sports and recreation needs). The Township should monitor and track the need of these new residents.

Community Survey Results

A final perspective on demand for arts, culture and heritage activities is afforded by the community survey results. A key finding as it relates to arts and culture programs and events is that interest was high in the online survey. Of the 60% of respondents who thought that new programs were needed, 47% were interested in visual arts programming, and 45% were interested in one-day/weekend events.

Assessment and Recommendations

Following from the analysis above, Table 3-8 summarizes potential recommendations and their associated rationale.

Table 3-8: Arts, culture and heritage recommendations

Recommendation	Rationale
Hold an arts and culture summit to bring all arts, culture and related groups and organizations in the Township together to: a) explain the new directions and opportunities present in the current plan; b) discuss further ways and means of promoting arts, culture and heritage in the community; and c) draw more public attention to the wide range of cultural opportunities available throughout the municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · some sense from interviews and surveys that communication among groups is lacking and that more opportunities to share information would be welcome · other similar sized (and even smaller) communities have benefited from organizing such an event in terms of bringing the community together and demonstrating an intentional stance towards arts and culture development
Expand the range and variety of information available for arts and culture groups on the municipal website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the section on the municipal website relating to arts and culture could be expanded further and made even more useful through the addition of: a) coordinated calendar of upcoming events and activities; b) contact persons for each organization listed on the website (rather than having to dig into each individual organization's site); and c) a brief statement as to the role and purpose of each organization · this is covered under marketing and communications in the Implementation Section
Explore the potential for a wider range of low-cost arts, culture and tourism events and activities in the Township, aimed at permanent as well as seasonal residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · a wider range of activities and events specifically related to arts, culture, heritage and tourism should be explored – these could include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Photography contest sponsored by the Township that would highlight the natural and historical assets of the community · Writing contest (possibly aimed at schoolchildren) on the theme of, for example, 'imaginary stories that occurred in Severn'; 'how I spent my summer vacation in Severn'; or 'historical events in Severn' · Cooking events: possibly on the theme of 'unique dishes in Severn' · Innovation grants for unique and cost-effective ideas to promote ways to celebrate arts and culture in the Township · as well as being ways to engage the population with the unique assets of Severn, these low-cost initiatives could have significant potential to attract positive media attention

Table 3-8: Arts, culture and heritage recommendations (continued)

Recommendation	Rationale
Consider joining the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · membership in the Creative City Network of Canada sends a signal to permanent and seasonal residents that the community is serious about the cultural life of the community, and interested in its overall growth and development · moreover, the CCNC can provide a range of useful information about ways and means to grow the cultural sector, as well as the positive economic benefits that will accrue · at Severn’s current population size (2021 population approximately 14,600) membership cost is just over \$300 a year, so quite affordable · see: https://www.creativecity.ca
Promote agritourism opportunities throughout the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the County of Simcoe has just recent developed an Agritourism Development Toolkit that is oriented towards encouraging new and expanded agritourism opportunities throughout the County · in addition to being economic development possibilities in their own right, agritourism businesses can provide local residents with significant opportunities to learn about the agricultural and natural resource heritage of the community, and thus can help further an arts and culture agenda · the Township should ensure that any potential candidate operations that could benefit from learning more about agritourism, should be able to do so · the next step towards implementation of this initiative would be to meet with the County to discuss ways and means of identifying existing operations and determining the best approach

Table 3-8: Arts, culture and heritage recommendations (continued)

Recommendation	Rationale
Continue to pursue tourism development opportunities (with Orillia’s Lake Country and other partners) through the preparation of a tourism development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · previous reports undertaken by Orillia’s Lake Country have identified a number of specific opportunities for tourism development in throughout Severn · these are relevant to the insofar as they represent opportunities for local businesses but also recreational and tourism opportunities for local residents · the major ideas have included increased public (and tourist) access to waterways – specifically Lake Couchiching and the Trent Severn; waterfront restaurant; camping and glamping opportunities; and a family entertainment centre · the Township should prepare a tourism development plan (which would itemize and prioritize the various tourism-related opportunities identified) · this should contain a cultural tourism component to ensure that the tourism potential of existing cultural assets is realized
Retain Culture and Tourism Development Position (or expand duties of existing position to accommodate these new responsibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · in the longer-term as some of these initiatives gain traction and yield returns, the Township should consider hiring a Culture and Tourism Development officer, possibly on an initial contract basis · the duties of this position would encompass: a) regular liaison with the Township’s Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee; b) coordination of the tourism development plan (as described above); c) coordination of other initiatives (such as the arts and culture summit, cultural events and activities, liaison with the CCNC, etc.) · however, during the term of this Plan, these duties could be assigned to a more general Program Developer, as discussed in the Service Delivery section.

PE12. Hold an arts and culture summit

PE13. Explore the potential for a wider range of low-cost arts, culture and tourism events and activities in the Township, aimed at permanent as well as seasonal residents

PE14. Consider joining the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC)

PE15. Promote agritourism opportunities throughout the County

PE16. Continue to pursue tourism development opportunities (with Parks Canada, Simcoe County Tourism, Orillia's Lake Country and other partners) through the preparation of a tourism development plan



Figure 3-3: Uthhoff Trail



Figure 4-1: Washago Community Centre

4.0 Facilities

4.1 Introduction

This section of the Master Plan addresses the need for indoor and outdoor facilities to meet community activity requirements now and in the future, and considers:

- community recreation hubs
- all facilities planning and improvements
- indoor facilities
- outdoor facilities



Figure 4-2: Matchedash Community Centre

The following points summarize consultation results related to facilities, which are discussed in more detail in the assessments:

- Coldwater and District Community Centre is the most frequently used facility in the Township by both residents and organized user groups.
- User groups were largely satisfied with the facilities they use for their programs. For indoor facilities, among the 12 groups responding, all but one (92%) indicated that facilities are well suited to their requirements. The remaining group was uncertain in this regard. Similarly, almost all of the groups that use outdoor facilities for their programs (89% or 8 groups) indicated these are well suited to their needs.
- Among 25 responding groups, the largest proportion (44% or 11 groups) indicated that they will not need new facilities, and 24% (6 groups) responded affirmatively. The remaining groups (8 or 32%) were uncertain in this regard.
- Among the six (6) groups anticipating need for new facilities, the most frequently indicated needs were: ball diamonds, auditorium and a large multi-purpose area, (each noted by 2 groups).
- Over half of the residents to the telephone survey (52%) were of the opinion that new or expanded facilities are not needed, 36% indicated they are, and 12% were unsure.
- Responses on the need for improvements focused on the Coldwater Arena, and court facilities/equipment for pickleball.

4.2 Assessments and Recommendations

Community Recreation Hubs

Primary Hubs

The previous Master Plan recommended that Township parks and recreation services be concentrated in four community nodes to help build the delivery of services: Washago (existing), Coldwater (existing), Cumberland Beach (now Westshore) (future), and Marchmont/Bass Lake (future, outdoor).

A pattern of hub development has been established over time and the Township now has two major focal points for indoor and outdoor recreation, Washago Community Centre/Centennial Park, and Coldwater and District Community Centre (including the Fairgrounds). The new Westshore Recreation will provide a third major indoor/outdoor recreation hub for residents of the Township.

Secondary Hubs

Lake St. George and the Matchedash Community Centres comprise locally serving facilities, and contribute to an overall improved geographic distribution of indoor spaces for community use and should continue to operate as such. Marchmont Community Park can provide a focus for outdoor recreation facility development for this area of the Township.

Creating an arts-focused community centre through redevelopment/renovation of the building and grounds at the Township's recently bequeathed property in Port Severn will serve several objectives: addressing a deficiency in facilities for community arts development and programming; optimizing use of a Township-owned asset; improving

the overall geographic distribution of community facilities by adding a hub in the north end of the Township; creating a unique waterfront setting for arts-related events programming in the summer; providing a venue for visitor-focused attractions (see also Severn Community Arts Centre below).

Strategic development and distribution of programs and activities at primary and secondary hubs is appropriate due to the physical capability of facilities to accommodate various types and levels of use. Older, smaller spaces such as Lake St. George Community Centre and Matchedash Community Heritage Centre can continue to operate largely as locally serving centres with support from the Township. Washago Community Centre/Centennial Park, Coldwater and District Community Centre (including Fairgrounds), and Westshore Recreation Centre should be targeted for sport and non-sport recreation for the community at large. As noted above, Marchmont Community Park can accommodate future outdoor facility development, as required. The proposed Severn Community Arts Centre will focus on arts, culture and heritage programming, for the Township as a whole but not to the exclusion of its programming for other amenable uses.

- F1. Designate three primary recreation hubs in the Township as the focus for a wide range of organized programs and self-directed recreation opportunities, including the existing hubs of Washago Community Centre/Centennial Park, and Coldwater and District Community Centre and Fairgrounds, and the new Westshore Recreation Centre
- F2. Designate four secondary recreation hubs including the existing Lake St. George Community Centre and Matchedash Community Heritage Centre, Marchmont Park, and the newly acquired waterfront property in Port Severn, which is recommended as a focal point for community-based arts activity
- F3. Use each recreation hub to strategically develop and distribute programs/activities that are amenable to the characteristics of facilities spaces/capacities, with the objectives of serving immediate residents and/or attracting Township-wide participation, depending on the type of hub and ability to deliver programs

All Facilities Planning and Improvements

Use in Relation to Capacity

The Township carefully tracks all hours of scheduled facility use, which is an important activity for program/service planning and budgeting. For all facilities, use is calculated in relation to a common denominator of 6,563.92 annually available hours (i.e., capacity). While it may be a strictly accurate number in relation to potential operating hours to accommodate bookings, this figure is likely high in relation to actual patterns of use. Including all available hours in calculations of use in relation to capacity under-reports prime time activity. Tracking use by prime time hours and non-prime time hours provides a more realistic picture of use in relation to capacity, since prime time is high demand/use time (regardless of total available time). It is also a truer indicator of the point where demand exceeds supply, which in turn suggests the need to address ways to improve use of non-prime time to redistribute use.

Prime time and non-prime time are currently defined for the arena ice-in season but not for other scheduled facilities.

The Township should review the use of 6,563.92 as annually available hours for all scheduled facilities and establish relevant definitions of prime time and non-prime time for the purpose of tracking use. Prime and non-prime times should be defined and tracked for ball diamonds, sports fields, pickleball courts, future tennis courts and other outdoor facilities used for organized activity/programming. These hours will likely vary by general types of facilities and length of season. Sports fields and ball diamonds will have similar definitions, as

will outdoor net sport courts but they will be different from each other. Tracking use within these smaller ‘windows’ will provide a more realistic picture of use in relation to prime time/non-prime time capacity, and possible need to increase the supply of net sport courts. Moreover, tracking use during non-prime time will help verify post-COVID changes related to possible permanent lifestyle shifts with respect to working from home that may result in more daytime use of programs and facilities.

As it stands now, the ice pad and the floor at the arena are each allocated the equivalent of a full year’s hours (6,563.92). In reality, however, total time is split between ice-in and ice-out seasons, as follows:

- available ice-in hours comprises 3,829 per year (6,563.92/12 months = 547 hours per month x 7 months/per ice-in season, September through March);
- available ice-out hours comprises 2,735 per year (6,563.92/12 months = 547

hours per month x 5 months/per ice-in season, April through August).

For use tracking purposes, therefore, prime and non-prime time at the arena, should be revised to reflect this seasonal split between the ice and the floor.

Table 4-1: Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in the Township of Severn

Facility Type	Ownership			
	Municipal	School Board	Non-Profit*	Total
Arena	1 (single pad)			1
Curling Rink			1 (4 sheets)	
Halls/Community Rooms	4		4	8
Meeting Rooms/Lounge	2		5	7
Kitchens	3		5	8
Gymnasium		3		3
Ball Diamonds	6			6
Soccer Fields	3	3		6

* includes churches

- F4. Review use of 6,563.92 as annually available hours for all scheduled facilities and establish relevant definitions of prime time and non-prime time for the purpose of tracking use on ball diamonds, sports fields, pickleball courts, future tennis courts and other outdoor facilities used for organized activity
- F5. Develop performance indicators for all facilities that actually reflect available facility prime and non-prime times in relation to use to optimize operations

AODA Upgrades and Improvements

Between February and June of 2020, the Township prepared Barrier-free Accessibility reports on each of its major recreation buildings. The draft reports contained detailed checklists outlining the improvements/upgrades needed to meet AODA standards. The facilities and parks reviewed and the total estimated cost for each are listed in Table 4-2.

The total for the indoor facilities reviewed was \$1,284,426 in AODA improvements, and parks upgrades totalled \$598,050. Much of this work has been completed, with the following items to be addressed in 2022: visual fire alarms at both the Washago and Coldwater District Community Centres; front entrance doors at the WCC; an accessible pathway in Washago Centennial Park. The current Multi-year Accessibility Plan runs to 2023 and will then require review and updating for the next five years to 2028.

- F6. Continue to implement AODA accessibility upgrades as per budgeted items
- F7. Review and update the five-year Multi-year Accessibility Plan in 2023

Table 4-2: Estimated Costs for AODA Accessibility Improvements

Facilities	Total Estimated Improvement Costs (2020\$)
Coldwater Fairground	\$292,470.00
Washago Centennial Park	\$305,580.00
Lake St. George Community Centre*	\$545,308.00
Matchedash Heritage Centre*	\$188,451.00
Washago Community Centre	\$174,394.00
Coldwater and District Community Centre	\$376,273.00

Note: As noted in the reports: the costs provided are Class D estimates and do not include soft costs such as design, project management, contingency and taxes
 * some items were not included in the estimate

4.3 Indoor Facility Requirements

Arena

Ice Requirements

The 2019 consolidated use data for the CDCC indicates the arena was used for a total of 1,621.62 hours or approximately 25% of available capacity (6,563.92 hours). The following considers use according to prime and non-prime time for a more detailed assessment.

Based on the 2019 ice scheduling calendar and the Township’s differentiation between prime time and non-prime time, winter operating hours are Monday to Sunday, 6:00 am to 11:30 pm. Within total operating hours, prime time comprises Monday through Friday from 4:00 pm to 11:30 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 6:00 am to 11:30 pm. All holidays are considered prime time hours. Non-prime time (the balance of operating hours) comprises Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 4:00 pm.

The 2019 ice scheduling calendar was used to select the most heavily booked week in each full month of the ice-in season: January, February, March, October, November and December. The schedule is visually depicted in Appendix C.

The overall busiest week in each of the above-noted six months was used to determine the proportions of prime and non-prime time ice use. These are shown in Table 4.3.

As shown in the table, prime time use ranged from 75% during the week of February 17 to 48% for the week of March 10. Five of the six weeks comprised over 50% prime time use. As is typical, non-prime time use was proportionately much lower than prime time and ranged from 16% to 49%. The variation in the difference in proportionate use of prime and non-prime time during the week of March 10 was likely due to shifts in use during March

Break - comprising both more daytime programming, and less evening, activity.

These findings indicate that, while prime time at the arena is generally well used, there is additional capacity in the evenings and on weekends. Non-prime time provides considerably more unused capacity for expanded use. Using 62% as an indicator of average proportionate use of prime time equates to 45 hours of prime time as sufficient to meet current demand for peak ice use at the Coldwater Arena. On a per capita basis this translates into 0.003 hours per person using the 2021 Census population for the Township (14,576). At this level of supply, the projected 2036 population of 17,507 will require 52.5 hours of prime time ice. This figure is based on permanent population growth alone. It assumes constant levels of participation and does not include seasonal residents. At the same time, it still provides a considerable amount of prime time for increased

scheduling. The current amount of prime time at a supply level of 0.003 hours per capita could accommodate a population of about 24,000. Since the Township carefully tracks all facility use, it is likely that any unmet demand for ice use due to new programming/increased participation in existing programs will be anticipated and accommodated in the arena schedule.

Table 4-3: Use of Prime and Non-Prime Ice Time in 2019

Week in 2019	Prime Time Hours Used		Non-prime Time Hours Used	
	#	%	#	%
week of January 20	42.5	58.6%	15.5	31.0%
week of February 17	54.5	75.2%	14.0	28.0%
week of March 10	35.0	48.3%	24.5	49.0%
week of October 27	42.0	57.9%	8.0	16.0%
week of November 17	44.5	61.4%	10.5	21.0%
week of December 15	49.5	68.3%	9.0	18.0%
total for six weeks	268.0		81.5	
average per week	44.7	61.7%	13.6	27.2%

Facility Improvements

Among the 26 groups that responded to the user group survey, 14 (52%) use municipal indoor facilities. All but one (92%) of 12 groups indicated that facilities are well suited to their requirements. The remaining group was uncertain in this regard. Given the high level of response to the user group survey, therefore, it was surprising to hear a somewhat different perspective in the focus groups with sports and recreation organizations and service clubs, where dissatisfaction emerged with respect to the arena:

- size of the ice pad and lobby: participation in hockey has increased annually, so greater accommodations are needed for multiple teams using it at the same time; lobby is too small and needs to be expanded
- dressing room, washroom sizes, configuration and amenities: need to be updated, made larger, accessible and inclusive to accommodate future growth/more people simultaneously. A primary concern is that washrooms and dressing rooms should be made more accessible. It was also noted that the showers and hot water are unreliable.
- ice-in season: one arena user reported the need to start in September in order to be ready for the season and, therefore, the group must use ice in Midland, Oro or Orillia in September to start its program as Coldwater does not yet have ice in.

The online community survey included these comments: “The washrooms in the dressing rooms are not useful as they do not have doors. Relocation of the washrooms outside of the dressing rooms would provide

more space for people. It is difficult for figure skating and minor hockey to hold tournaments and competitions. The existing rooms could be made bigger with removal of false walls and toilets. It would leave more room for bench space. Some seating in the rink area could be removed to add dressing rooms down one side or expand the side dressing rooms down the length of the building and/or in the rear of the building to provide additional rooms.”

Considerable investment has already been made in the arena to upgrade/improve the building and its operating efficiency, including a renovated entrance to integrate AODA accessibility and a new roof. The Township is aware of the building’s deficiencies and is working towards additional improvements over time, the foremost of these being AODA accessibility. Many of the comments from the community included the need to improve accessibility, and this objective would be mandatory to undertaking upgrades to configuration and dressing room/washroom size. Estimated costs should be determined as support for future grant opportunities to: renovate the entrance to provide a larger lobby; address deficiencies in dressing rooms and washrooms; relocate the enclosed space on the perimeter of the ice pad and reconnect the aisle on either side.

While most of the community feedback on the arena focused on the need for improvements, some suggested replacing it with a new facility. Despite the appeal of this option, it is not a feasible one for the Township of Severn. The cost to replace the arena alone would exceed \$10 million. Assuming a proportionate split in federal, provincial and municipal funding, the Township’s share would be at least \$3.3 million. At the same time, the use levels of

the existing arena might not prove feasible to recommend replacement and so achieve upper level funding. If funding applications were not successful, the Township would be required to carry the full cost or opt not to replace the facility. As it stands now, the arena is an important community asset, and offers capacity for additional programming in both ice-in and ice-out seasons (and hall use) as Severn grows during the term of the Plan. It is one of only a limited number of barrel designed arenas left in Ontario and, as noted above, it is well used and has been well maintained over the years despite its age. Moreover, efforts to improve the building and its functions are ongoing. The Township, therefore, can continue to focus on both physical improvements and expanded programming in upcoming years.

- F8. A new indoor ice pad is not required. The Coldwater Arena can accommodate anticipated additional demand for ice use due to population growth during the term of the Master Plan
- F9. Continue making required improvements/enhancements to the arena to ensure its ability to continue to serve the community

Curling Rink

The curling rink is operated by the local curling club under a Municipal Capital Facility Agreement (2019). It is a ten year agreement between the Township and the Coldwater and District Curling Club to continue the Club's title to the Subject Lands (described in the agreement) and operation of the facility until May 1, 2028 at which time, unless the agreement is renewed, the Subject Lands will be sold to the Township for \$1.00. The agreement allows the Club to carry out renovations/improvements as specified in the document and outlines the relationship between the Club and the Township in other matters including use of the facility and parking, repairs and maintenance, revenues and expenses, accounting and reporting, and liability and safety.

In its response to the user group survey, the Club noted it has 275 members, from various areas within and outside the Township. It provides programming to all age groups beginning with children between the ages of 5 and 12 years from October through March. The Club did not report the need for expanded facilities and is uncertain regarding need for assistance from the Township.

- F10. Continue working relationship with the curling club until end of current agreement, and beyond, through its renewal

Program Space

Municipally Programmed

Coldwater District Community Centre Hall (CDCC)

The 2019 consolidated use data for the CDCC indicates the hall was used for a total of 1,342.85 hours or approximately 360 more than that shown on the calendar. It is assumed that this amount represents last minute rentals, which the Township makes every effort to accommodate. As noted above, the number of available hours used now to determine proportionate use of capacity is 6,563.92 per year. Using this figure indicates that the hall was used to 20% of available capacity in 2019.

The 2019 scheduling calendar for the Hall was used for a more detailed look at use for the year. The calendar notes 301 bookings for the year, totalling 981.8 hours of use.¹ This use was divided into prime and non-prime time to estimate demand for weekday vs. weeknight and weekend use. Hours of use after 6:00 pm on weeknights and all day Saturday and Sunday was considered prime time, with the balance comprising non-prime time. Appendix C contains the monthly and yearly totals for these variables. For the full year, 60% of use occurred during non-prime time (weekdays before 6:00 pm), with the balance (40%) occupying weekday evening and weekend hours. This level of use reflects the Township's successful efforts to use facilities on weekdays, whether for its own programs, contracted services or rentals to other community groups such as the Coldwater Village Players. At the same time, the community consultation

results indicated interest in more daytime programming, and some for which services are already provided on weekdays (e.g., yoga). There is time available to expand existing or develop new programs using the CDCC hall, particularly in the months July through September.

The 2019 consolidated use data for the CDCC indicates the hall's kitchen was used for a total of 710.45 hours or approximately 11% of available capacity (6,563.92 hours). A Health Unit commercial certified kitchen can be used for a variety of food and nutrition programs, as well as projects/activities related to communal and/or commercial use of the kitchen.

The Township of North Glengarry is a small Ontario community that is embarking on this type of initiative. Their website notes, "Now accepting bookings: The Township of North Glengarry has partnered with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit to launch the new "North Glengarry Community Kitchen" pilot project. This initiative will enable food producers to rent time at the North Glengarry Community Kitchen, located at the Maxville and District Sports Complex (25 Fair Street, Maxville) so that they can produce food items for resale. The cost is \$50 per day and food producers are required to have their Food Handlers Certificate and have their recipe validated by the EOHU."²

Other provinces appear to be considerably farther ahead in this area. The Government of Manitoba lists approximately 60 locations to, "Rent a local commercial community kitchen to help further develop your food product idea. All these locations have a Food Service Establishment permit issued by Manitoba Health."³

¹ Excludes use by Township for meetings, etc.

² Source: <https://www.northglengarry.ca/en/things-to-do/community-kitchens-program.aspx>

³ Source: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/online-resources/community-kitchens-listing.html>

The potential to increase use of the CDCC kitchen for community and/or commercial use should be investigated by the Township.

- F11. Use available time in the Coldwater District Community Centre Hall to expand existing or develop new programs, particularly in the months July through September
- F12. Consult with Simcoe Muskoka District Public Health Unit to investigate the potential to use the CDCC Hall kitchen for community programming and food producer rentals

Washago Community Centre (WCC)

In January 2020, the Township assumed management of the Washago Community Centre, which was previously operated under a lease agreement with the Washago Community Centre Corporation. A Transition Plan and Team were established to guide the seamless transfer of operations and programming responsibilities to the Township. The transition has been completed, and as COVID-19 restrictions are incrementally removed, work can proceed with program development. The intent is to retain existing programs/facility access that the community uses, as well as develop new services to encompass a broader range of recreation interests. A Washago Community Advisory Committee was established with a mandate to ensure the success of the building, events and to support the community in accessing the facility. The Committee comprises two members of Council and community members at large.

This decision to make the transition from community-based to Township management was made in 2019, in the early stages of the COVID pandemic. A smooth transition, therefore, was affected by unprecedented circumstances. As services reopen and ‘normalization’ returns, it is anticipated that the Township will initiate dialogue with the local community to ensure the appropriate integration of long standing and new programs/services at the WCC.

The COVID facility shut-down period was used to implement a number of capital improvements to the Community Centre in anticipation of reopening, including:

- re-keying the building for security/ controlled access
- sport-specific lighting the rink for night use and safety
- replacing rinks boards and netting

Improvements/upgrades that are scheduled for completion in the short-term include:

- general painting of the exterior and siding repair
- front door servicing to determine need for repairs or replacement, through an OTF grant
- eavestrough repairs and maintenance to ensure water is diverted from building
- replacing decorative landscape rock along the concrete walkway for safety of people entering the building
- an accessibility audit to specify required AODA upgrades/improvements (e.g., walkway is too narrow, inappropriately sloped and uneven at connection to parking lot), which has been completed. The final drawings are being reviewed by the Accessibility Committee.

F13. As per the objectives associated with Township management and operation, retain existing programs/facility access to the Community Centre, and develop new services to encompass a broader range of recreation interests

Arena Floor

During ice-out season, the arena floor of the CDCC becomes an indoor program space for other programs/activities. The 2019 scheduling calendar for the arena floor shows April through August use totalling 147 hours. Use was divided into prime and non-prime time to estimate demand for weekday vs. weeknight and weekend use. Hours of use after 6:00 pm on weeknights and all day Saturday and Sunday was considered prime time, with the balance comprising non-prime time. Based on these definitions, almost all use was prime time:

- 22 prime evening hours for ball hockey
- 10 prime weekend hours for Rebel Rollers tournament
- 94 hours for special events (Shine Brite Festival), all but 5 prime weekend hours
- 16 prime evening hours private rental
- 5 prime evening hours Township recreation programs

The 2019 consolidated use data for the CDCC indicates the arena floor was used for a total of 261.12 hours or approximately 4% of available capacity (6,563.92 hours), which equates to much time for expanded use. Considerable potential exists, therefore, to

use this space for indoor programming and special events during ice-out months.

As discussed below with respect to pickleball, the arena floor offers indoor space for this activity. Two courts are available here, and players are interested in increasing hours of use at the arena, but staff hours are insufficient to extend coverage. Making optimal use of the arena floor for programming during the ice-out season will require extending staff hours to allow it to occur.

F14. Review current demand for access to arena floor for programs/activities and increase staff hours accordingly to provide supervision during use

Westshore Recreation Centre

A new recreation centre will be developed in the community of Westshore to serve:

1. existing residents of the area,
2. new local residential neighbourhoods,
3. Township residents in general -

since the Centre will include facilities that are not part of existing supply in other settlement areas.

Preliminary concept plans for the Centre show it will comprise a gross building area of 19,171 square feet, and will include a double gym, a large community room, multi-purpose space(s), a kitchen, lobby/reception space, and ancillary facilities. This will provide the Township with full-time access to active programming space. The outdoor area shows an activity/event space immediately adjacent to the building to accommodate connected indoor/outdoor use, a playground area, a sports (soccer) field, two tennis courts, and four bocce ball courts. Facilities on the outdoor portion of the site are located in such a way as to be able to accommodate a future building expansion, should it be needed.

With the exception of the sports (soccer) field, the proposed indoor spaces and outdoor facilities for Westshore are not part of the existing municipal supply. Collectively, therefore, they will provide assets to expand programming and participation opportunities in new activity areas for the community as a whole.

F15. The focus of the new Recreation Centre should be local and Township-wide programming/ use that expands recreation opportunities, particularly in areas that are not part of current supply

Proposed Severn Community Arts Centre

The Township was recently bequeathed a waterfront property in Port Severn with a residential building on site. This property presents an opportunity to offset a deficiency in community arts, culture and heritage programming and should be considered as a location for focusing its development. The building could be renovated to provide studio/work spaces for communal use (or rental income), a common area(s) for group activities, exhibits, formal programming, etc., and a small kitchenette with a fridge and microwave. While this represents one possible suitable use for the space, the Township should consult with the family that bequeathed the property first, before any actions are taken.

The site itself could accommodate outdoor studio spaces, public art installments, and an event space. While the core mandate of the Centre would be developing community arts and culture, the spaces could be booked for other types of activities and events (though the primary use would be as a community resource, and it would not operate on a for-profit model). A waterfront location would support an attractive and unique setting for arts-related programs/ activities in the spring, summer and fall and improve water access points. A pad for a

contracted food vendor could be provided for summer service.

In addition to addressing a gap in services, an arts centre in Port Severn would improve the overall geographic distribution of community facilities by adding a hub in the northwest end of the Township. It is recommended that the Township undertake a feasibility study to determine the potential for this property to be redeveloped as a hub for arts, culture and heritage programming, along with a concept plan, anticipated capital and operating costs, and the potential for revenue generation. As a municipal facility, it would be delivered using a cost recovery model, with any revenues from rentals/events going to subsidizing its operations.

The arts and heritage related groups that responded to the user group survey all anticipate growth in participation in their programs/activities, and may be potential users of a community arts centre for new and/or satellite programs. These groups, the family, and the community at large should be included in a comprehensive consultation program as part of the feasibility study.

F16. Conduct a detailed feasibility study, including community and family consultation, to determine the potential for the bequeathed waterfront property in Port Severn (3253 Port Severn Road) to be redeveloped as a hub for arts, culture and heritage programming

Community Programmed

Matchedash Community Heritage Centre and Lake St. George Community Centre

Each of these Township-owned facilities is leased through three-year agreements to the Matchedash Community Heritage Association and the Lake St. George Community Centre Corporation, respectively. The lease stipulates \$1.00 per month rent for the first year, which is negotiable in each of the following years. The Township is responsible for major capital improvements/ alterations and the leasees are responsible for facility maintenance and repair. The Centres are accountable to the Township through twice annual reports of revenue and expenditures, and a statement of financial position.

Both Centres provide facilities for community use, operate year-round and run programs and others special events. Programs include karate classes, dart league, and related to fitness/wellness, social/club and drop-in. Events include seniors lunches, Christmas Crafts Vendors Fair, and rentals for weddings, baby showers, etc.

Lake St. George users come from Washago (45%), Westshore (45%) and outside Severn Township (10%). Matchedash users comprise a majority (80%) from rural Severn, and 20% from outside the Township. Both Centres anticipate up to 10% growth in upcoming years in the numbers of people they will serve for a variety of reasons including: overall population growth in the area, availability of facility time, interest in their program/event focus, their social engaging/fun activities, and plans to expand/provide new programs and/or events.

It is assumed that both agreements with the Centres' operating groups are current⁴ and will be renewed when they expire. Lake St. George Community Centre is located almost equidistance between Washago Community Centre and the planned Westshore Recreation Centre. Programming changes at the WCC and new programs developed at the Westshore Recreation Centre may impact the services offered at Lake St. George. The Township, through its recommended program development and coordination position (as discussed below), would be responsible for working to ensure appropriate/balanced distribution of programs and services across its facilities as well as identifying new opportunities for specific locations. A respondent to the online resident survey noted, he/she is "not really optimistic about any exercise and/or art related activities in Coldwater or Matchedash. There is a growing need, however, as more people are interested in building or renovating all-year residences where cottages used to be the norm." This is an indicator of program areas that should be investigated for provision at these centres.

F17. Support expanded programming at Lake St. George Community Centre and Matchedash Community Heritage Centre that aligns with identified needs, facility capabilities, and balanced service distribution across the community

Outdoor Facility Requirements

Soccer Fields

The Township's existing supply of soccer fields totals three (3):

- two at Washago Community Park and one at the Coldwater Fairgrounds, all of which are scheduled for organized activity
- Marchmont Community Park does not have a formal soccer field, but was reported as used by one group for soccer in the users' survey

Forty-three percent (36) of the respondents to the online resident survey indicated park improvements require the addition of multi-purpose sports fields. None of the user groups indicated the need for new playing fields in the foreseeable future.

2019 scheduling and use data show total hours available on the Township's three soccer fields at 19,691.76 per season. Hours used totaled 126.92 or 0.64% of available hours. Prime time hours (evenings and weekends) are a 'subset' of available time and are the hours that are typically in high demand/use on municipal sports fields. Although prime time on fields is not defined by the Township, it is estimated at 584 per field or 1,752 hours total per season. If it is assumed that all hours used occurred during prime time, proportionate total use on soccer fields increases to 7.2%, with the Coldwater Fairgrounds field accounting for most of the total. At 7.2% prime time use, therefore, the majority of weeknight and weekend time (92.8%) is available to accommodate additional activity. No new

fields will be required to accommodate anticipated population growth to 2036.

While soccer remains dominant in community level field sports, it appears participation has peaked and is trending to decline. Table 4.4 shows participation in soccer in Ontario between the years 2012 and 2019, as published in Canada Soccer's Annual Reports. Except for a spike in total participation in 2013, numbers declined over this period by 23%. Within total participation, youth male and female (ages 18 and under) declined by 20% and 30%, respectively or 24% total. These data suggest that the rapid growth in soccer in earlier decades will not be a factor in facility demand for the foreseeable future and reversing trends may result in an oversupply of fields in some communities that have built their supplies as single purpose fields in response to surging demand.

At the same time, facilities that have previously been designated and used almost exclusively for soccer are increasingly being designed and programmed to accommodate compatible sports on multi-purpose fields. This approach recognizes several factors: the relative decline in soccer, the need to facilitate participation in other community sports, and the requirement for municipalities to limit expenditures in single-purpose recreation infrastructure.

In keeping with broader trends, the Township's fields have been used almost exclusively for soccer. Currently, there is much unused time on these fields and there are other sports which could potentially use them, such as field lacrosse, football, rugby, ultimate frisbee and field hockey. Canada's Sport for Life (CS4L) framework for Long Term Development in Sport and

Physical Activity has generated a more formal approach in the sport community to strengthening and building introductory programming at the local level, which suggests future growth in these activities. Introductory level program development also aligns with the framework for Physical Literacy for Communities (PL4C)⁵, which is the foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity. At the community level, municipalities are the leaders in recreation service provision. The municipal mandate for recreation typically emphasizes introductory level programming in a variety of areas including field sports. Severn's 2019 use of municipal fields, for example, included 37 hours of Township programming for Little Kickers soccer. The Township, therefore, can actively facilitate the development of community-based field sports in addition to soccer. As part of this orientation to a wider range of field sports, 'soccer fields' should be renamed as 'sports fields.'

The Westshore Recreation Centre sports field is being developed to provide that area of the Township with access to outdoor facilities, and to support combined indoor/outdoor activity. As a new field being designed as a multi-purpose facility, it can function as the 'flagship' for accommodating and growing other types of field sports. Future improvements to existing fields throughout the Township should enhance their multi-functionality to also contribute to diversifying their use.

The sports field at the Westshore Recreation Centre can meet the following programming objectives: combined indoor/outdoor activity that will require a sports field; providing a multi-use field, since there are other fields in the community that are readily available to accommodate additional soccer use;

⁴ The Lake St. George Community Centre lease expires in 2022; the Matchedash Community Heritage Centre lease expired in 2019.

⁵ <https://physicalliteracy.ca/communities/>

improving the geographic distribution of sports fields that can accommodate a variety of activities.

Although no additional access to sports fields is anticipated, the Township has an agreement with the Simcoe County District School Board for community use of school soccer fields outside academic hours at Marchmont, Severn Shores and Coldwater Public Schools. While this agreement has not been activated due to no demand for access to these fields, it remains part of the Township’s roster of partnerships with non-municipal providers should such a need arise.

- F18. Rename ‘soccer fields’ as ‘sports fields’ to recognize and promote their availability for use for other sports that can be accommodated on multi-use fields
- F19. Program the new multi-purpose field at the Westshore Recreation Centre as the ‘flagship’ for accommodating and growing other types of field sports such as field lacrosse, football, rugby, etc.
- F20. Future improvements to sports fields should be made to enhance their multi-functionality
- F21. No additional sports fields are required during the term of the Master Plan

Ball Diamonds

The Township’s existing supply of ball diamonds totals six (6):

- four of the six are scheduled for organized use - two at Washago Centennial Park and two at Coldwater Fairgrounds. Of the four diamonds, one at Coldwater Fairgrounds is lit
- Marchmont and Timberline Parks each have one ball diamond

2019 scheduling and use data show total hours available on the Township’s four ball diamonds at 26,255.68 per season. Hours used totaled 571.03 or 2.2% of available hours. Prime time hours (evenings and weekends) are a ‘subset’ of available time and are the hours that are typically in high demand/use on municipal sports fields. Although prime time on fields is not defined by the Township, it is estimated at 1,080 per lit field and 584 per unlit field or 2,832 hours total per season. If it is assumed that all hours used occurred during prime time, proportionate total use on ball diamonds increases to 20.2%, with the lit diamond at Coldwater Fairgrounds accounting for most of the total. At 20.2% prime time use, therefore, the majority of weeknight and weekend time (79.8%) is available to accommodate additional activity. The loss of one diamond at Washago Centennial Park in 2023 to accommodate a new multi-sport court next to the Kids’ Zone (to include a pump track and half pipe) will have limited impact on supply since it is used very little. No additional ball diamonds will be required during to accommodate anticipated population growth to 2036.

The need for a larger ball diamond at the CDCC for minor ball was noted in focus groups, along with field orientation away from the sun. User groups indicated the need for two for hardball diamonds here to eliminate the need to leave the municipality for tournaments. The Parks section of the Master Plan presents a preliminary concept drawing for the Fairgrounds. A facility fit exercise showed that available space is insufficient to accommodate two hardball diamonds. The concept, therefore, includes one hardball and one softball diamond, reoriented away from the sun.

Diamonds at Marchmont and Timberline Parks were upgraded in 2021 and neither is scheduled for organized use, although Marchmont was reported as used by one group in the users’ survey. Should additional capacity be required for organized softball use during the term of the Master Plan, these facilities can be scheduled.

- F22. No additional ball diamonds will be required to accommodate anticipated population growth to 2036
- F23. Upgraded diamonds at Marchmont and Timberline Parks can be scheduled should additional capacity be required for organized softball

Table 4-4: Soccer Participation in Ontario 2012 to 2019

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Youth Male	164,215	164,693	157,837	171,023	160,738	147,971	138,262	131,316
Youth Female	124,341	121,556	113,904	115,427	106,586	98,457	90,299	86,627
Senior Male	40,329	42,978	41,191	27,797	38,449	36,696	38,954	37,745
Senior Female	24,351	26,044	24,402	14,233	21,186	19,540	20,726	18,201
Total	353,236	355,271	337,334	328,480	326,959	302,664	288,241	271,889

Table 4-5: Canadians that played tennis at least once a week during the tennis season as reported in 2018

Canadians That Played Tennis At Least Once a Week During the Tennis Season (i.e. Frequent Players)					
2,936,000 Canadians			8% of Canadians		
Breakdown by Gender					
Male:	58%		Female:	42%	
Breakdown by Age Group					
6 to 8	9 to 11	12 to 17	18 to 34	35v to 49	50+
Additional Facts					
67% of participants over 18, have children under 18 at home					
18% were born outside of Canada					

Tennis/Pickleball Courts

Data in Table 5-5 from a 2018 study on frequent players⁶ show the appeal of tennis to youth and young adults, as well as its potential to engage newcomers to Canada in community sport. There are currently no tennis courts in the Township. The Westshore Community Centre courts will be multi-purpose facilities to accommodate tennis, pickleball, etc.

The Washago Pickleball Club has approximately 65 members from Washago and area. In 2020, the Club entered a Facility Use Agreement with the Township for use of the courts on the outdoor pad at Washago Community Centre during the playing season, which ran from May to Thanksgiving. Regular weekday and tournament days were scheduled for the use of the courts and, as required for events, the hall, BBQ, tents, etc. The Township took

responsibility for running a casual, drop-in program at other times. The agreement was to be reviewed after the 2020 season, to assess the potential to improve/renew the arrangement. COVID-19 resulted in restricted use of the courts during the year, and a deferral of the review since the agreement was not fully implemented.

Trends show that pickleball participation has been growing exponentially across North America in recent years and appears not to have yet peaked. Pickleball Canada notes, “the number of players across Canada has grown from 6,000 to 60,000 in the past 6 years and the number of courts increased approximately 10 times...Every U.S. state and all Canadian provinces now have pickleball venues. The known places to play total of 6,885 at the end of 2018 represents (sic) an increase of 1,016 or approximately 85 locations per month.”⁷

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

7 <https://www.usapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-Pickleball-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

There are a number of factors that will likely support continued growth in pickleball participation,⁸ including:

- its recognition as a legitimate sport, with both recreational and competitive categories
- play, in terms of rules and physical intensity, is relatively easy
- an all-ages appeal
- national organizational commitment to growing participation
- it can be played year-round indoors and outdoors, with appropriate facilities
- participants report that it is fun as well as physically beneficial

The experience of other municipalities indicates that pickleball courts are currently among the most commonly requested new facilities in Ontario communities.

It was indicated in 2020 that the Washago Pickleball Club is interested in having more courts developed to expand its activities. Surveys and focus groups for the Master Plan indicated interest in improved/more facilities for pickleball. The online survey and focus groups included the following comments:

- Pickleball is exploding in popularity both in Severn and throughout North America. All the surrounding townships have multiple outdoor courts that are available to players. Severn needs to resurface and develop the courts in Washago so that residents have a local facility. We need at least four good courts as well as available washroom facilities.

8 <https://www.selkirk.com/pickleballs-growth>

- Some would like the Township to provide more equipment (e.g., nets) as participants now must use their own, and to increase repair and painting on playing surface in Washago.

Given increasing participation in the sport, it is appropriate for the Township to continue to provide facilities for the community, and to renew its agreement with the Washago Pickleball Club. Should demand materialize for additional courts, multi-purpose courts should be developed and possible locations for these are Washago Centennial Park or Marchmont Community Park Centre to improve facility distribution. Specific times for tennis and pickleball should use be allocated/scheduled on courts during prime and non-prime time, for both organized (as per club participation) and casual activity. Monitoring use of facilities by activity will confirm demand and provide indicators of need to adjust scheduling.

F24. Should demand materialize for additional courts, multi-purpose (including pickleball/tennis) courts should be developed at Washago Centennial Park or Marchmont Community Park

F25. Allocate specific time on courts for tennis and pickleball use and monitor to confirm demand, and the need to adjust schedules



Figure 5-1: Timberline Park

5.0 Parks, Trails and Boat Launches

This section includes the background inventory, assessments, and recommendations for all Township owned parks, trails and boat launches.

5.1 Parks

The Township of Severn has 11 municipal parks and parkettes, and one park managed by a not-for-profit organization (Bayou Park). The parks feature open green space, playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, beaches, and boat launches. They also include ball diamonds, soccer fields, outdoor ice rinks and beach volleyball courts. Severn residents also have access to playgrounds and fields at three public elementary schools and trails and natural space at five conservation areas in the Township (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1: Summary of parks and green spaces in the Township of Severn

	Name	Location	Facilities											
			Playground	Open Green Space	Skate Park	Pavilion	Basketball	Beach Volleyball	Beach	Off-Leash Dog Park	Outdoor Rink	Shuffle-board	Permanent Washroom Access	Parking
Municipal	Ardtree Park	2375 Couchiching Ave.	1	1										
	Bass Lake Woodlands Park	1956 Pine Ave.	1	1				1			1*	1		
	Coldwater Fairgrounds	11 Michael Anne Dr.	1	1	1	1	1						✓	✓
	Ian Crichton Memorial Park	2030 Elana Dr./ 2055 Birkeshire Woods Ln.	1			1								✓
	Marchmont Community Park	2049 Avery Ln.	1	1		1				1	1			
	Mill Street Parkette	2 Mill St.		1										
	Shoreview Park	3183 Shoreview Dr.		1										
	Timberline Park	3581 Timberline Ave.	1	1		1								
	Village Green Parkette	3A River St.		1										
	Washago Centennial Park	3398 Quetton St.	1	1	1	1	1		1	1			✓	✓
	Thomson Parkette	Between 2101 Big Chief Rd. and 2109 Thomson Cres.		1										
Total (municipal only)			7	10	2	5	2	1	1	2	2	1		

*Denotes that the outdoor rink is also a multi-sport court during the warm months

Table 5-1: Summary of parks and green spaces in the Township of Severn (continued)

	Name	Location	Playground	Open Green Space	Skate Park	Pavilion	Basketball	Beach Volleyball	Beach	Off-Leash Dog Park	Outdoor Rink	Shuffle-board	Permanent Washroom Access	Parking
Ratepayer's	Bayou Park	3575 and 3581 Bayou Rd.		1					1					
Schools	Coldwater Public School	33 Gray St., Coldwater	1	1										✓
	Marchmont Public School	1902 Division Rd. W, Orillia	1	1										✓
	Severn Shores Public School	2746 Cumberland Rd., Cumberland Beach		1										✓
Conservation Areas	Severn Woodlands Reserve (Couchiching Conservancy)	Orillia Region												
Total (municipal + other)			9	14	2	5	2	1	2	2	2	1		

The Township of Severn currently has 24 undeveloped subdivisions with municipal parkland dedications (Table 6-2). Although the specific location and features of future parks is unknown, they will offer residents in new developments in Port Severn, Fesserton, Marchmont, and Washago additional recreational opportunities.

Table 5-2: Undeveloped subdivisions with municipal parkland dedication

	Name	Location	Size (ha)
Municipal (Undeveloped)	Coldwater	Brick Pond Rd.	0.05
	Coldwater	2 River St.	
	Timberline	3676 Shadow Creek Rd.	0.18
	Twin Oaks Subdivision	1746 Twin Oaks Cres.	0.61
	Twin Oaks Subdivision	1656 Trader Cowan Rd.	0.44
	Sandcastle Estates	3246 Shoreview Dr.	0.18
	Canal Rd.	4142 Canal Rd.	0.23
	Severn Estates	4615 Trent Trail	0.43
	Severn Estates	4620 Trent Trail	0.41
	Heffner Subdivision	2580 Point Bush Cr.	0.16
	Heffner Subdivision	2550 Baguley Rd.	0.50
	Heffner Subdivision	2541 Baguley Rd.	0.52
	Heffner Subdivision	2593 Baguley Rd.	0.31
	Heffner Subdivision	3326 Point Bush Cr.	0.46
	Narrows Marina Rd.	3679 Narrows Rd.	0.55
	Russell Subdivision	3312 Russell Dr.	0.63
	Bruce Plan	3599 Riverdale Dr.	0.15
	Dean Subdivision	5301 Claresbridge Ln.	0.98
	Birkshire Woods	2037 Birkshire Woods Ln.	0.66
	North Ridge Estates	1598 Fawn Ln.	1.97
	North Ridge Estates	1630 Osprey Ln.	4.80
	North Ridge Estates	1629 Osprey Ln.	12.92
	Hawk Ridge Subdivision	4181 Uthoff Line	3.83
	Wilson Point	1561 Cunningham Cres.	0.51
Riverdale Estates	Black River Rd. (Lot 9 and 10, Concession 17)		
Port Severn	3253 Port Severn Rd.	0.14	
	Turnbull Development	Westshore	unknown at this time

Park Classification

Classification

A parks classification system encourages an adequate and appropriate supply of parks in the Township by outlining for each park type: a description, list of features and amenities, the number of hectares that should be targeted for provision relative to population size, and target uses/users. Table 6-3 expands upon the current Township of Severn parks classification system, and organizes the current inventory of Township owned parks by the four proposed categories: Recreation Hubs, Community Parks, Local Parks, and Parkettes.

Table 5-3: Current Township of Severn parks classification system

	Description	Current Provision	Examples of Design, Facility and Program Considerations	Existing Parks in this Category
Recreation hubs	<p>A park or group of parks closely connected, with significant attractions or facilities, that serve the whole Township as well as visitors.</p> <p>Connected to trail network or near major road with prominent street frontage, may share site with indoor recreation centre or school.</p> <p>Generally 10 ha or larger in size.</p>	<p>31.72 ha</p> <p>1.6 ha/ 1,000 people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mix of manicured, natural and hardscape areas or spaces. · Can include ball diamonds, sports fields (lit and/or unlit) sports fields fit for league play, net sport courts (dedicated or dual use), multi-use casual play courts, play structures, beaches suitable for swimming, skateboard parks, pump tracks, skating rinks/paths, walking paths, passive space, trails, gardens, lighting, seating, other supports for special events (stages, electrical hook ups, covered areas etc.) · Has washrooms and parking · At a minimum parks should have: waste receptacles, park sign, shaded seating (picnic table and/or bench), a piece of play equipment (small playground or swing set) shade structure, and trees 	<p>Washago Centennial Park</p> <p>Coldwater Fairgrounds</p>

Table 5-3: Current Township of Severn parks classification system (continued)

	Description	Current Provision	Examples of Design, Facility and Program Considerations	Existing Parks in this Category
Community Park	<p>A park that may serve multiple neighbourhoods, and serve a limited community-wide function. Has some specialized facilities and support amenities.</p> <p>Connected to trail network or near major road with prominent street frontage, may share site with indoor recreation centre or school.</p> <p>Generally from 4 – 10 ha in size.</p>	<p>11.6 ha</p> <p>0.6 ha/ 1,000 people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mix of manicured, natural and hardscape · Can include sports fields fit for league play, multi-use courts, play structures, skateboard parks, pump tracks, passive space, trails, gardens, lighting, and seating · Has washrooms and parking · At a minimum parks should have: a waste receptacle, park sign, seating (picnic table and/or bench), a piece of play equipment (small playground or swing set), and trees 	<p>Ian Crichton Memorial Park*</p> <p>Marchmont Community Park*</p> <p>Timberline Park</p> <p>*Note: Park meets criteria except lot size minimum</p>
Local Park	<p>A park intended to serve the needs of residents within 5 to 10 minutes walking distance, and to serve as a neighbourhood focal point.</p> <p>Central to a neighbourhood, may be adjacent to schools or other public facilities.</p> <p>Generally 1 – 2 ha in size (min. 0.5 ha).</p>	<p>10.6 ha</p> <p>0.5 ha/ 1,000 people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mix of manicured, natural and hardscape · Informal sports fields/ courts, play structures, passive space, trails, gardens, lighting, seating · May or may not have washrooms and/or parking · At a minimum should have: a waste receptacle, park sign, seating (picnic table and/or bench), a piece of play equipment (small playground or swing set), and trees 	<p>Ardtree Park*</p> <p>Bass Lake Woodlands Park</p> <p>Shoreview Park</p> <p>*Note: Park meets criteria except lot size minimum</p>

Table 5-3: Current Township of Severn parks classification system (continued)

	Description	Current Provision	Examples of Design, Facility and Program Considerations	Existing Parks in this Category
Parkette	<p>A small park that can be located in any part of the Township, including along trails. Depending on amenities and location, they can serve different purposes.</p> <p>May be integrated with natural areas, trails and/or historic attractions; high elevation points with scenic views; and urban/mixed-use areas.</p> <p>Generally less than 1ha in size.</p>	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix of manicured, natural and hardscape. May include passive space, paths, gardens, lighting, seating, monuments, art, etc. 	<p>Mill Street Parkette</p> <p>Village Green Parkette</p> <p>Thomson Parkette</p>

Park Classification

Each settlement area in the Township is supplied with two or three parks as shown in Figure 6-1. Of all areas, Ardtrea has the least park land and public recreation opportunities, having only a green space at Thomson Parkette. Although residents only have a short drive to Westshore, which features a couple of parks and recreational facilities, including the proposed Westshore Recreation Centre, focusing future park development in Ardtrea would allow residents to be within walking distance to a public greenspace.

The issue of park supply and distribution must be considered in relation to Severn’s specific context. What is considered good planning practice often is based on dense urban areas, and is not necessarily applicable to a low density, dispersed community like Severn. For example, park provision standards are generated with

urban communities in mind, considering the physical and mental health needs of residents in homes with little or no private outdoor space. This differs greatly from many areas in Severn that have access to greater private recreation space (e.g., large lots, waterfront properties). Therefore, the need to supply public greenspace is not as pressing in Severn from a physical and mental health perspective. However, public green spaces and parks offer more than physical and mental health benefits to residents. This includes providing a place for people of all ages to come together, recreate, and socialize and to support continued investment in existing (and future) parks. For this reason, the Township should continue to invest in improvements to existing parks to make them accessible and appealing to all residents.



Figure 5-2: Picnic shelter at Coldwater Fairgrounds

Parks and Outdoor Facilities

- 1 Ardtrea Park
 - 2 Bass Lake Woodlands Park
 - 3 Coldwater Fairgrounds
 - 4 Ian Crichton Memorial Park
 - 5 Marchmont Community Park
 - 6 Mill Street Parkette
 - 7 Shoreview Park
 - 8 Timberline Park
 - 9 Village Green Parkette
 - 10 Washago Centennial Park
 - 11 Thomson Parkette
-
- School Board Open Space
 - 12 Coldwater Public School
 - 13 Marchmont Public School
 - 14 Severn Shores Public School
-
- Conservation Areas
 - 15 Grant's Woods Nature Reserve
 - 16 Severn Woodlands Nature Reserve
 - 17 Butler, Helen Nature Reserve
 - 18 Roehl Wetland Reserve
 - 19 Fawcett Nature Reserve
-
- Privately Owned
 - 20 Bayou Park
-
- Washroom
 - Pavilion
 - Outdoor Ice Rink
 - Beach
 - Outdoor Fitness
 - Dog Park
 - Parking
 - Volleyball
 - Skiing
 - Basketball Court
 - Passive Green Space
 - Baseball Diamond
 - Soccer Field
 - Pickleball
 - Skateboarding
 - Location Marker
 - Severn Municipal Boundary
 - Highway
 - Settlement Area
 - Undeveloped Subdivisions
 - Parkland Dedication with Parkland Dedication

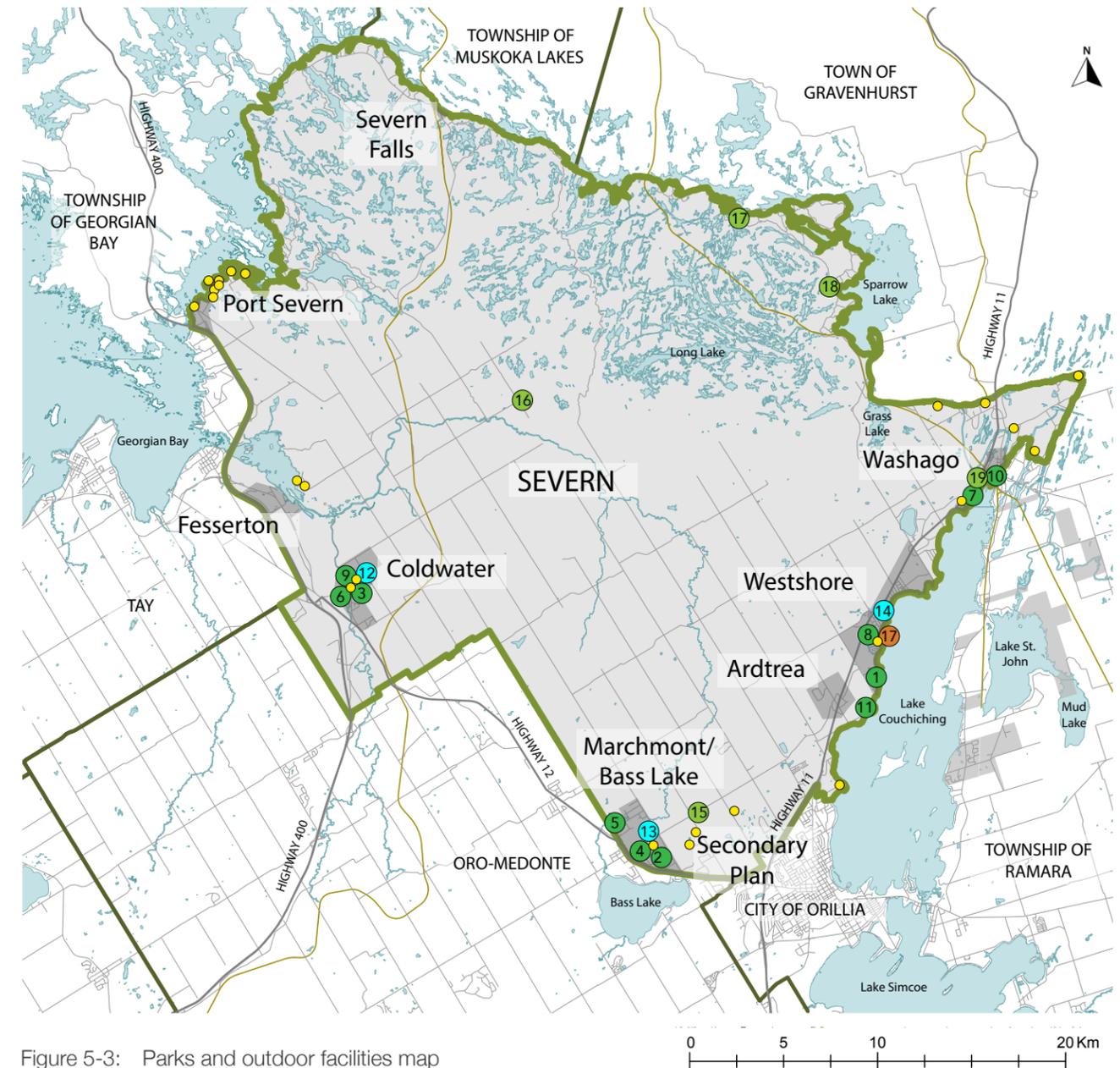


Figure 5-3: Parks and outdoor facilities map

5.2 Trails

Inventory

There are seven regional trails in the Township of Severn: the Uhthoff Trail, the Simcoe County Loop, the Trans Canada Trail, the Matchedash Bay Loop, the Silver Creek Loop, the Slessor Tract, and Grant's Woods Loop Trail. The Township is in the process of planning and developing the Westshore Trail. Table 6-4 is an inventory of Township-based trails.

Uhthoff Trail

The Uhthoff Trail follows the train route that was used to transport grain from the prairies to ports with ships bound for Europe. When the railway line was abandoned in 1985, the Township of Severn, Orillia Naturalists Club, Orillia and District Snowmobile Club, and Trans Canada Trail purchased the land for what would become the Uhthoff Trail. Featuring a limestone path running 30 km from downtown Orillia to Georgian Bay, the Uhthoff trail is used year round for walking, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and equestrian pursuits. The Uhthoff Trail forms part of the Simcoe County Loop and Trans Canada Trail. The Township of Severn owns and operates the trail and has installed trail route signage, parking, and picnic tables at trail heads. Although there are no public washrooms along the trail, there are washrooms for public use in some communities adjacent the trail.

Simcoe County Loop

Simcoe County Loop is a 160 km bike trail that runs through nine municipalities and reaches Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. As the name suggests, the trail is operated by Simcoe County with part of the loop incorporating sections of the Uhthoff Trail, Tiny Trail and Trans Canada Trail. The signage incorporated along the trail provides users directions and highlights the municipalities and partners that make the trail possible. Because it comprises various trails, the path type varies along the loop but is primarily composed of limestone multi-use rail trails and includes waterfront sections.

Trans Canada Trail

Featuring 27,000 km of off-road pathways, roads and highways, and waterways, the Trans Canada Trail, formerly known as The Great Trail, is a nation wide recreational trail that aims to promote the value of nature and make it accessible to all Canadians. While overseen by Parks Canada and the Trans Canada Trail non-profit organization, it is local organizations and municipalities, conservation authorities and provincial and national agencies that own and maintain the trail. The Uhthoff Trail, which forms the majority of Severn's part of the Trans Canada Trail, first started development 35 years ago, while the trail system as a whole is currently 30 years old. The Trans Canada Trail features directional, safety, and cultural signage throughout the trail system.

Matchedash Bay Loop Trail

Located in the largest Matchedash Bay marsh on Georgian Bay, the Matchedash Bay Loop Trail is owned and operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and is primarily used for hiking and bird watching as the marsh is designated as an Important Bird Area. The trail is composed of 1.9 km of grass and natural pathways that are often subjected to flooding. Matchedash Bay is recognized as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Convention of Wetlands) and is a Ducks Unlimited Greenwing Legacy Project.

Silver Creek Loop

This 8 km natural trail is owned and operated by Simcoe County, led by the Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club (SCMBC). Located at Carlyon Line and Division Road East with a private access to the Uhthoff Trail, the Silver Creek Loop is suited for hiking, cross-county skiing, equestrian riding and mountain biking. The loop is subject to seasonal closure for hunting. The SCMBC is in the process of installing map signage of the trail and features parking for trail users.

Slessor Tract

Located across Carlyon Line from Silver Creek Loop is Slessor Tract, a 2.9 km natural trail also owned and operated by Simcoe County and Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club (SCMBC). Like Silver Creek Loop, this trail is targeted at hikers, cross-country skiers, equestrian riders, and mountain bikers, and also has a private access to the adjacent Uhthoff Trail. With the exception of seasonal hunting closures, it is a year-round trail. There is signage of the trail, its features, and parking locations for users.

Grant's Woods Loop Trail

The Grant's Woods Loop Trail is located in Grant's Woods Nature Reserve, and has been owned and protected by the Couchiching Conservancy since 2002. The 4 km of looped trails are for hiking, snowshoeing, and skiing, with many interpretive signage stops along the way. The nature reserve is open year round.

Westshore Trail

The Westshore Trail is yet to be developed but will be a multi-use trail that runs along the west shore of Lake Couchiching, connecting the communities of Washago, West Shore, and Ardtrea, and linking up with the Uhthoff Trail. There are also segments of proposed trail connecting the existing trail on east shore of the Lake. While much of the development and final appearance of the trail is still to be determined based upon funding and timing, this Township-owned trail will be developed in three phases over a 10 year period. Once it is built, it will be used by residents and tourists alike for walking, hiking, biking and winter uses (cross-country skiing and snowshoeing).

Table 5-4: Trails Inventory

Trail Name	Location	Trail Users	Managing Authority	Length
Uhthoff Trail	Wilson Point Rd. to the 400 overpass at Waubaushene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking Biking Snowshoeing Cross country skiing Equestrian 	Township of Severn	30 km
Simcoe County Loop Trail	Through Orillia and Barrie to Simcoe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biking 	Portion in Severn is managed by the Township	160 km
Trans Canada Trail	Throughout Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking Biking Equestrian 	Portion in Severn is managed by the Township	27,000 km
Matchedash Bay Loop Trail	2665-2667 Kinnear Sideroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking 	Ministry of Natural Resources	1.9 km
Silver Creek Loop	Burnside Line and Birchcliffe Cres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking Mountain biking Cross country skiing 	Simcoe County (Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club)	8 km
Slessor Tract	Burnside Line and Birchcliffe Cres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking Mountain biking Cross country skiing 	Simcoe County (Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club)	2.9 km
Grant's Woods Loop Trail	Grant's Woods Nature Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking/hiking Hiking Snowshoeing Skiing 	Couchiching Conservancy	4 km
Westshore Trail	Westshore Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (undeveloped) 	Township of Severn	N/A

Trail Classification

Table 5-5: Trails Classification

	Pathway – Class A	Pathway – Class B	Trail – Class C
Description	Developed Paved or compacted granular path surfacing	Developed Granular or gravel path surfacing	Semi-Developed Gravel or Natural path surfacing
Expected Traffic and Use	High	Moderate to high	Low to high
Examples of Design and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular maintenance Highly regulated Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well supplied with directional and interpretive signage A well developed trail head with visitor centre, parking and washrooms Benches Can link to campgrounds Multi-Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian Cycling Roller blading (paved) Non-electric scooters (paved) Cross- Country skiing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional maintenance Highly regulated Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directional and interpretive signage A well developed trail head with visitor centre, parking and washrooms (portable) Benches Can link to campgrounds Multi-Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian Cycling Equestrian Skate-track skiing Snowshoeing Dog sledding Some motorized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal maintenance Moderately regulated Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some directional and interpretive signage Parking Benches Multi-Use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian Cycling Equestrian Nordic-track skiing Snowshoeing Dog sledding Motorized

Table 5-5: Trails Classification (continued)

	Pathway – Class A	Pathway – Class B	Trail – Class C
Existing Trails in this Category	Township: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No trails in this category 	Township: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uthoff Trail 	Township: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No trails in this category
	Non-Municipal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simcoe County Loop Trail 	Non-Municipal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trans Canada Trail 	Non-Municipal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver Creek Loop Slessor Tract Grant’s Woods Loop Trail Matchedash Bay Loop Trail

5.3 Boat Launches

Inventory

With many waterbodies (lakes, rivers, streams, and ponds), Severn offers ample recreation opportunities for watercraft enthusiasts. The Township owns and operates eight boat launches and docks and provides two water access points for small craft users. There are also 10 other boat launches that are not owned or maintained by the Township and are not regulated. The majority of launches are very basic in design, with a gravel path that descends to the water. Due to the rural nature of Severn, many of the launches do not have designated parking and few to no amenities. A small number of the boat launches have wooden docks for launching and provide parking for 4 to 10 vehicles. Table 5-6 is an inventory of Township-owned boat launches and water access points.

Table 5-6: Boat Launches Inventory

Boat Launch	Location	Paddling Routes	Amenities
Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock	Washago (3337 Albany St.)	Green River ('Washago') (7 km loop – easy to moderate difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking (limited) Dock signage Dock Boat Launch
Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock ('Washago Dock')	Washago (3398 Quetton St.)	Lake Couchiching North (5 km loop – easy to moderate difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking (limited) Dock signage Dock Emergency life preserver ring
Port Stanton Dock	1557 Port Stanton Parkway	Sparrow Lake (11 km loop – easy to moderate difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking (limited) Wharf Master dock
Severn Falls Dock	1730 Earl Haid Ave.	Severn River (13 km one way – moderate difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wharf Master dock Seating Dock Signage Overnight docking (paid) Emergency life preserver ring
Severn Falls Boat Launch	Doug Smith Dr.	Severn River (13 km one way – moderate difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Boat launch

Table 5-6: Boat Launches Inventory (continued)

Boat Launch	Location	Paddling Routes	Amenities
Coldwater Dock and Boat Launch	74 River St.	Coldwater River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, motorized watercrafts • Parking (limited) • Dock • Boat launch • Dock signage • Emergency life preserver ring
Maclean Lake Dock and Boat Launch ('Henry's Landing')	1914 Henrys Landing	MacLean Lake (15 km loop – easy difficulty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Dock • Boat launch • Emergency life preserver ring • Emergency life preserver ring
Port Severn Dock and Boat Launch ('Kellys Landing')	2720 Kellys Rd.	Little Lake, Georgian Bay, Sturgeon Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking (limited-4hrs max) • Dock • Boat launch • Dock signage
Soules Rd. Water Access	1966 Big Chief Rd.	Lake Couchiching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, motorized watercrafts only • Parking (limited on-street) • Boat launch
Hedgemere Landing Water Access	Bayou Rd./Hedgemere Landing	Lake Couchiching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking (limited) • Boat launch

Boat Launch Classification

Table 5-7: Boat Launch Classification

	Boat Launch/ Dock with Parking	Boat Launch/ Dock	Small Craft Launches
Description	Water access points with long term parking, boat launching and/ or docking facilities	Water access points with boat launching and/or dock facilities	Water access point that is undeveloped and does not offer any boat launching and docking facilities
Expected Use	For use by full sized boats, canoes and kayaks	For use by full sized boats, canoes and kayaks	For use by canoes and kayaks
Examples of Design, Facility and Program Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the site as a water access point, including a list of features • 911 emergency signage • life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus • Regulatory signs pertaining to Zebra mussels and other invasive species • Appropriately graded launch ramp, turn-around and long-term parking area • Dock suitable for temporary tie-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the site as a water access point, including a list of features • 911 emergency signage • Life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus • Regulatory signs pertaining to Zebra mussels and other invasive species • Appropriately graded launch ramp, turn-around and temporary parking area • Dock suitable for temporary tie-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access point to water that is not necessarily appropriately graded • May not include parking or a turn-around • No signage indicating that this site is a water access point • No emergency equipment (911 emergency signage, life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus) • No dock
Existing Access Points in this Category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock* • Severn Falls Dock • Severn Falls Boat Launch • Coldwater Dock and Boat Launch • Maclean Lake Dock and Boat Launch ('Henry's Landing') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock * • Port Stanton* • Port Severn Dock and Boat Launch ('Kellys Landing')* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soules Road Water Access • Hedgemere Landing Water Access

*Denotes that the dock/ boat launch does not meet all classification requirements. Refer to boat launch recommendations.

5.4 What We Heard

Parks And Trails

Use

In both the random telephone and online resident surveys the large majority visit parks and facilities (random survey: 63%, online: 92%), and 27% (random) and 8% (online) do not use them (Figure 5-3).

The random survey asked respondents which community centres, parks or trails they or members of their households use in the Township, and the top choices parks were Coldwater and District Community Centre/Fairgrounds (37%), Washago Centennial Park (17%), Bass Lake Woodlands Park (11%), and Ian Crichton Memorial Park (6%). This aligned with the responses from the online survey, with the exception of Marchmont Community Park (12%), Timberline Park (8%), and Shoreview Park (3%) ranking higher than Ian Crichton Memorial Park (3%).

Needs

When asked whether respondents thought that parks and trails in Severn required improvements, 68% of random survey respondents (19% online) said that no improvements are needed. The 21% of phone respondents (41% online) who thought that improvements are needed provided the following recommendations (% random survey, % online survey):

- More shade/seating/lighting (18%, 49%)
- Washrooms and water fountains (15%, 61%)
- Beautification (10%, N/A)
- Increased maintenance (9%, 32%)
- Covered areas for markets/picnics (7%, 45%)
- New and improved play equipment (7%, N/A)

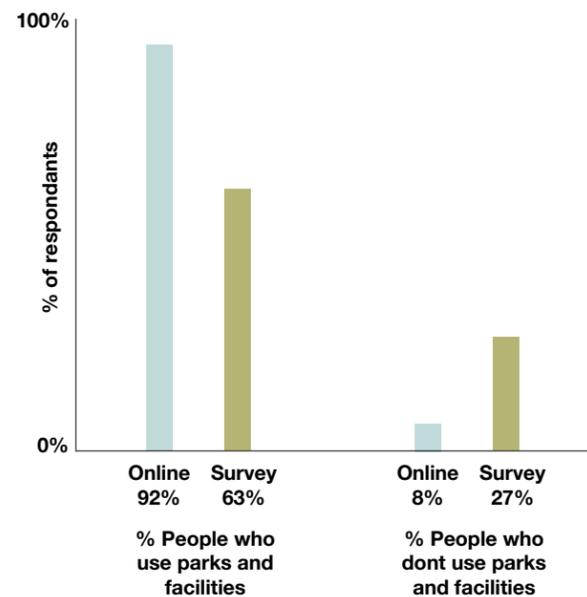


Figure 5-4: Use of parks and facilities from the resident and online surveys

Boat Launches and Paddle Routes

Use

Of those surveyed, 36% (random) and 72% (online) said that they or their household members use the lakes, rivers, canoe routes and/or boating facilities in the Township of Severn (Figure 5-4).

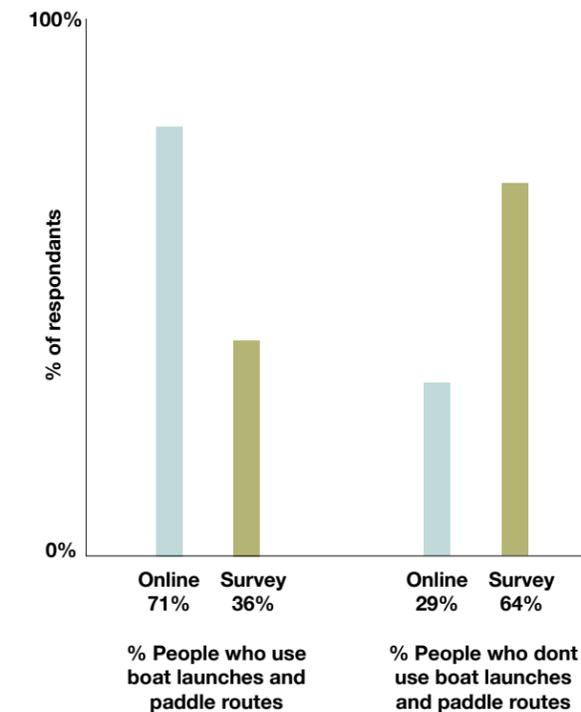


Figure 5-5: Survey results of family use of lakes, rivers, canoe routes and/or boating facilities in the Township of Severn

Needs

When asked if improvements are needed to the lakes, rivers, canoe routes and/or boating facilities in Severn, 26% of random survey respondents (48% online) replied affirmatively. Respondents from both surveys were uncertain about their stance (15% random, 27% online). Of those suggesting improvements, the following were the top needs identified (% random survey, % online survey):

- Dock/boat launch improvements (21%, 71%)
- Additional and/or improved washrooms (14%, 52%)
- Additional parking (11%, 51%)
- Better mapping of canoe routes (11%, N/A)
- More places to swim/beach (N/A, 55%)
- More waste receptacles (N/A, 45%)

5.5 Nature and the Outdoors: Guiding Principles for Parks, Recreation, and Leisure in Severn

This section describes underlying principles that will guide park, trail and boat launch provision over the next 10 years. They were identified as being important to the community, and have been applied as key considerations in this assessment and the resulting recommendations.

Environmentally-Focused Parks and Waterfront Planning and Management

Naturalization

Many parks in Severn contain large areas of mown grass that is not used for active or passive recreation purposes. Turf areas require considerable resources for regular maintenance and provide minimal ecological benefit. Replacing some turf areas with other more diverse types of planting would provide a range of ecological benefits as well as reducing the cost and maintenance burden associated with turf grass. During the spring and summer months, the Township contracts out grass cutting, and over time more naturalized areas could reduce the amount paid for these services.

Naturalization is the process of allowing natural plant growth to occur, while managing that growth typically by removing/limiting non-native and invasive species and planting and encouraging the growth of desired native species. Naturalization is an important strategy for improving ecosystem health, and in turn, building climate change resilience. Naturalization, for all its benefits, comes with two main challenges. First, some residents interpret naturalized landscapes as messy and unkempt, leading them to complain and lobby the Township to remove

it. Second, contrary to appearances, in the early stages of plant growth, naturalized spaces can require more maintenance and specialized knowledge than mowed lawns, increasing demand on already stretched staff resources. However, within a couple of years, naturalized spaces should require less maintenance and resources than mowing.

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

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

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

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

The Township should implement some of these practices in future naturalized areas to increase resident support and acceptance. Potential sites for naturalization should be chosen in consultation with the community, and certain parks are suggested in the next section on park specific recommendations.

Consultation is an opportunity to educate about naturalization, and to come up with a design plan that pleases residents. A naturalized garden, border, or section could be added to almost any park if the resources are available.

Supporting All Season Outdoor Recreation

Considering Severn's climate, the value of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities could equal those provided during the warmer months. Some municipalities help support all season recreation by offering outdoor programs. Other potential providers of outdoor programming in the Township can access helpful resources from organizations dedicated to parks and outdoor recreation such as Outdoor Play Canada and Parks People. For example, Outdoor Play Canada provides frameworks to assist outdoor play practitioners develop curricula or programs to foster stronger relationships between children and nature.

The Township can further support outdoor recreation in all seasons by providing certain amenities and attractions, such as:

- shelter from sun and rain
- warming stations
- year-round washroom facilities
- drinking water sources
- lighting
- seating
- winter events

Shelter From Sun and Rain

As a matter of public health and safety, adequate shade needs to be provided in each park, either through tree canopy or a built structure. This is particularly important in playgrounds where young children and their caregivers often spend considerable time, and where scheduled sports games and practices take place.

While Severn provides shade structures in five of their eight public parks, this shade is centralized and is not offered throughout the park and around park amenities. Strategic tree planting should be implemented for the myriad benefits provided (shade, carbon sequestration, stormwater management etc.). In the immediate and short term, however, the existing shade structures and pavilions can provide shade as trees will take years before reaching maturity and start offering the benefits of shade. Parks that do not currently have shade structures on site, most notably Bass Lake Woodlands, should be provided with a structure in the future in order to accommodate shaded group seating.

Warming Stations

A warming station is a partially or completely enclosed space that is available for people to escape the elements and warm up for a brief time. They can be as large or as small as the site allows and can have heat if connected to hydro. An energy efficient option is to equip the shelter with buttons to turn on a heat source for a set period of time, as has been done with some GO Transit shelters. This ensures the heat is only running when people are using it. In Severn, warming stations would be suitable at main trail heads, and at any major park that in which year-round use is the focus of future improvements and programming.

Year-round Washroom Facilities

Currently permanent washrooms are provided at Coldwater Fairgrounds and Washago Centennial Park, and during the summer months, portable toilets are supplied at the community parks. Washrooms should also be provided at primary trailheads along the Uthoff Trail and future Westshore Trail, whenever possible. This may be accomplished through the provision of portable toilets, especially when water and sanitary service is not available. Where feasible, washrooms should remain available year-round, particularly at parks that are the focus of efforts to grow winter programming/activities.

Drinking Water Source

Providing a source of drinking water at parks allows people to increase the length of time they stay and can help prevent heat-related illnesses in hot weather. Drinking water is especially important in parks with sport and other facilities that people will use for more than an hour or two (e.g., ball diamonds, beaches, skate parks etc.). In addition, given the rural context of much of Severn, parks are often far from stores where people can purchase water.

Severn provides municipal water services in many of its communities but it could be a challenge to provide drinking water in other parts of the Township that aren't serviced. Depending on the location, the Township could assess the feasibility of installing a water tank or connecting to well water in order to provide drinking water at a park.

Lighting

At this latitude, winter days can be fully dark by 5:00 pm. In order to encourage use of parks and facilities in winter months, this should be taken into account to ensure selected parks, trails and facilities that are targeted for winter use are sufficiently lit.

Seating

It is sometimes the practice to remove seating and picnic tables during winter months to protect them from the elements, but seating should be selected based on material durability, and placed under protected structures so that it can be used all year-round to allow people to sit and socialize outdoors.

Winter Events

The Township can also encourage year-round use of parks by helping to organize and/or promote outdoor winter events. Examples of outdoor winter events from other cold-climate municipalities include snowman building competitions, 'snow roll' bike rides, musical performances, movie nights, scavenger hunts, etc. with accompanying hot drinks, fire pits, bannock, campfire hot dogs, and smores. Events should be organized by local community groups and have a local focus, as many people do not want to travel far during the winter. The amenities discussed above would help support winter events.

Supporting amenities related to shelter from sun and rain, warming stations, year-round washroom facilities, drinking water sources, lighting, winter events are discussed in the park-specific recommendations section.



Figure 5-6: Seating at Centennial Park

5.6 General Park, Trail, and Boat Launch Recommendations

Access and Accessibility

Parks need to be upgraded over time to address the need for accessible and safe paths of travel, connections, and entrances to on site buildings (e.g., washrooms, change rooms), and other amenities. Infrastructure must meet AODA requirements regarding seating (benches and picnic tables), playground equipment, playground safety surfaces, and pavement surfaces/paths of travel (including tactile warning strips, handrails, and ramps).

Priority should be given to improvements to parks based on public/user safety and accessibility as per the Canadian Standards Association’s requirements (CSA), Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements. This includes but is not limited to:

- playground safety (protective fall surfaces and CSA approved equipment)
- accessible routes through parks
- seating (location and configuration)
- wayfinding and user information

The Township is in the process of making accessibility upgrades to parks as part of ongoing maintenance and upgrades.

PK1. Continue to make required accessibility upgrades to parks (including playground safety, routes and wayfinding, seating, shade and bicycle parking) as part of ongoing maintenance and upgrades

Signage and Wayfinding

As a general rule, signage should be provided along major routes, at parks, heritage sites, trails, boat launches/docks, paddle routes and facility entrances, and throughout the sites as needed. Signs should be AODA compliant. Aside from increasing awareness and user experience, signs contribute to building the community’s sense of place when consistent, unique signage is used throughout the Township. Severn recently completed a branding study and developed a new logo that highlights unique aspects of the community: the waterfront connection and bridges, historic buildings and local shops, network of trails and agriculture, and the Township’s natural elements. The Township has also recently approved a Signage Strategy and Implementation Plan that is to be implemented at all parks, trails, boat launches, facilities and heritage sites.

In conjunction with the Signage Strategy and Implementation Plan, the following should be implemented:

- provide directional signs at all parks highlighting adjacent trail connections, nearby recreational facilities, important publicly accessible amenities such as washrooms, and culturally and/ or historically significant features
- prioritize road highway signs for more remote destinations such as canoe routes access points
- include a trail map which can be used for both digital and print for online and at trailheads, to be regularly updated and revised to address improvements to the trail network as the master plan is implemented

- include road and highway directional signs to allow easy navigation to local and regional destinations including signage along Highway 11, Highway 12 and Highway 400
- incorporate the Township’s new logo and associated branding

Once the strategy is in place, signs would be fabricated and installed in a phased approach and as part of separate projects and initiatives, many of which are described in this plan. This could include but not limited to: parks, trails, and boat launch improvements, trailheads, and other municipal infrastructure improvement projects.

PK2. Implement Township-branded signage and wayfinding at Township parks, trails, boat launches, facilities, heritage sites, and main arterials

Interpretive Signage Strategy

Interpretive signage will add points of interest throughout Severn by sharing important facts/narratives with trail users. This may include but is not limited to information about the natural environment and cultural and historic points of interest. This strategy should be coordinated with the signage and wayfinding strategy, but not necessarily integrated. The strategy should develop a template which can be expanded on or integrated with trail projects as they are developed.

The strategy should:

- provide a template for interpretive signs
- identify visual themes and graphic design that match the Severn signage branding
- assign interpretive signage priority projects to specific organizations, departments or committees
- inform sign design through recommended forms, dimensions, materials and construction methods
- provide details on potential smart-phone interpretation methods
- identify narrative/educational themes (what kind of narratives do you want to tell)
- provide guidelines for effective and accessible communication (language considerations, braille, use of photos and illustrations)
- interpretive signage proposed outside of the Township boundary should be designed in consultation with regional trail partners

PK3. Develop and implement Township-branded interpretive signage at points of natural, cultural and historical points of interest

Developments and Parkland Dedication

With over 26 proposed developments underway, Severn will be looking at an influx of new residents. In order to adequately serve the new and existing neighbourhoods throughout the Township, each settlement area (Washago, Westshore, Ardtrea, Marchmont/Bass Lake, Coldwater, Fesserton, Port Severn and Severn Falls) should have a minimum of a local park, and ideally both a both local and community park/recreation hub. New parks should be connected by pedestrian trails or pathways to other existing parks, trails, the waterfront and nearby amenities in order to create a more connected and pedestrian friendly park system. Where possible, parkland dedication from adjacent new developments should be consolidated to help ensure that parks of adequate size can be made to be able to support a wider variety of park amenities.

The following are settlement areas that should consider future parks when land is made available, either through parkland dedication or the Township purchasing land, in order to allow residents access to an acceptable amount of parkland:

- Ardtrea (Settlement Area 1)
 - a community park in or near Ardtrea, preferably by the waterfront (proposed Westshore Recreation facility will offer the parkland that meets this requirement)
- Coldwater (Settlement Area 2)
 - a local park, possibly with a connection to the Uhthoff Trail

- Fesserton (Settlement Area 3)
 - a local park, preferably by the waterfront and Matchedash Bay Paddle Route
- Port Severn (Settlement Area 4)
 - a local park, preferably by the waterfront
- Severn Falls (Settlement Area 5)
 - a local park by the Severn Falls Dock and Boat Launch to offer a resting space for watercraft users

Proposed local parks should include (applies to settlement area 2-5):

- passive and active spaces
- at least one sports court/field or splash pad or skate park
- shaded seating/picnic areas
- playground equipment
- washroom facilities (portable)

Proposed community parks should include (applies to settlement area 1):

- mostly active spaces
- at least two active amenities (e.g. sports court/field and/or splash pad and/or skate park)
- shaded seating/picnic areas
- playground equipment
- washroom facilities

In order to manage the development of future parklands, the Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC) should be consulted when determining whether a new development should be providing

cash-in-lieu or parkland dedication. This advice will be based upon the projected resident population and recreational needs, the location and quality of parkland being dedicated, and the presence of adjacent parkland and associated amenities offered. Should parkland dedication be the advice of the committee, the developer should demonstrate that the land can meet the park requirements outlined in the parks classification section.

PK4. Consult with the Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC) to inform whether developers should be providing cash-in-lieu or parkland dedication based upon the development's location and communities' needs

Policies

Two new policies were identified in this assessment, that would be needed to support recommendations and implementation of this plan.

'Environment First' Park and Waterfront Policy

The peace and quiet of the natural environment in Severn attracts residents and visitors as much as recreational activities within these spaces do. It is essential, therefore, that environmental well-being dictates the type and extent of human activity that can occur in natural spaces. The actions discussed previously in the Environmentally-Focused Parks and Waterfront Planning and Management section (protecting lake ecosystem health, energy efficient lighting, and

naturalization) should be formalized in an 'environment first' policy to support their implementation and maintain their priority. The policy could include a vision statement for the department affirming the commitment to environmentally focused park development and management, and act as a guide for future decisions. Such a policy should be developed in consultation with the community and the Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA), who are already monitoring and managing Severn's natural resources, to ensure local environmental concerns are addressed. The development of the policy is also an opportunity for education and buy-in for environmentally responsible practices, as discussed previously.

PK5. Develop an 'environment first' policy to support environmentally focused park and waterfront development and management

Fruit Tree and Community Garden Project

Community gardens or orchards require a partnership with community groups or volunteers to maintain them, and get the most benefit out of the project. For this reason, before fruit tree orchard and community garden projects are initiated, a policy should be developed outlining at minimum, site selection criteria, approved species (for trees), and roles and responsibilities pertaining to supplies, construction, operations, maintenance, and programming. The policy may include a contract to be signed by relevant parties to ensure that trees and gardens are properly cared for.

PK6. Before undertaking a fruit tree or community garden project, the Township should develop a policy to clarify goals/objectives, roles and responsibilities

5.7 Park Specific Recommendations

This section discusses recommendations for specific Township parks. If a park is not included in this section, it means specific changes to that park are not recommended during the term of this Plan. The general park considerations discussed above apply to all parks, including those not listed here.

Parks fall into one of the following categories: parks requiring standard park upgrades, parks that require minor upgrades, or parks that require major upgrades.

Standard Park Upgrades:

- tree planting and naturalized planting
- additional seating and picnic tables
- new/upgraded paths
- lighting
- provide connections to adjacent existing/future trail networks
- wayfinding/interpretive signage

Minor Park Improvements:

- upgrades to 1 or 2 existing infrastructure elements (e.g. playground equipment and surfacing, skate park, parking lot, basketball courts, shade structure)

Major Park Improvements:

- upgrades to 3 or more existing infrastructure elements (e.g. playground equipment and surfacing, skate park, parking lot, basketball courts, shade structure)

Recreation Hubs

Washago Centennial Park

Washago Centennial Park is a prominent park in the Township that offers a variety of facilities and amenities. It should continue to be maintained and developed as a focal point for the whole community. The park has two ball diamonds, a full soccer field, a skate park featuring both a half-pipe and pump track, permanent washrooms, a playground, fitness equipment, a community graffiti art board, an off-leash dog park, a pavilion, open green space, parking, a sand beach, pathways throughout and a future Kid's Zone. This section focuses on the unscheduled park facilities and amenities, while scheduled facilities (ball diamonds and sports fields) are discussed in more detail in the Facilities section.

Existing Facilities and Amenities

1. pathways and wayfinding: movement through the park could be improved by better connections between pathways, and additional directional and informational signage that follows the Township's signage branding.
2. beach: Due to the popularity of the beach, expanding the beach further into the park should be explored. This will include investigating the implications of beach expansion on playground accessibility and any conflicts that might arise between the beach expansion and the natural shoreline restoration. The park features a popular sand beach on the south side along Lake Couchiching. The beach has some beach chairs but additional seating (picnic tables and more beach chairs) as well as some permanent umbrellas would offer beach users a more comfortable stay.

New Facilities and Amenities

1. campground: Part of Washago Centennial Park used to have camping, attracting both locals and tourists. Due to management issues, the campground was closed. Camp sites, however, were retained for possible future use. Given the Township's interest in generating additional revenue and the need for visitor accommodations, converting a section of Washago Park back to its previous campground use could offer a potential solution. In addition, the location at Washago Centennial Park is ideal for its proximity to several paddle routes along Lake Couchiching, the future Westshore trail, and other amenities and activities at the park for campers to enjoy. Some key considerations concerning the development of a campground at Washago Centennial Park include:
 - conducting a market feasibility study to determine if a campground at this site is feasible
 - preparing a business case for the operation and management of the campground (Township, private or partnership run)
 - developing a concept plan which illustrates the design and configuration of the campground required to support the business case (number of sites, size of sites (tents vs trailers), associated amenities, etc.)
2. kayak, canoe and paddleboard rentals: One of Washago Centennial Park's best assets is its location on Lake Couchiching. However, there are not many opportunities for locals and visitors to enjoy using the lake unless they bring a watercraft to the park. Many

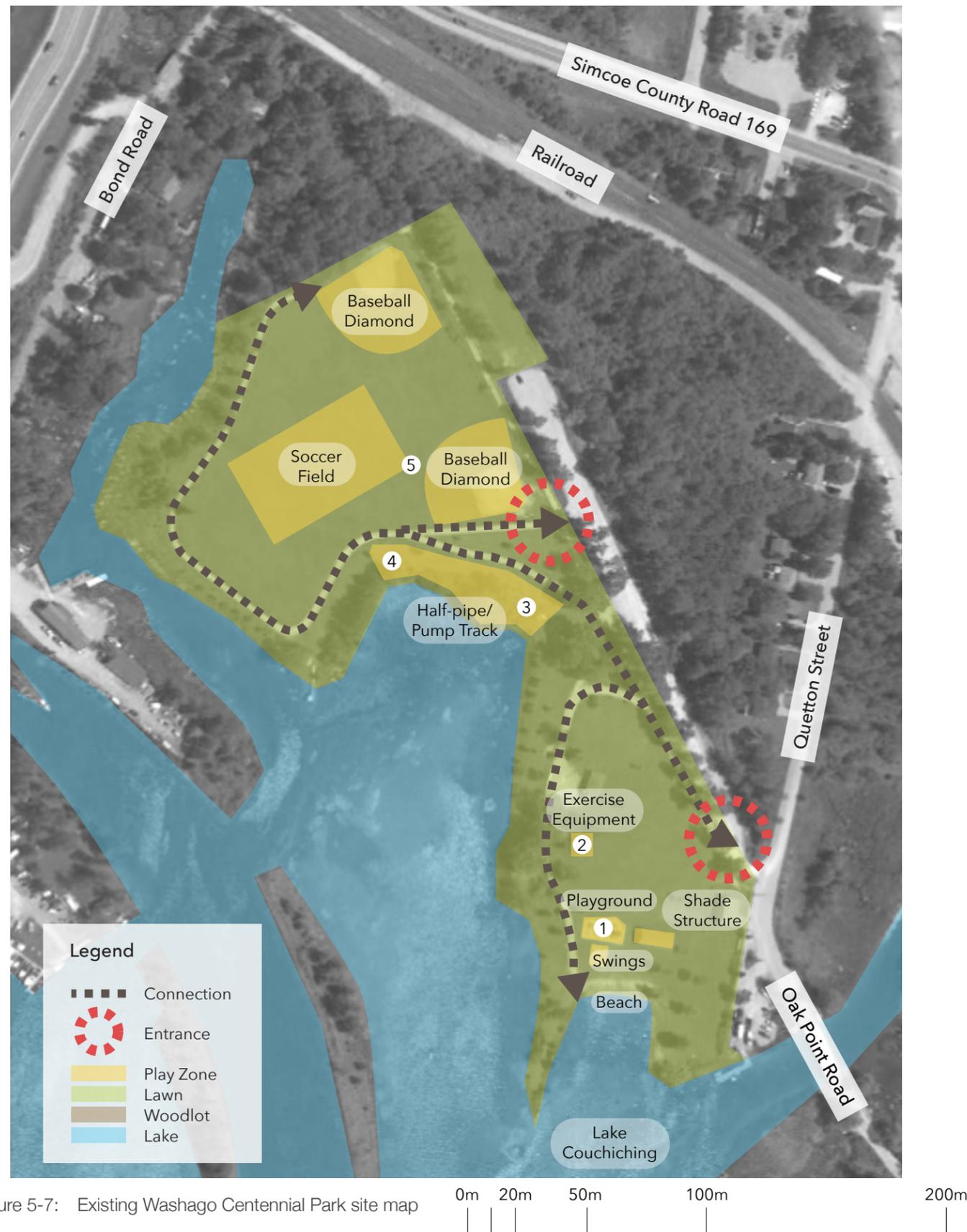


Figure 5-7: Existing Washago Centennial Park site map

lakefront communities now provide seasonal rentals of equipment for water-based recreation (e.g., kayaks, canoes, standup paddleboards, etc.), often through contracted services. Offering this type of service at the park would provide additional access to Lake Couchiching for recreation.

3. beach volleyball court: Because the beach is limited in size at Washago Centennial Park, introducing a dedicated beach volleyball court in the park would offer park users additional recreational opportunities and solidify the park as a beach destination. There is currently only one beach volley court in Severn at Bass Lake Woodlands park so there isn't an over-abundance of courts.

- PK7. Undertake a campground feasibility study at Washago Centennial Park
- PK8. Install additional seating and permanent umbrellas at the Washago Centennial Park Beach
- PK9. Consider adding seasonal rentals of equipment such as kayaks, canoes, and standup paddleboards through contracted services at Washago Park's Lake Couchiching waterfront
- PK10. Add a beach volleyball court to Washago Centennial Park



Figure 5-8: Coldwater Fairgrounds Skate Park

Coldwater Fairgrounds

Coldwater Fairgrounds is the most visited park in the Township according to the resident random and online surveys. It is a community hub, with a basketball court, playground, shade structure, two ball diamonds, walking track, skate park, toboggan hill, and washrooms. The park is also the home of the annual Coldwater and District Agricultural Society’s Fair, which runs for 3 days each fall and attracts over 13,000 visitors. Fair amenities on-site include two barns, animal washing station, agricultural pens, track to showcase livestock, horse ring, vendor area, sand pit, and demolition derby area. The park is beside the Coldwater Arena and the Curling Recreation Centre and collectively, the site attracts and serves people from all over Severn and beyond.

Existing Facilities

1. Bleachers: Many of the bleachers have been recently replaced through the Township’s Bleacher Replacement Program. This program is valuable in maintaining the comfort and durability of seating options offered, and should continue monitoring the condition of the bleachers in the years to come and replace them as necessary. All bleachers for the fair should remain to accommodate visitors.
2. Baseball diamonds: The existing baseball and softball diamond will be relocated as new diamonds oriented to the north-east/east as per baseball pitch standards.
3. Horse ring: The horse ring is an integral part of the Agricultural Society’s Fair and needs to remain on-site. It should, however, be relocated to accommodate

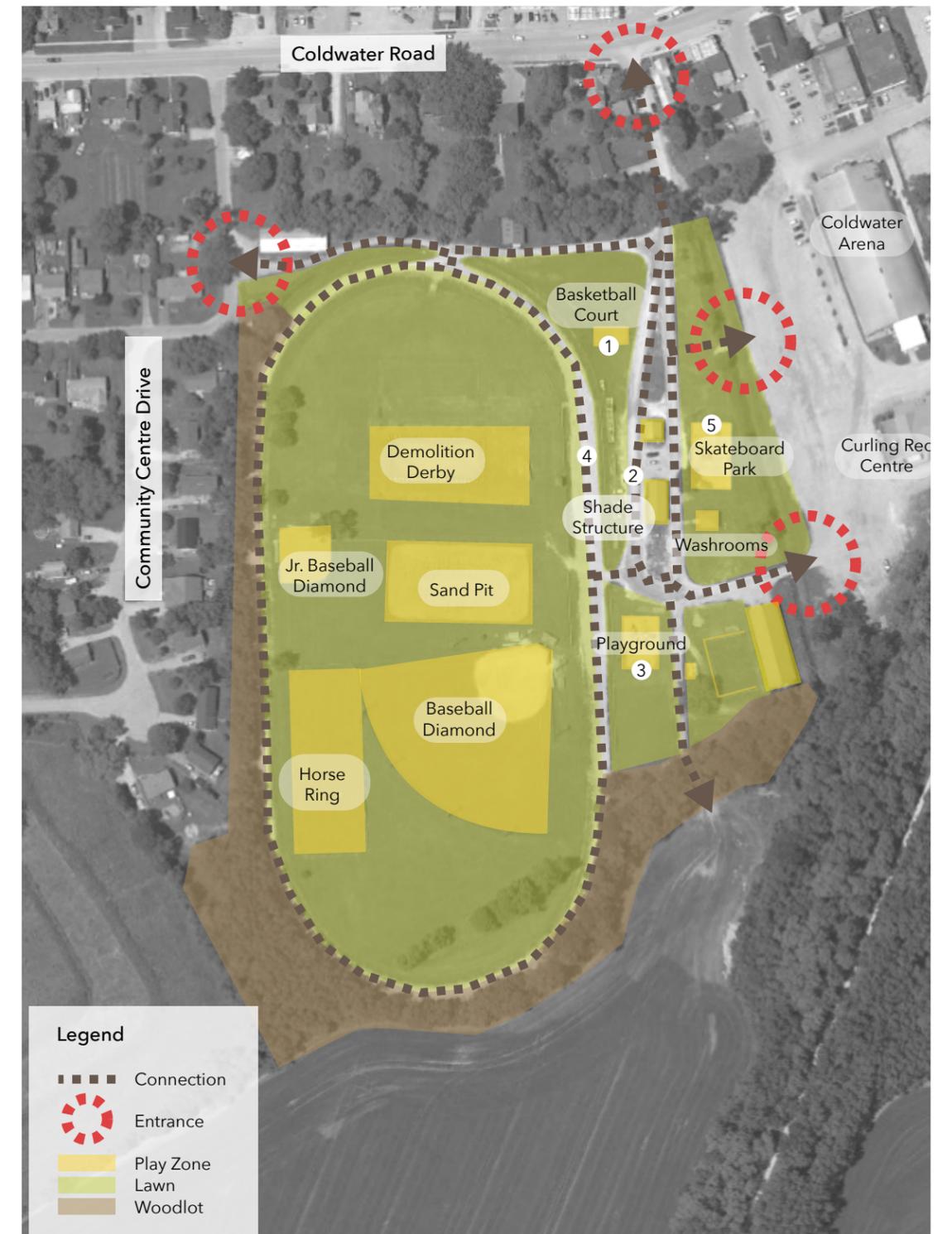


Figure 5-9: Existing Coldwater Fairgrounds site map



the proposed relocated baseball diamonds and be more accessible to fair spectators. When not being used for the Fair, the horse ring can serve as an off-leash dog area. In order to achieve this, the fencing and gate systems for the horse ring need to be updated.

4. Walking track: The walking track is also used by the Agricultural Society's Fair but is in need of new limestone screenings and periodic weed removal. The track should be promoted for year-round use by all site users.
5. Sand pit: The existing sand pit is used during the Fair for showcasing livestock and needs to remain. However, since the sand pit is a relatively large flat area, it should double as an outdoor ice rink during the winter. This will encourage the use of Coldwater Fairgrounds throughout all seasons.
6. Basketball court: The existing basketball court is in poor condition and should be replaced with a multi-sports court to allow greater play flexibility. This should include new basketball nets and line painting for pavement games (four square, hop scotch, etc.). The larger asphalt pad could also accommodate more vendors during the Fair.
7. Toboggan hill: The existing toboggan hill by the current basketball court should be relocated beside the playground. Fill from the existing hill can be used in the construction of the new hill in order to reduce the need to bring fill to the site.

New Facilities and Amenities

1. Additional sports courts: People of all ages should have access to outdoor recreational activities, but older populations tend to be underserved. Adding low-impact lawn sport courts like horseshoes and bocce ball at the Fairgrounds will increase opportunities for seniors, as well as families and groups, to participate in organized or casual play. Coldwater can allow families and groups of all ages to play together.

PK11. Further refine and implement the proposed Coldwater Fairgrounds Concept Plan that enhances the existing park features to increase the user variety year-round

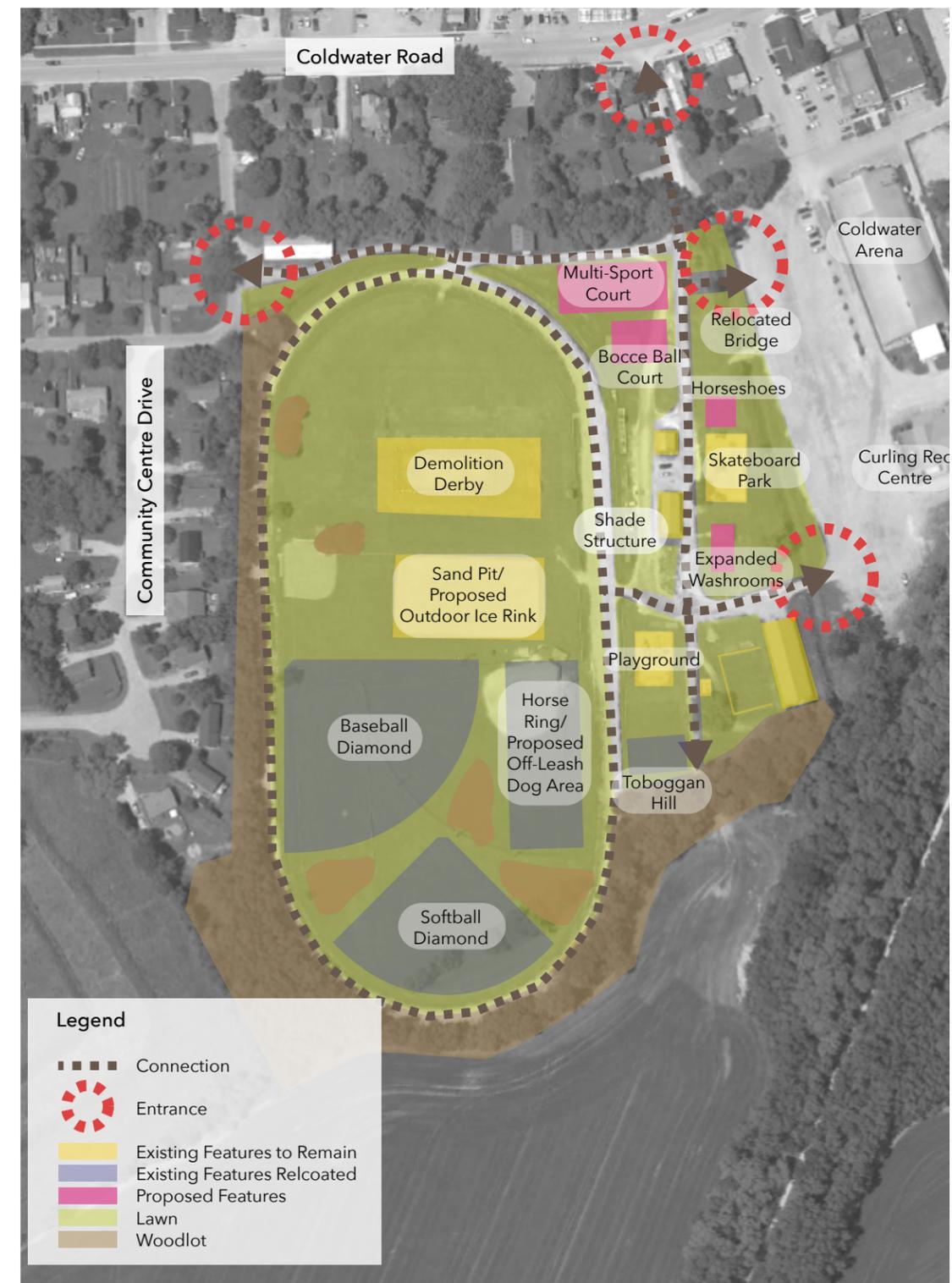


Figure 5-10: Proposed Coldwater Fairgrounds site map



Community Gardens

Municipalities across Ontario follow a variety of models in providing community gardens, based on where they are situated (municipal lands, school, or other institutional lands), the role of community partners, and the department’s capacity to provide oversight or facilitate the delivery of programs. The direction the Township wishes to take on community gardens will depend on the interest of local champions and community groups, and the capacity of the Township to provide required administration.

For example, the City of Kingston’s Recreation Department allocates land for community gardens on municipal properties, including parklands. The City works with the local Community Garden Network that is responsible for operating the community gardens on these lands. The City’s responsibilities include providing annual funding to address enhancements, maintenance, and providing information regarding development and maintenance. Other communities, such as the Town of Milton, engage in partnerships with local schools with onsite gardens by incorporating community gardening as part of its summer day camp programs.

Given the strong connection between growing food, well-being, and food security, food banks and public health units are obvious potential partners for community garden development. The Township can contribute by offering municipal land (including but not limited to parkland) as space for gardens, and in discussion with possible partners. Beyond provision of designated space for gardens, the Township should clarify other types of support it can provide to groups that assume responsibility for the sites.

Community Parks

Ian Crichton Memorial Park

Located in a woodlot, Ian Crichton Memorial Park features a shaded playground with games tables, and a shade structure with picnic tables. There are pathways that connect the amenities to each other and to the adjacent roadways.

Existing Amenities

1. Seating: The park currently offers group seating under the shade structure and a park bench by the playground. Additional seating around the playground is recommended so that parents can sit and watch or supervise their children on the playground. Additional seating should also be provided along the pathways.

New Amenities

1. Buffer planting: Trees and native grasses and perennials should be planted between the existing shade structure and Elana Drive to create a privacy and safety buffer between the pavilion and road. The planting buffer will improve the comfort of the pavilion users and define the shade structure area.

PK12. Provide naturalized planting between the road and existing shade structure at Ian Crichton Memorial Park

PK13. Provide additional seating along park paths and around playground at Ian Crichton Memorial Park

Marchmont Community Park

Marchmont Community Park is an open park that is owned and managed by the Township. The park features a basketball court, playground, dog off-leash area, shade structure and a baseball diamond that is separated from the other amenities by a significant slope.

Existing Amenities

1. Basketball court: The existing basketball court features one permanent and one moveable basketball net. To increase its usability, the basketball court should include line painting for pavement games. The old basketball nets should be removed, and new basketball nets should be installed on both sides of the long side of the court.
2. Dog off-leash area: The off-leash area should be removed as per Township staff recommendations. Because this dog off-leash area is only one of two in Severn parks, a new off-leash area should be introduced elsewhere (see Coldwater Fairgrounds) with the potential for a new dog park being located at Marchmont Community Park should the need arise.
3. Park signage: The existing park signage should be replaced with the Township’s standard park signage. The current signage also features a community news board. It is recommended that the Township continue to provide residents with places to share services and news following the Township’s park signage branding.
4. Outdoor rink: The outdoor rink at the park was historically run by volunteers, the Township should make efforts to provide whatever support is needed to these groups so that the rink may

continue. This is discussed further in the Programs and Events section.

New Amenities

1. Naturalization and community gardens: The majority of the park is open lawn which requires extensive lawn maintenance and creates a lack of shade on-site. Introducing naturalized borders and shade trees will reduce maintenance costs in the long term and provide shaded seating throughout the park. Since there are existing small planter boxes managed by the community, there may be potential to introduce larger scale community gardens in the park as well.

PK14. Upgrade basketball court nets and surfacing at Marchmont Community Park

PK15. Replace park signage with Severn branded signage at Marchmont Community Park

PK16. Implement community gardens and naturalization throughout park at Marchmont Community Park

PK17. Provide additional shaded seating throughout park at Marchmont Community Park

Timberline Park

Timberline Park includes a shade structure with group seating, a playground with swings, exercise equipment, and a large open space. The limestone screenings pathway has been recently installed and the exercise and playground equipment have been updated (2015 and 2022, respectively).

Existing Amenities

1. Trees: The site has some tree planting around the perimeter of the park but there are no trees by the gathering areas, such as the playground and swings. Shade is needed for sun protection for all ages, but especially children and seniors. Implementing tree planting throughout the park will increase the safety and comfort of all users.

New Amenities

1. Naturalization: While some open lawn space is good for free-form play, like frisbee and informal soccer games, the park features a significant amount of lawn, which requires a great deal of maintenance. Naturalized planting should replace a large portion of the lawn to promote pollinator species and the aesthetic value of the park.
2. Future development: While the park offers some recreation amenities, there is a significant amount of park space that could be used for other opportunities. A design process with community consultation would allow the residents around Timberline Park to generate ideas about what additional amenities they would like to see at the park.

3. Additional amenities: Timberline Creek Park does not offer a wide range of amenities but has the space and community size to do so. The Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC) should conduct an on-site meeting with residents in order to gather community ideas and concerns. Some possibilities to consider for future park development are adding an ice rink, basketball court and/or lawn games (eg. horseshoe, bocceball).

PK18. Implement naturalization and strategic tree planting throughout park at Timberline Park

PK19. Conduct a design process with community consultation for future development at Timberline Park

Local Parks

Ardrea Park

Ardrea Park features a new AODA compliant jungle gym, some young trees, and a bench. Most of the facilities at this park have been recently updated and are in good condition and do not require upgrades at this time.

Existing Amenities

1. Seating: There is one bench by the playground. Although the park is small, providing another bench by the playground will allow more than one family to sit and watch their children.
2. Trees: Although the site doesn't have any shade yet, the trees on-site will eventually provide sun protection as they will shade much of the park.

New Facilities

1. Naturalized planting buffer: Because the backyards of the surrounding properties back onto the park, there is a lack of privacy for both park users and property owners. Introducing a naturalized planting buffer around the perimeter would provide screening and separation between properties.

PK20. Provide another bench around playground at Ardrea Park

PK21. Introduce a naturalized planting buffer around perimeter of park at Ardrea Park

Bass Lake Woodlands Park

Bass Lake Woodlands has a playground, beach volleyball court, basketball court, and large open space. The basketball court has permanent wooden boards around the pavement to also serve as an outdoor ice rink.

Existing Amenities

1. Playground: The playground features a new jungle gym and swing seat however, none of the play equipment is geared towards children with disabilities. Adding an accessible swing seat and a play feature that doesn't require climbing would improve the useability of the play space by all children. There should also be an accessible playground ramp, or at least a section with no difference in elevation, between the pathway and adjacent ground surfacing.
2. Beach volleyball court: Bass Lake Woodlands Park features the only public beach volleyball court in Severn. The court needs to have encroaching sod removed and additional sand added to define the court. Benches should also be added by the court to provide users and/or spectators with seating.
3. Outdoor ice skating rink/basketball court: The basketball court is multi-functional and a great asset to the park for all season use. The court should be resurfaced to reduce potential tripping hazards. The wooden boards around the court are in poor shape and they should either be replaced with new wooden boards or with temporary boards that can be removed after the skating season. Temporary boards is the preferred method as it will preserve their

longevity and not impede court users during the warmer months.

4. Seating: There is currently limited seating in the park, with only one picnic table and some benches by the basketball court. Additional group seating and benches should be added by the parks amenities, particularly around the playground so that parents can watch over their children.
5. Trees: There is a forested edge on the east side of the park that, due to its positioning, does not offer much shade to users. There is clearly a desire for more shaded seating on site since the only seating present has been moved out of the sun. Planting additional trees to provide relief from the southern sun would provide site users with greater sun protection and comfort.

- PK22. Add accessible playground equipment at Bass Lake Woodlands Park
- PK23. Plant new trees to provide shade at Bass Lake Woodlands Park
- PK24. Provide additional group and individual seating by amenities at Bass Lake Woodlands Park
- PK25. Provide regular maintenance of beach volleyball courts at Bass Lake Woodlands Park
- PK26. Upgrade existing basketball court/ outdoor ice rink surfacing and boards at Bass Lake Woodlands Park

Shoreview Park

Shoreview Park was recently acquired from the ratepayer’s association. It is adjacent to Lake Couchiching, and while it does not provide direct water access for water crafts, it offers shaded group seating with views of the lake.

There are no improvements recommended for Shoreview Park at this time. However, as is the case at other parks, the condition of existing features should be monitored and replaced as needed.

5.8 Trail Specific Recommendations

Trail Connectivity

There are seven regional trails that pass through Severn (Uthhoff Trail, Simcoe County Loop, Matchedash Bay Loop, Trans Canada Trail, Silver Creek Loop, Slessor Tract, Grant’s Woods Loop Trail) that provide an excellent foundation for making the Township well connected for trail users from recreational and active transportation perspectives. Of the seven, only the Uthhoff trail is a under the management of the Township but it’s a key part of the Severn, County and Provincial trail network because it forms part off the Simcoe County Loop and the Trans Canada Trail. Severn is also expanding upon its trail system with the Westshore Trail set for development over a ten year period. However, the majority of the Township is underserved with trails. Given the size of the Township, and the limited amount of land in public ownership, a strategy is required to help further develop a trail network over the long term that will serve residents and support tourism.

This trail strategy will help direct the establishment of new trail connections across the Township as both on and off-road linkages, trailheads, and other associated amenities over the long term. The strategy will provide staff with the guidance and tools necessary to secure these new connections and trailheads as opportunities present themselves through the land development/ subdivision process. Key trail connections that support the strategy would be secured by requiring developers to provide open space connections. Strategic securement of trails and pathways will better connect Severn’s settlements both internally and to each other. They will help make the community’s settlement areas along the

two Township trails destinations, supporting healthy active living and tourism.

Because the Westshore Trail is still being planned, the Township can simultaneously create trail connections to the Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock, the Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock, the Soules Road Boat Launch and the Hedgemere Landing Water Access. This will ensure that both residents and visitors will have access to trails and paddle routes.

PK27. Develop a Severn trail strategy to plan and implement trail development and connectivity in the Township

Trailheads

Trailheads are the primary starting points to the trail network. Through signage they should inform the public about safe trail use, provide a map of the network, and a trail etiquette message should be posted. Other suitable regulatory and wayfinding signage should also be provided. Trailheads should also be made known online through the trail community (i.e. Township website, AllTrails). Trailheads are designated as either minor or major depending on space available and anticipated level of use.

Major trailheads should include: Parking, signage, garbage receptacles, mapping and seating. Minor trailheads may also contain these features but will likely be fewer due to anticipated lower levels of use. At a minimum, minor trailheads should have signage and mapping. Minor trailheads may be provided at locations where trail users might join the trail from another connecting trail or where it connects to the adjacent community. Due to limited servicing and maintenance, washrooms cannot be installed along the trails.

PK28. Provide trailheads with appropriate amenities at trail connection points

Mountain Bike Trails

Mountain biking is becoming an increasingly popular sport, especially in the Township of Severn. In 2021, 2,294 members joined the Simcoe County Mountain Bike Club (SCMBC), a significant increase from the 750 members the previous year. While there are two mountain biking tracts in Severn (Slessor Tract and Silver Creek Loop), both are located in the same area just south-west of Ardtrea, meaning that mountain bikers are being underserved elsewhere in the township. The Township owns several plots of land off Reservoir Road (3547 Reservoir Road, 3540 Reservoir Road and 3167 Vasey Road) near Coldwater. This combined 128.23 hectares of woods that would be a great location for new mountain biking trails because it's size would allow for multiple tracts with varying riding difficulty, and its location would serve the residents of Coldwater, Fesserton, and Port Severn. The land is also adjacent to the on- and off-ramp of Highway 400, meaning that it's easy to access the trails from elsewhere in the Township and the greater County. The Township should partner with the SCMBC on the design, construction and maintenance of the proposed mountain biking tracts as their expertise in this recreation sector is invaluable.

There are some site constraints that would need to be investigated prior to beginning the construction of the tracts. Because the lots are heavily wooded, significant vegetation and tree removals would need to be conducted. There is also a lack of nearby parking for future tract users so the design of the mountain bike tracts would also need to include a small parking lot to accommodate users. Lastly, while the Highway 400 is a benefit in accessing the site from other settlement areas, there could

also be traffic conflicts. A traffic study would need to be conducted to determine whether site users can easily access the highway to and from the site, and whether development of these trails would impede traffic, both during construction and post-occupancy.

PK29. Land owned by Township at Reservoir Road should be developed into multiple mountain bike courses with the design and maintenance assistance of the SCMBC

Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding for Severn trails (Uthhoff and Westshore) should follow the strategies outlined in 5.6 (general parks, trails and boat launches recommendations). Westshore in particular offers an opportunity to realize a fully integrated trail system as it is still in its planning stage.

Uthhoff Trail, the only trail the Township currently owns and operates, lacks signage that directs users to adjacent amenities. This is particularly important in regards to highlighting nearby public restrooms and bike repair facilities because these are important for trail users to access but, for management and servicing reasons, they cannot be introduced along the trail. This directional signage should include the location/direction and distance to these public facilities, and signage should be placed at regular intervals along the trail.

PK30. Provide signage to all public restroom and bike repair stations and locate directional signage at regular intervals along the trail



Figure 5-11: Trail crossing sign



Figure 5-12: Dock and boat launch

5.9 Boat Launch Specific Recommendations

There are eight Township owned boat launches/docks, ten non-Township boat launches/docks, and two Township small craft launches across Severn. Considering the location of Severn's settlement areas in relation to these facilities, the Township is well served. However, there are no municipal boat launches/docks in Fesserton, which is the only settlement area with direct access to Georgian Bay. Opportunities to provide additional launches at key lakes should be considered.

Overall the Township's boat launches are relatively modest in size and amenities and vary in condition. Most sites are relatively small, have limited parking and are in need of safety amenities, such as emergency signage and emergency rescue apparatus. To ensure the launches are always safe and are in a state of good repair, a strategy is required to assess, update and enhance the Township's launches on a regular basis. This would include undertaking a detailed assessment of each launch, identifying

required improvements, scheduling the repairs, and monitoring regularly after improvements are completed for ongoing repairs and maintenance.

For some launches, enhancements should be considered as part of the boat launch strategy to help address the need for additional parking, launch widening or twinning, new or extended docks, and other possible amenities such as invasive species signage and boat washing equipment to help control the spread of invasive mussel species.

Boat Launch Classification

Severn currently does not have a boat launch classification system, a tool that can act as a benchmark to ensure all Township docks provide the basic amenities appropriate to a type of launch/dock. We have proposed three classifications based upon the types of docks and launches currently in Severn: Boat launch/dock with parking; boat launch/dock without parking; and small craft launches. Boat launches in each category are:

1. boat launch/dock with parking: Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock*, Severn Falls Dock, Severn Falls Boat Launch, Coldwater Dock and Boat Launch, Maclean Lake Dock and Boat Launch ('Henry's Landing')
2. boat launch/dock without parking: Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock*, Port Stanton Dock*, Port Severn Dock and Boat Launch ('Kellys Landing')*
3. small craft launches: Soules Road Water Access, Hedgemere Landing Water Access

*denotes those locations where upgrades are needed to satisfy classification standard

Not all boat launches/docks meet the criteria given. Upgrades should be made to these existing boat launches to meet the classification criteria in order to provide users safety and ease of dock/launch use.

1. update the Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock to meet the classification standard of a boat launch/dock with parking:

Quetton Street Boat Launch and Dock:

- add regulatory signage for Zebra mussels and other invasive species
- provide additional long term parking due to adjacency to Washago Centennial Park and assumed high use

2. update the Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock; Port Stanton Dock; and Port Severn Dock and Boat Launch ('Kellys Landing') to meet the classification standard of a boat launch/dock without parking:

Albany Street Boat Launch and Dock:

- add emergency signage and life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus
- add regulatory signage for Zebra mussels and other invasive species

Port Stanton Dock:

- provide dock signage, including route maps
- repair Wharf Master dock from damage caused by fire in 2021
- add emergency signage and life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus
- add regulatory signage for Zebra mussels and other invasive species

Port Severn Dock and Boat Launch ('Kellys Landing'):

- add emergency signage and life saving and/or emergency rescue apparatus
- add regulatory signage for Zebra mussels and other invasive species

- add additional parking and/or extend the timed parking maximum

In order to encourage and serve all paddle route users, including both residents and visitors, all paddle routes should have a municipal dock/launch.

PK31. Implement the boat launch classification system and update existing docks/launches to meet the classification standards

Historic Waterways Project

The Trent-Severn Waterway, a national historic site of Canada, is a 386 km waterway that features the cultural and natural beauty of Ontario. It starts in Lake Ontario at Trenton and finishes at Georgian Bay and Lake Huron in Severn. The waterway follows Lake Simcoe into Lake Couchiching and parallels the rivers and channels along the northern edge of Severn, finishing at Port Severn. While the Severn section of the Trent-Severn Waterway is managed by Parks Canada, Severn will benefit by working with the tourism organization to improve signage and docks along the route. Doing so will attract and encourage more of the waterway users to come into Severn, boosting the local economy in the food, recreation, and hospitality sectors.

PK32. Work with Parks Canada, Simcoe County Tourism, and Orillia Lake Country to support the historical waterways project, by installing interpretive and directional signage, and making launch repairs at designated locations

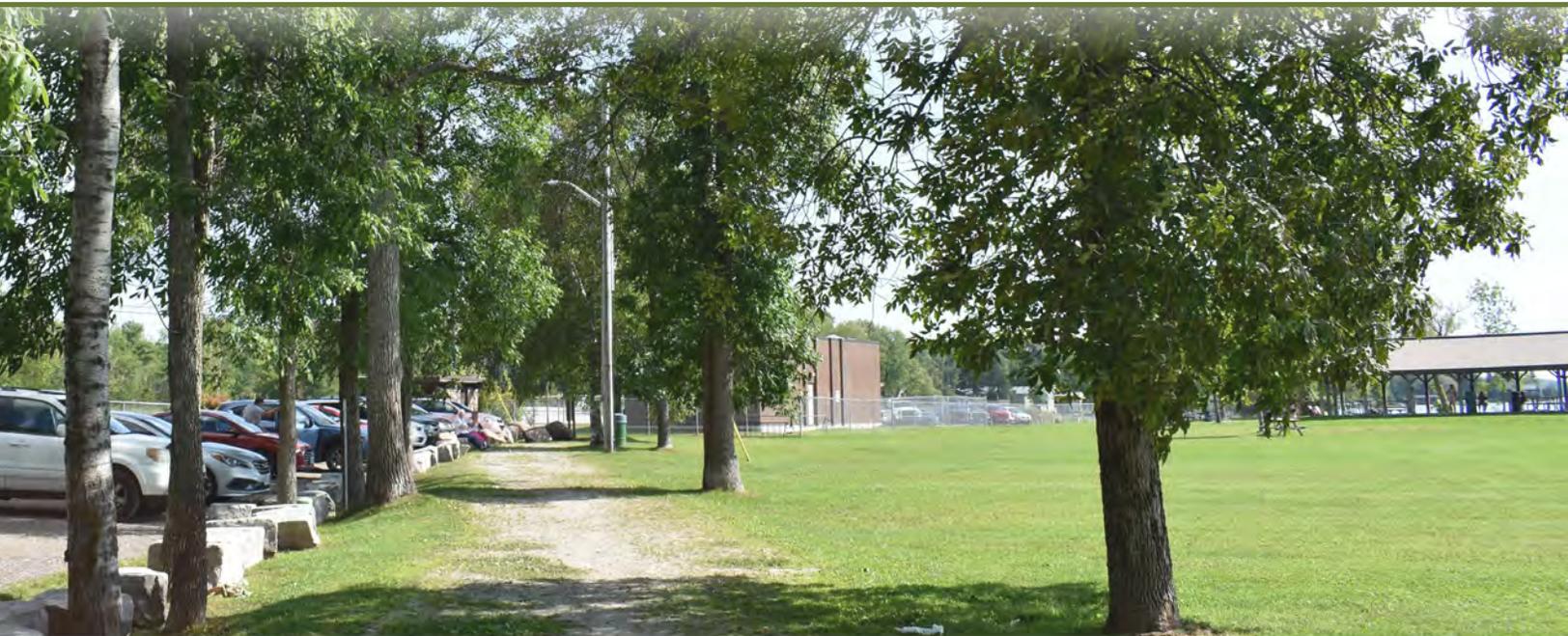


Figure 6-1: Washago Centennial Park

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Municipal Role in Service Delivery

Township of Severn operates largely as an indirect provider of recreation services. In this role, it facilitates or enables others - such as volunteer program providers or contracted instructors - to deliver programs/activities to the community. The Township's focus as an indirect provider is providing high quality parks and facilities for use by other programs providers and for general community activity and enjoyment. Both capital projects, facilities programming and operations are key staff responsibilities in this model.

It is typical for relatively small municipalities to operate using this model, as there is neither the level of demand for specific types of programming nor the resources to institute direct service delivery by hiring dedicated program staff. The Master Plan recommendations align with a continuation

of this role in the future, which requires sufficient support in several areas to be successful:

- staff and volunteer resources to do the work
- collaborations and partnerships with non-municipal providers
- municipal policy
- service planning and evaluation

Staff

Report R19-045 (August 29, 2019) on the Township's Recreation Service Delivery Model recommends hiring additional staff to enable recreation program development. Since that time staffing levels have not been increased and, therefore, are insufficient to ensure this function occurs. Implementing

the Master Plan's recommendations will depend on the availability of staff to do the work, as it looks to considerably expanding both programming and facility use.

As discussed above, despite relatively well-used indoor facilities for the most part, there is good potential to use existing and future spaces to expand current and develop new programs. Similarly, as discussed in the program section of the Plan, the potential to develop outdoor and year-round activity is considerable. There is limited capacity with existing staff, however, to assume responsibility for this function, which requires a focus on community development, program needs identification, coordination in meeting needs through specific services, and on-site facility staff. Additional staff needs are identified below.

Recreation Program Developer/Coordinator

In report R19-058 (October 23, 2019), staff recommended that Council consider a full time Recreation Programmer to meet the entire Township's needs, with a preliminary recommendation that the position would comprise working two days at the Washago Community Centre (as per the Transition Plan), two days in Coldwater, and one day at the Administration Centre. It is recommended that this position be instituted immediately to begin developing and coordinating programs/activities at all Township facilities and parks.

Reporting to the Manager of Recreation and Facilities, the primary responsibilities of this position would include proactive relationship building with various sectors of the community to: identify program interests in both sport and non-sport areas (including arts, culture and heritage); identify and

work with providers; locate and coordinate program/activity provision in Township indoor and outdoor space; and monitor and evaluate program efficacy. Programs/activities would include responsibility for Township-delivered special events as well as regular, seasonal programming, and advising/assisting non-municipal event providers. A secondary responsibility could include liaising with non-municipal facility owners/operators to direct programs that cannot be accommodated at Township facilities to other amenable spaces (e.g., schools, service club halls, etc.).

Report R19-045 (August 29, 2019) on the Township's Recreation Service Delivery Model identified several ideal qualifications for this position including day-camp experience, High-Five certification, background in special events planning and a college/university level education in the field. In addition to these qualifications, a key trait is self-motivation with a genuine interest in reaching out to, and meeting new people, relationship building, inquiry and creative problem-solving to overcome obstacles to delivering innovative programs and services.

Based on the Township's current salary grid, this position is estimated at an annual range of between \$66,000 and \$69,000.

Facilities Staff

Optimizing facility use will require sufficient staffing to facilitate access for programs, to make additional hours available for use by the volunteer-based community groups, and to take on additional operations and maintenance work. While this is relevant to all Township spaces, initiatives including expanded programming at Washago Community Centre and the Westshore Recreation Centre (when complete), will not succeed without the necessary staff

to allow new community-based uses to be introduced and grow. Similarly, ice-out season use of the arena will require staff to allow increased use to occur.

While it depends on the way hiring occurs (e.g., part-time, seasonal, etc.), it is estimated that, in the short-term, an additional \$50,000 per year (salary) will be needed to provide these services. The need to increase this allocation over time will depend on program/service growth.

Volunteers

Individual Volunteers

In addition to the many volunteer groups that operate community programming in Severn, the Township has a Volunteer Parent Policy for Recreation Programs whereby a parent who assists on a weekly basis with a program is entitled to a 50% reduction in their child's registration fee. This policy can continue to be used to recruit volunteers for new programs that require and can monitor individual contributions, and could extend to those for adults who require the help of caregivers to facilitate their participation. Volunteers will be particularly important to developing programs in new municipal spaces as they come onstream. The Transition Plan for the Westshore Community Centre (WCC), for example, noted additional volunteer opportunities and partnerships will be pursued for all activities at the Centre.

Community-based Volunteer Groups

The volunteer organizations that participated in the Master Plan survey provide a range of sport/recreation programming and periodic special events. Twelve of 25 groups (48%) that responded to the survey expressed interest in additional assistance from the Township. While the largest proportions indicated need for help with insurance, marketing and promotion, and communication with the municipality, Table 6-2 shows that the only listed item for which it appears help is not needed is accessing school facilities.

Table 6-1: Areas of interest for additional municipal support to volunteer groups

Answer Choices	% of Groups
insurance (securing, cost, etc.)	50%
volunteer recruitment	41.7%
volunteer training	8.3%
volunteer recognition	16.7%
fundraising	41.7%
assistance with funding applications	25%
accessing school facilities	0%
better facility scheduling	25%
marketing and promotion	58.3%
communicating with the municipality	66.7%

The Township should consult with the community’s volunteer groups to better understand their support requirements, to inform the appropriate municipal response. To provide equity and consistency in the assistance provided, and to promote awareness of help that is available, a formal policy should be developed.

A Community Group Affiliation Policy is an option to bringing all volunteer support policies under a single umbrella. Affiliation policies describe the services available from the municipality to registered community groups in providing their program and services.

Although not-for-profit community groups or organizations must be registered to receive municipal assistance, registration

does not guarantee support. A standard, typically annual, registration/application process for eligible groups interested in municipal assistance “affiliates” them with the municipality, and establishes a formal, consistent process for reviewing requests and monitoring policy effectiveness. Municipal staff review the applications and make recommendations to Council for approval. The support provided is typically in-kind, with funding provided through a separate policy or policies (e.g., Severn’s capital grant policy). The extent of services available to affiliated groups depends on the capacity of the municipality to provide them.

The policy specifies criteria for affiliation and the services available to affiliated groups. Requirements for affiliation include items

such as delivering programs and services that align with municipal goals/objectives as stated, for example, in the Recreation Master Plan and the Strategic Plan; being a not-for-profit group operated by a volunteer board or executive committee; identifying the group as either adult or youth focused, if a greater emphasis is placed on child/youth activities (family based activities could be included for the purposes of the policy); membership/participation in the group must be available to all residents in the community; criteria to measure the merit of the group’s programs/services (e.g., does not duplicate existing programs/services, fosters physical activity/healthy lifestyles, etc.); being based in the municipality with a majority (51%) of participating members residing within its boundaries. While a majority local membership is often used as a criterion, it may not be realistic for Severn, which is part of a larger regional market that includes travel between communities to use recreation services. Township programs, for example, serve a sizable number of Oro-Medonte residents.

Benefits to affiliated groups might include:

- facilities and equipment: free or proportionate discounted fees for use of facilities, spaces, equipment
- marketing and promotion: distribution of approved promotional materials at municipal facilities and assistance with contacts for the local media; free listing in the parks and recreation program guide
- grants and insurance: assistance from municipality in securing liability insurance, sourcing potential grants, and/or completing applications for non-municipal grant programs (e.g., Ontario Trillium Foundation, private sector, etc.)

- leadership training and development: course rebates for community volunteer development to a maximum amount/person/course (e.g., \$50/year) to a maximum amount per group/organization (e.g., \$200/year), provided the course is a core component of the organization/group’s mandate, with priority being given to certain courses
- events: assistance with developing a marketing/advertising plan and economic impact survey and analysis; use of municipal property such as portable event fencing, trash cans, etc.; delivery and pick up of municipal equipment

While a number of the above benefits are already enjoyed by volunteer groups in Severn, it may be useful to bring these - and others identified through consultation - under a single policy. It can be used to provide clarity and consistency in terms of the range of support services available to volunteer groups and what they must do to be eligible to be, and remain, affiliated. The policy can also be structured to simplify application over time. Specifying support in terms of, for example, percentage discounts on facility rentals, can help simplify applying fee schedules that change on a regular basis. Developing a new policy can be used to review and possibly update existing policies that also relate to volunteer service provision (e.g., grant program for shared costs on capital works) or to identify individual policies/practices for specific types of support that are not needed once it is in place.

- IM1. Hire a Recreation Program Developer/Coordinator immediately to begin developing and coordinating programs/activities at all Township facilities and parks
- IM2. Hire Facilities staff to support extended use, operations and maintenance of existing and new facilities
- IM3. Continue policy innovations to incentivize individuals to volunteer in service provision
- IM4. Consult with volunteer recreation groups to confirm the type and extent of required assistance to sustain/grow their programs/events, and to inform development of a Community Group Affiliation Policy

Collaborations and Partnerships with Non-municipal Providers

In an indirect service delivery model, collaborations and partnerships are a large part of service provision through other parties. Documented agreements to support these working relationships are important to ensure the rights and responsibilities of all parties are clear. Available information from the Township indicates that formal agreements are a standard practice in parks and recreation service delivery. All new or renewed collaborations with other public, not-for-profit agencies, community-based volunteer groups and/or the commercial sector should continue to be covered by formal agreements.

Public libraries are key contributors to recreation-related programming and have staff to deliver their services. In many communities, municipal recreation departments and public libraries partner to provide programs and services to residents. Our discussion with the Severn Township Library indicated that, at this point in time, the Library is interested in operating independently. If this situation should change in the future, the municipality can work with the Library to coordinate and support each other's programming efforts to the benefit of both parties.

In all communities, realizing truth and reconciliation means relationship building with local Indigenous Peoples. While there is much interest in developing programs that promote understanding and knowledge of Indigenous history and legacy in our communities, establishing an ongoing working relationship with Indigenous Peoples is beyond the scope of a parks and recreation master plan, as it is a corporate-wide initiative. With respect to

the services addressed in this Plan, ideally the Chippewas of Rama First Nation would be part of ongoing joint service planning activities related to mutually beneficial outcomes (see Section 6.2.5). This activity would occur under a formal relationship that is established by the Township for all relevant municipal work.

At the same time, the Chippewas of Rama First Nation have a Consultation and Accommodation Protocol, which detail the projects of interest and required process for consultation and an application to request consultation. Both these documents are available online:¹

- Chippewas of Rama First Nation Consultation and Accommodation Protocol
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation Consultation Request

As a long-term Plan, other opportunities for partnership may emerge - particularly through the efforts of a Program Developer/Coordinator whose role includes finding program providers to meet community needs and interests that cannot be addressed through local organizations. The 'fit' between local program/service needs and a response from other providers will depend on a variety of factors including the specific nature of needs, the availability and suitability of Township facilities and spaces, and costs to each party and participants, etc., which would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Three key service providers that are potential program partners with the Township are the YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka,

¹ <https://www.ramafirstnation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Consultation-and-Accommodation-Protocol-for-publication.pdf>

² <https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/our-mission/>

the Boys and Girls Club of North Simcoe (BGC), and Special Olympics Ontario. YMCAs and BGCs are increasingly offering satellite programming in their service areas in collaboration with municipalities. The BGC of North Simcoe lists 20 community partners, of which two are the Town of Midland and the Township of Tiny.

Through its program development function, Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) is seeking to partner with municipal recreation departments to bring more inclusive programs to communities.

“Over the past 50 years Special Olympics has grown from a modest program serving local athletes to become the world’s largest movements [sic] dedicated to promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion, and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities through sports. Special Olympics Ontario has optimized the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle through sport to improve the well-being of individuals with an intellectual disability. Their vision is that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all across Ontario.”²

To this end Special Olympics is partnering with municipalities in Ontario to support them in developing and providing programs for people with intellectual disabilities. SOO provides assistance in the areas of volunteer and coach training courses; athlete and volunteer recruitment for the program;

support for promotion; and competition opportunities. Municipal contribution to the partnership may include facilitating/running the program as part of its regular roster; providing facilities, equipment, etc.; setting the price for participation; providing necessary coaching, staff and volunteers; providing SOO with limited feedback on participant profile (e.g., age and gender); encouraging all involved with the program to register with SOO; abiding by SOO policies and procedures; paying relevant expenses (as agreed upon between the parties); providing insurance coverage for events/programs. The municipality retains all income from the program.

- IM5. As is the Township's current practice, all new or renewed collaborations with other public, not-for-profit agencies, community-based volunteer groups and/or the commercial sector should continue to be covered by formal agreements
- IM6. Over the term of the Plan, unforeseen opportunities for partnership may emerge that cannot be addressed through local organizations and should be pursued on a case-by-case basis
- IM7. Working with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation should be guided by their consultation and accommodation protocols under the municipal corporation's direction

Program Packages

Although not typically considered partnerships in the strict sense of the word, opportunities to access 'program packages' developed by interest-based agencies are numerous when explored. The following provides two examples of these types of opportunities.

Second Harvest

Second Harvest, for example, offers food-related programming to not-for-profits and businesses that could be facilitated for in-situ provision by the Township. Examples of programs are:

- Easting Well on a Budget, a one-hour interactive workshop that will teach participants how to eat well on a budget without compromising nutrition.
- Food Date Labelling, a one-hour workshop designed to clear up the confusion about expiry and best before dates, a major cause of food waste in Canada.³

Programs are \$200 for not-for-profits and \$500 for business. If local groups expressed interest in hosting these types of events, the Township could assist with organization and facility space.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF)

The CWF website notes, "CWF is dedicated to ensuring that our wildlife and natural spaces remain a treasured part of our country. The challenge is inspiring that same conservation ethic in new generations of Canadians to ensure they develop their own passion for wildlife conservation. At CWF, we develop education programs to help connect Canadians to nature. We encourage Canadians of all ages to participate in individual conservation actions and to experience, enjoy and value nature. In an ever-increasing urban society, the greatest challenge is developing those connections to our natural world. Education and experiential learning are key pillars in programming designed to meet this challenge."⁴

The Federation provides well developed resources to support its goals through education and leadership, which could be used as the basis for local initiatives facilitated by the municipality. Themes/program areas, as described on the website include:

WILD Generations Gardening Club promotes intergenerational mentorship in gardening for wildlife. The program supports organizations working with youths and seniors with resources to empower them towards enhancing community gardens into wildlife-friendly habitat. When we enrich our outdoor spaces with natural sources of food, water and shelter for wildlife and practice earth-friendly gardening, we contribute to healthy ecosystems and create habitats to support animals that pollinate our fruits and vegetables.

WILD Outside is a national leadership program currently focused on youth ages 15 to 18. We developed the program as a way for CWF facilitators to help young Canadians learn how to be part of a team, develop a conservation ethic and plan a community-based action project. Teams then deliver their nature connection projects in their community. The WILD Outside program will expand to 20 cities across Canada in 2020 thanks to funding provided by the Canada Service Corps initiative established by the Government of Canada.

WILD About Sports encourages Canadians to get outside and enjoy Canada's waterways, coastline and oceans by providing training, resources and opportunities for them to get involved and take action. The program uses watersports and related activities to increase Canadians' awareness of the environment and wildlife habitat. The WILD About Sports guide features 20 activities that will build your confidence in using conservation messaging as they work with groups and individuals outdoors and in, on and around the water.

This program is delivered through partners such as Conservation Authorities, School Boards and post secondary institutions, that host local workshops.

Municipal Policy

The Township has a standing grant program for shared costs on capital works on Township land by incorporated community groups. A fee waiver policy allows program providers that meet specific criteria to apply for facility rental fees to be forgiven, and provides an automatic 50% reduction in fees for certain groups using the Coldwater District Community Centre and municipal parks.

³ <https://www.secondharvest.ca/resources/training>

⁴ <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/?src=topleftlogo>

In addition to the Community Group Affiliation discussed above, the Township should consider developing policies that will contribute to revenue generation. The details of each approach depends on the objectives in using it, in conjunction with other methods, for funding these services. Formal policies and procedures for each strategy adopted should be developed for clear and consistent implementation. Examples of revenue generating policies are summarized below.

Table 6-2: Resident interest in fundraising campaigns

Area of Questioning	Random Survey 200 Respondents	Online Survey 114 Respondents
donating money to a capital campaign	33%	18%
organizing/ assisting with local fundraising events	9%	37%

Donation Programs

A general donation program could be considered to support recreation services, although it would likely need to include other areas to which residents could contribute. The City of Toronto includes an opportunity to donate to specific service areas in its tax mailouts. This Voluntary Contribution program notes, “You can make a voluntary contribution (donation) to support a variety of City programs and services that matter to you. You can make a donation in any amount from \$1 up to \$50,000 [which include]: children; youth and parenting; history art, and culture; parks, gardens and beaches.”⁵

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

Naming Rights

Financial support can be recognized by naming a park or facility after the donor. In recent years, the practice of naming places after individuals has come under fire as public pressure emerges to rename institutions, streets, and other public spaces when the namesake’s worthiness is called into question - whether this is an individual or a business/commercial enterprise. A possible way to preclude this eventuality is to provide a highly visible plaque in the park or facility that acknowledges the individual or business that contributed to its development, while choosing a formal name that is relevant to/reflects the community as a whole.

Approaches in the same area as naming rights include sponsorships and selling advertising space at municipal facilities. Further discussion on best practices for naming rights can be found in Appendix D.

Targeted Capital Campaigns

While ‘capital campaigns’ typically relate to raising funds for large building projects, the same approach can be taken for smaller, community-supported initiatives that contribute to parks and recreation infrastructure. Key elements of this approach to planned fundraising include: a predetermined monetary goal attached to providing a concrete project, sufficient lead time to raise funds, an end date to fundraising, broad-based community involvement in the effort, and ongoing communications about its progress. Often, incentives are provided to motivate contributions (e.g., matching funds, public recognition of donors, etc.)

As shown in Table 6-3, the resident household surveys for the Master Plan indicated varying levels of interest in fundraising activities.

Among 25 user groups (Table 6-4), the largest proportions were uncertain about involvement in capital fundraising, while the greatest level of agreement emerged for helping with fundraising activities.

- IM8. The Township should consider developing policy related to revenue generation to help finance parks and recreation services
- IM9. Targeted capital campaigns should be considered for time-limited, tangible parks and recreation projects

Service Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Joint Planning Activities

Beyond the need for internal planning activities, joint service planning by all key providers in the community should occur on a regular basis. The Township should take the lead in instituting planning activities with this core group of organizations, covering several tasks to align with annual budgeting:

- verifying community service needs/ demands
- determining which of these can be addressed
- detailing the program/service response by area (parks, trails, facilities, programs, and/or delivery)
- determining the delivery method and organizations to share in provision
- developing budgets to support the action(s)

Partnerships among participating organizations should emerge in response to specific required actions, which may be continuous or self-limiting, depending on the initiative. They will also constitute different contributions to service delivery (e.g., municipal space for a program, run by a volunteer group, with guidance from the health unit.

The number of sessions per year in which all participants should engage can be determined collectively. At least one full-group session per year, however, would be required - and likely supplemented by smaller group meetings throughout the year to deal with specific topics emerging from the collective session or unforeseen issues. Special events, for example, may require

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

separate groups/sessions and include the business community in planning activities.

The Township currently participates both formally and informally in planning activities that involve other area municipalities and the County of Simcoe. Service provision in Severn occurs within a regional context, making it important for the Township to keep current on new developments and proposals in nearby communities. This will ensure local service provision focuses on what is needed within the larger context. There may be opportunities for Severn residents to be served by major facilities in, for example, Orillia while the Township may provide services to residents from other communities (e.g., Oro-Medonte). This continued interaction will be particularly important as municipalities in the area grow and work to establish appropriate levels of service for their residents. The Township, therefore, should continue to engage in joint planning activities with municipalities on its borders and with other relevant agencies such as Simcoe County, the Conservation Authority and local school boards. In some cases, joint planning will occur at regular intervals while, in others, it may occur on an ad hoc or as-needed basis.

Program and Service Monitoring and Evaluation

The first planning activity noted above, “verifying community service needs/ demands” will require ongoing service monitoring and evaluation so that ‘needs’ to be addressed in the upcoming year can be identified and be considered in the budget process. The Township currently tracks program participation, and facility use (which is discussed in Section 4.0). This

activity should be supplemented by users’ program and service evaluations to clarify the strengths and weaknesses - in content, delivery, timing, cost, etc. - of existing services and tracking unmet demand for programs/services that could be considered for future provision. Identified program strengths may be directly transferable to other services, while weaknesses that emerge might be able to be addressed to improve future sessions or events.

Parks and Recreation Ontario’s Manual entitled Measuring Customer Value and Satisfaction for Parks and Recreation FN is a practical guide supporting service evaluation work. As noted in the Manual, it is “intended to enable providers of parks and recreation to easily and consistently assess customer value and related issues. [It] includes a common set of core questions and an enhanced set of questions that can be used by providers to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and services, as well as advice on approaches to administering surveys”.⁶

Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The Plan spans a 15-year timeframe, and recommendations are organized in the implementation plan to occur in a rational order, recognizing that actual implementation timing will be influenced by budget and unforeseen factors. At the same time, it is important to track and document recommendations as they are implemented to be able to budget and report on annual progress. Each recommendation will require additional detailing to some degree for it to become part of the Township’s recreation services system.

Capital recommendations are largely discrete in that there are identifiable start and end dates for these projects. Work components and budgeting can be assigned over a period of years that correspond to pre-planning tasks (e.g., feasibility study/ concept plans), pre-development work, detailed design, and construction.

Operating recommendations need to be integrated into ongoing work and are cyclical in nature, in that they are continuous components of annual budgets. Planning and tracking progress requires sufficiently detailed steps for implementation along with objectives/targets that can be used to measure achievements.

Expanding the workload associated with service development typically means hiring more people to implement the Plan’s recommendations, since existing staff are working at capacity. The proposed Program Developer/Coordinator will work with other Township staff to develop annual plans/ budgets for implementing recommendations, along with targets, and monitoring/ evaluation tasks for reporting purposes and to update the Master Plan’s progress. In addition to the annual update, many municipalities conduct a comprehensive mid-point review of Master Plans.

- IM10. The Township should take the lead in instituting joint service planning on a regular basis with all key program providers in the community
- IM11. Other interested parties should be requested to participate in planning activities, as need or opportunity arises
- IM12. The Township should continue to engage in joint planning activities with municipalities on its borders and with other relevant agencies
- IM13. Current program and facility use tracking should be supplemented by program evaluations and unmet demand to inform ongoing service planning
- IM14. Conduct annual updates of the Master Plan’s implementation progress based on ongoing planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures

Table 6-3: User group interest contributing funding and fundraising

Area of Contribution	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
Our organization would contribute to the capital costs of developing new facilities for our use	16.7% 4 groups	37.5% 9 groups	45.8% 11 groups	24
Our organization would help with fundraising activities for facility development	40% 10 groups	12% 3 groups	48% 12 groups	25

⁶ <https://www.prontario.org/public/training/Measuring%20value.pdf>

Marketing and Communications

The Township has been increasing its social media presence, with positive response from the community. Social media is an effective way to engage with a wide audience, and as such could potentially improve awareness of and participation in programming and self-directed recreation activities in Severn. While social media is the primary place residents receive updates on current events and activities, if they are looking to register for recreation programming, or for specific information about parks and facilities, the Township website is likely the first place they will look, so it is important that the website is comprehensive and easy to navigate.

The Township has recently upgraded their website, and it includes an interactive community calendar, calendar.severn.ca. The calendar can be populated by community members themselves, making it an easily accessible form of marketing and promotion for a broad range of Township activities. Posts are reviewed by Township staff before being made public. The Township has a campaign planned for summer of 2022 to raise awareness about the calendar, and encourage community organizers to use it regularly.

Communications channels can also be used by the Township to promote its work in parks and recreation services. The Municipality of Port Hope, for example, posts an annual graphically enhanced Parks, Recreation and Culture Year-in-Review webpage⁷ that summarizes the past year's work in developing, operating and maintaining these services. Much of this information would be captured in monitoring activities and could be used to produce an 'annual report' to Township residents.

⁷ <https://www.porthope.ca/en/your-municipal-government/prc-year-in-review.aspx>

- IM15. Maintain social media presence and advertise recreation programs, activities, and events through various social media channels
- IM16. Continue efforts to promote use of the community calendar, in order to build a comprehensive, centralized recreation activity hub
- IM17. Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the Township's achievements in providing recreation services

6.2 Severn Implementation Considerations and Financial Implications

Introduction

The recommendations contained in this Plan have operational and financial implications. Operational implications affect the implementation of the Plan in terms of:

- the timeframe for the actions and any critical path aspects involved;
- the roles and responsibilities of relevant parties;
- any targets or milestones that may be set in order to monitor progress and achievement of the initiatives.

Financial implications involve estimated capital costs (or one-time costs) and on-going operating costs to the municipality that will be sustained in implementing the Plan.

Cost estimates are necessarily 'order of magnitude' in nature at this point. Over the expected timeframe for implementation, certain factors and variables will change: costs will escalate; new opportunities will emerge such as funding and grant programs; new partnership options may become evident; staff turnover will occur; etc. All of these may affect the actual costs to the Township to implement the Plan. Also to be considered is municipal staff time to implement the Plan. While the Plan identifies new staffing costs, implementation work will also have to be assumed by existing staff - and these costs are assumed to be part of existing operating budgets.

The tables below outline, in turn, the operational considerations of the plan as well as the high-level financial estimates

related to implementing the Plan over 15 years, divided into four time frames:

- Immediate: 2022
- Short-term: 2 to 5 years
- Medium-term: 6 to 10 years
- Longer-term: 11 to 15 years

The rows show when the action is to start, and how long it will carry on. The colour of the rows indicates operating (one-time or ongoing), and capital (one-time, or ongoing) costs, per the legend below. A fifth category identifies recommendations that are contingent on need and/or the involvement of non-municipal actors.

Table Legend:

Colour	Recommendation Type
✓	one-time operations: recommendations related to introducing new staff, processes, approaches as one time initiatives
→	ongoing operations: recommendations related to ongoing work/tasks/processes
✓	one-time capital: time-limited recommendations related to spending on additions/improvements to infrastructure
→	ongoing capital: infrastructure spending related to planned improvement programs or single AODA/asset management upgrades to infrastructure
	if required; as appropriate; involves non-municipal parties

Total Costs of Recommendations

Time Frame	Total Costs
Immediate 2022	\$449,000
Short: 2 to 5 years	\$1,187,000
Medium: 6 to 10 years	\$258,500
Long: 11 to 15 years	
Total Cost	\$1,894,500

Healthy Active Living Implementation Plan

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Program Delivery						
HAL1	22	Develop a Healthy Active Living Policy, or integrate Healthy Active Living policy statements in the Official Plan	✓	✓		

Programs and Events Implementation Plan

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Program Delivery						
PE1	29	Implement a short-duration programming model in addition to regular programming	→	→	→	→
PE2	30	Explore opportunities to provide incentives for participants in local programs	→	→	→	→

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Programs and Events						
PE3	30	Work with volunteers to develop a Welcome Wagon program for new residents	→	→	→	→
PE4	30	Approach schools to assist in communicating recreation opportunities	→	→	→	→
Events						
PE5	30	Continue to provide Township-led all-ages events, and provide support to community groups that organize events	→	→	→	→
Outdoor Recreation						
PE6	31	Explore opportunities to expand outdoor recreation programs/activities, for example nature-based programming (e.g., local ecology, plant identification), water-based activities (e.g., canoeing, kayaking, SUP'ing, swimming, etc.)	→	→	→	→
PE7	31	Support the development and sustainability of outdoor rink volunteer groups	→	→	→	→
PE8	31	Provide children's/youth learn-to-skate programs at Bass Lake and Marchmont outdoor rinks in collaboration with volunteers who provide and maintain the ice		→	→	→
Age-specific Programming						
PE9	34	Offer new and expanded active and non-active programming in the Township for each age cohort (preschool, child, teen, adult, senior)	→	→	→	→

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
PE10	34	Pilot adult and senior fitness and wellness classes during the day and gauge community interest and attendance through program evaluations	→	→	→	→
PE11	34	Ensure seniors' representation on CRAC, and consider developing a senior's recreation sub-committee	→	→	→	→
Arts, Culture, Heritage and Tourism						
PE12	44	Hold an arts and culture summit		→		
PE13	44	Explore the potential for a wider range of low-cost arts, culture and tourism events and activities in the Township, aimed at permanent as well as seasonal residents	→	→	→	→
PE14	44	Consider joining the Creative City Network of Canada (CCNC)		→		
PE15	44	Promote agritourism opportunities throughout the County	→	→	→	→
PE16	44	Continue to pursue tourism development opportunities (with Parks Canada, Simcoe County Tourism, Ontario's Lake Country and other partners) through the preparation of a tourism development plan	→	→	→	→

Facilities Implementation Plan

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Community Recreation Hubs						
F1	48	Designate three primary recreation hubs in the Township as the focus for a wide range of organized programs and self-directed recreation opportunities, including the existing hubs of Washago Community Centre/Centennial Park, and Coldwater and District Community Centre and Fairgrounds, and the new Westshore Recreation Centre	✓			
F2	48	Designate four secondary recreation hubs including the existing Lake St. George Community Centre, Matchedash Community Heritage Centre, Marchmont Park, and the newly acquired waterfront property in Port Severn, which is recommended as a focal point for community-based arts activity	✓			
F3	48	Use each recreation hub to strategically develop and distribute programs/activities that are amenable to the characteristics of facilities spaces/capacities, with the objectives of serving immediate residents and/or attracting Township-wide participation, depending on the type of hub and ability to deliver programs	→	→	→	→

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations Facilities	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Use in Relation to Capacity						
F4	49	Review use of 6,563.92 as annually available hours for all scheduled facilities and establish relevant definitions of prime time and non-prime time for the purpose of tracking use on ball diamonds, sports fields, pickleball courts, future tennis courts and other outdoor facilities used for organized activity		✓		
F5	50	Split total arena hours to be tracked by ice-in and ice-out seasons, for both prime and non-prime time		✓		
AODA Upgrades and Improvements						
F6	50	Continue to implement AODA accessibility upgrades as per budgeted items	\$175,000*			
F7	50	Review and update the five-year Multi-year Accessibility Plan in 2023		✓		
Arena						
F8	54	A new indoor ice pad is not required - the Coldwater Arena can accommodate anticipated additional demand for ice use due to population growth during the term of the Master Plan				

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations Facilities	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
F9	54	Continue making required improvements/enhancements to the arena to ensure its ability to continue to serve the community	\$180,000			
Curling Rink						
F10	54	Continue working relationship with the curling club until end of current agreement, and beyond, through its renewal	→	→	→	→
Coldwater District Community Centre Hall						
F11	56	Use available time in the Coldwater District Community Centre Hall to expand existing or develop new programs, particularly in the months July through September	→	→	→	→
F12	56	Consult with Simcoe Muskoka District Public Health Unit to investigate the potential to use the CDCC Hall kitchen for community programming and food producer rentals	→	→	→	→

*Funds budgeted for Washago Community Centre and Park in 2022 (pathways, front doors, visual fire alarms)

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Washago Community Centre						
F13	13	As per the objectives associated with Township management and operation, retain existing programs/facility access to the Community Centre, and develop new services to encompass a broader range of recreation interests	→	→	→	→
Arena Floor						
F14	58	Review current demand for access to arena floor for programs/activities and increase staff hours accordingly to provide supervision during use	→	→	→	→
Westshore Recreation Centre						
F15	58	The focus of the new Recreation Centre should be local and Township-wide programming/use that expands recreation opportunities, particularly in areas that are not part of current supply	→	→	→	→
Proposed Severn Community Arts Centre						
F16	61	Conduct a detailed feasibility study to determine the potential for the bequeathed waterfront property in Port Severn (3253 Port Severn Road) to be redeveloped as a hub for arts, culture and heritage programming, including public consultation			\$75,000 ✓	

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Lake St. George Community Centre and Matchedash Community Heritage Centre						
F17	61	Support expanded programming at Lake St. George Community Centre and Matchedash Community Heritage Centre that aligns with identified needs, facility capabilities, and balanced service distribution across the community	→	→	→	→
Soccer/Sport Fields						
F18	63	Rename 'soccer fields' as 'sports fields' to recognize and promote their availability for use for other sports that can be accommodated on multi-use fields	✓			
F19	63	Program the new multi-purpose field at the Westshore Recreation Centre as the 'flagship' for accommodating and growing other types of field sports such as field lacrosse, football, rugby, etc.		→	→	→
F20	63	Future improvements to sports fields should be made to enhance their multi-functionality	→	→	→	→

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
F21	63	No additional sports fields are required during the term of the Master Plan				
Ball diamonds						
F22	64	No additional ball diamonds will be required during to accommodate anticipated population growth to 2036				
F23	64	Upgraded diamonds at Marchmont and Timberline Parks can be scheduled should additional capacity be required for organized softball				
Pickleball Courts						
F26	67	Should demand materialize for additional courts, multi-purpose (including pickleball/tennis) courts should be developed at Washago Centennial Park or Marchmont Community Park				
F27	67	Allocate specific time on courts for tennis and pickleball use and monitor to confirm demand, and the need to adjust schedules	→	→	→	→
Total Facilities Costs:			\$355,000		\$75,000	

Parks, Trails, and Boat Launches Implementation Plan

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
General Park Recommendations						
PK1	90	Continue to make required accessibility upgrades to parks (including playground safety, routes and wayfinding, seating, shade and bicycle parking) as part of ongoing maintenance and upgrades	→	→	→	→
PK2	91	Develop and implement Township-branded signage and wayfinding at Township parks, trails, boat launches, facilities, heritage sites, and main arterials		→	→	→
PK3	92	Develop and implement Township-branded interpretive signage at points of natural, cultural and historical points of interest		→	→	→
PK4	93	Consult with the Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee (CRAC) to determine whether developers should be providing cash-in-lieu or parkland dedication based upon the development's location and communities' needs	→	→	→	→
PK5	93	Develop an 'environment first' policy to support environmentally focused park and waterfront development and management	→	→		

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
PK6	94	Before undertaking an edible tree or community garden project, the Township should develop a policy to clarify roles and responsibilities				
Washago Centennial Park						
PK6	97	Undertake a campground feasibility study at Washago Centennial Park	✓	\$80,000 ✓		
PK7	97	Install additional seating and permanent umbrellas around the Washago Centennial Park Beach		\$25,000 ✓		
PK8	97	Consider adding seasonal rentals of equipment such as kayaks, canoes, and standup paddleboards through contracted services at Washago Park's Lake Couchiching waterfront		✓		
PK9	97	Add a beach volleyball court to Washago Centennial Park		\$15,000 ✓		
Coldwater Fairgrounds						
PK10	100	Further refine and implement the proposed Coldwater Fairgrounds Park Master Plan that enhances the existing park features to increase the user variety year-round		Design: \$100,000; Construction: \$650,000 ✓		
Ian Crichton Memorial Park						

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
PK11	102	Provide naturalized planting between the road and existing shade structure at Ian Crichton Memorial Park			\$3,000 ✓	→
PK12	102	Provide additional seating along park paths and around playground at Ian Crichton Memorial Park		\$10,500 ✓		
Marchmont Community Park						
PK13	103	Upgrade basketball court nets and surfacing at Marchmont Community Park			\$25,000 ✓	
PK14	103	Replace park signage with Severn branded signage at Marchmont Community Park	\$25,000 ✓			
PK15	103	Implement community gardens and naturalization throughout Marchmont Community Park			\$6,500 ✓	→
PK16	103	Provide additional shaded seating throughout Marchmont Community Park		\$6,500 ✓		
Timberline Park						
PK17	104	Implement naturalization and tree planting throughout Timberline Park		✓	\$10,000 →	→

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
PK18	104	Conduct a design process with community consultation for future development at Timberline Park			✓	
Ardrea Park						
PK19	105	Provide another bench around playground at Ardrea Park		\$2,500 ✓		
PK20	105	Introduce a naturalized planting buffer around perimeter of Ardrea Park		\$10,000 ✓	→	→
Bass Lake Woodlands Park						
PK21	106	Add accessible playground equipment at Bass Lake Woodlands Park		\$20,000 ✓		
PK22	106	Plant new trees to provide shade at Bass Lake Woodlands Park			\$6,000 ✓	
PK23	106	Provide additional group and individual seating by amenities at Bass Lake Woodlands Park			\$20,500 ✓	
PK24	106	Provide regular maintenance of beach volleyball courts at Bass Lake Woodlands Park	→	→	→	→
PK25	106	Upgrade existing basketball court/outdoor ice rink surfacing and boards at Bass Lake Woodlands Park			\$100,000 ✓	
Trails Recommendations						

Recommendation Number	Page Number	Recommendations	Time Frame			
			Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
PK26	107	Develop a Severn trail strategy to plan and implement trail development and connectivity in the Township		\$75,000 ✓		
PK27	107	Provide trailheads with appropriate amenities at trail connection points			\$12,500 ✓	✓
PK28	108	Provide signage to all public restroom and bike repair stations and locate directional signage at regular intervals along the trail		\$10,000 ✓		
PK39	108	Land owned by Township at Reservoir Road should be developed into multiple mountain bike courses with the design and maintenance assistance of the SCMBC			✓	✓
Boat Launch Recommendations						
PK30	110	Implement the boat launch classification system and update existing docks/launches to meet the classification standards	→	\$120,000 Upgrades: \$12,500 →	→	→
PK31	111	Work with Parks Canada, Simcoe County Tourism, and Orillia Lake Country to support the historical waterways project, by installing interpretive and directional signage, and making launch repairs at designated locations				
Total Parks Costs:			\$25,000	\$1,137,000	\$183,500	

Service Delivery Implementation Plan

Recommendation Number	Recommendations		Time Frame			
	Page Number	Implementation	Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
Staff and Volunteers						
IM1	116	Hire a Recreation Program Developer/Coordinator immediately to begin developing and coordinating programs/activities at all Township facilities and parks	\$69,000 ✓	→	→	→
IM2	116	Hire Facilities staff to support extended use, operations and maintenance of existing and new facilities		\$50,000 →	→	→
IM3	116	Continue policy innovations to incentivize individuals to volunteer in service provision	→	→	→	→
IM4	116	Consult with volunteer recreation groups to confirm the type and extent of required assistance to sustain/grow their programs/events, and to inform development of a Community Group Affiliation Policy		✓		
Collaborations and Partnerships with Non-municipal Providers						
IM5	118	As is the Township's current practice, all new or renewed collaborations with other public, not-for-profit agencies, community-based volunteer groups and/or the commercial sector should continue to be covered by formal agreements	→	→	→	→

Recommendation Number	Recommendations		Time Frame			
	Page Number	Implementation	Immediate 2022	Short: 2 to 5 years	Medium: 6 to 10 years	Long: 11 to 15 years
IM6	118	Over the term of the Plan, unforeseen opportunities for partnership may emerge that cannot be addressed through local organizations and should be pursued on a case-by-case basis				
IM7	118	Working with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation should be guided by their consultation and accommodation protocols under the municipal corporation's direction				
Municipal Policy						
IM8	122	The Township should consider developing policy related to revenue generation to help finance parks and recreation services		✓		
IM9	122	Targeted capital campaigns should be considered for time-limited, tangible parks and recreation projects				
Service Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation						
IM10	124	The Township should take the lead in instituting joint service planning on a regular basis with all key program providers in the community		→	→	→
IM11	124	Other interested parties should be requested to participate in planning activities, as need or opportunity arises				

Recommendation Number		Recommendations	Time Frame			
IM12	124	The Township should continue to engage in joint planning activities with municipalities on its borders and with other relevant agencies	→	→	→	→
IM13	124	Current program and facility use tracking should be supplemented by program evaluations and unmet demand to inform ongoing service planning		→	→	→
IM14	124	Conduct annual updates of the Master Plan's implementation progress based on ongoing planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures		→	→	→
Marketing and Communications						
IM15	125	Maintain social media presence and advertise recreation programs, activities, and events through various social media channels	→	→	→	→
IM16	125	Continue efforts to promote use of the community calendar, in order to build a comprehensive, centralized recreation activity hub		✓	→	→
IM17	125	Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the Township's achievements in providing recreation services		→	→	→
Total:			\$69,000	\$50,000		