

# Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan (draft)

November 2024

## Summary of Recommendations

Throughout the Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or topic area. By approving this Plan, the Municipality is not obligated to implement every recommendation or to deliver facilities and services in the specific order, quantity, or timing suggested. Instead, this Plan offers guidance on community priorities and outlines a general direction for addressing current needs.

Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of facilities, parks, services, etc.). The size of the Municipality's population and tax base restricts the resources that can be allocated to facilities and services. In turn, meeting the widest range of needs possible through the efficient use of resources is paramount.

Within the tables that follow, the priority and timing of recommendations are identified. Priority is often aligned with timing – generally, the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented.

### Priority

- **High Priority:** Prompt attention should be given during the recommended timeframe.
- **Medium Priority:** Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners and/or funding have been identified.
- **Lower Priority:** Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated/completed.

### Timing

- **Short-term:** 2024 to 2027
- **Medium-term:** 2028 to 2031
- **Longer-term:** 2032+
- **Ongoing:** Best practices to be followed on a continual basis

### Potential Cost Impacts

(Note: All cost estimates are preliminary and to be confirmed through future study. Additional cost metrics for trail development can be found in section 8.5.)

- **Minor (\$):** estimated at \$100,000 or less
- **Moderate (\$\$):** estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- **Major (\$\$\$):** estimated at \$500,000 or more

**Table 1: Summary of Recommendations – Service Delivery**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the <b>mission, vision and goals</b> of this Master Plan. Continue to solidify the Community Services Department’s role as a park/facility provider and program provider and facilitator through consistent messaging in all communications, budgeting, policies, and procedures.</p>	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
<p>2. Regularly undertake <b>internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures</b>, with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.</p>	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
<p>3. Document the <b>levels of service</b> provided in the Community Services Department and quantify the effort and resources required to meet these levels of service today and into the future.</p>	Medium	Short-term	Staff-led
<p>4. Provide <b>staff training and professional development</b> opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to <b>equity and inclusion</b> in the delivery of service. Continue to support the Department’s staff training plan through an annual budget allocation.</p>	High	Ongoing	Maintain current funding levels, at minimum
<p>5. Continue to work with the community to maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities through <b>recreation programming</b> for children, youth, and older adults in both urban and rural areas, including low to no cost activity options. Seek grants to help support new or expanded programs. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new program offerings.</p>	High	Ongoing	Staff-led

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
6. Regularly coordinate with <b>local service providers</b> to identify and assess potential recreation and sport program gaps, capacity concerns, pent-up demands, and tracking of participation rates. Continue to collaborate with other providers to promote available opportunities.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
7. Continue to partner with Mitchell and Area Community Outreach and others to ensure there are <b>programs geared to seniors</b> at all activity levels and opportunities for social connections.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
8. Continue to support community efforts to celebrate <b>local arts, culture and heritage</b> and encourage the use of public space for events and festivals. Work with Perth County to support initiatives that enhance and promote opportunities for cultural development and tourism.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
9. Seek to expand <b>multi-use programming space</b> through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.	High	Long-term	See also recommendations 22 and 23
10. Collect <b>facility utilization and registration data</b> annually from all organizations that use Municipal parks and facilities to assist in understanding trends, changing demands, and allocation. Identify and track key performance indicators and program targets that illustrate the value of parks and recreation services.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
11. Develop an <b>ice allocation policy</b> to ensure the fair and transparent allocation of ice time to local organizations. Work with municipal partners to implement elements of the policy at all arenas that are operated under agreement with the Municipality. Host an annual ice scheduling meeting so user groups can discuss their schedule and trade times.	High	Short-term	Staff-led
12. Review <b>policies and procedures</b> at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
13. Continue to explore opportunities to leverage <b>data and technology</b> to improve community access to parks, recreation, and trails services, as well as the efficient and effective delivery of services (e.g., expanding online tools, mobile technologies, etc.).	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led; may require project-specific funding
14. Continue to utilize and enhance a <b>variety of communication tools</b> to promote and gather feedback on parks, recreation, and trails services and initiatives. Options for expanding real-time information should be considered (e.g., e-newsletters, digital roadside signs, bulletin boards, social media, etc.), as well as cost-effective options for providing an annual printed community guide (for all municipal services).	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
15. Host <b>annual forums</b> with community organizations to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks, recreation, and trails services.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
16. Continue to actively <b>support volunteers and volunteer-led community organizations</b> in the development and delivery of parks, recreation, and trails programs and services. Continue to support the annual volunteer recognition event, community registration day, and initiatives that offer volunteering and leadership opportunities for youth.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
17. Continue to <b>seek and support community partnerships</b> that enhance services, reduce reliance on tax dollars, and increase resident access to needed parks, recreation, and trails services. Use a standard set of criteria to evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests (including a minimum external funding requirement), informed by this Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
18. Complete a <b>risk/liability review of existing partnerships</b> to ensure that the agreements properly identify roles and responsibilities, quality assurance, safety mechanisms, access and inclusion, performance measures, and legislative compliance at a minimum.	High	Short-term	Staff-led
19. Continue to engage <b>adjacent municipalities</b> on community service initiatives that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for West Perth residents.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
20. Continue efforts to maximize <b>community access to local school facilities</b> .	High	Ongoing	Staff-led

Table 2: Summary of Recommendations – Recreation Facilities

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>21. Review the <b>arena cost-sharing agreements</b> with North Perth (Elma-Logan Recreation Complex) and Huron East (Seaforth and District Community Centre) to ensure that resident access and benefits are appropriate given the Municipality's financial contributions and access requirements.</p>	High	Short-term	Staff-led
<p>22. Prepare a <b>feasibility study</b> to determine the viability and costs of maintaining the West Perth Arena &amp; Community Centre, as well as to inform its future expansion potential. Consideration may be given to developing a replacement ice pad (a twin pad is not recommended at this time) and indoor recreation spaces (e.g., gymnasium, fitness space, youth centre, indoor walking track, etc.) to serve long-term needs. The study should identify potential costs (operating and capital) and potential funding sources.</p>	High	Medium-term	Study: Minor (\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)
<p>23. Further explore the need and potential provision of <b>indoor multi-use space</b> for gymnasium sports and other recreational activities through a feasibility study proposed for the West Perth Arena and Community Centre. The Municipality may consider the potential to work with non-municipal providers to address these needs using the partnership criteria identified in Section 5.7.</p>	High	Medium-term	See recommendation 22
<p>24. Consider the needs of youth as part of the feasibility study proposed for the West Perth Arena and Community Centre, including the potential to develop a <b>permanent youth centre</b> at this location.</p>	High	Medium-term	See recommendation 22
<p>25. Continue to work with the community to expand programming and activities with the <b>Keterson Park pavilion</b>.</p>	High	Ongoing	Staff-led

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
26. Work with local user groups to undertake <b>priority improvements to ball diamonds</b> , including but not limited to consideration of sand/clay infields, dugout and bleacher enhancements, lighting replacement, and fencing repairs, where required.	Medium	Ongoing	Minor (\$)
27. Promote usage of <b>rural diamonds</b> for practices and occasional games by West Perth associations. Monitor demand for longer-term diamond development (beyond the next ten years).	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
28. Establish an annual budget line to support <b>playground replacement</b> at a rate of approximately one every one to two years, for a total of seven over the next ten years. High priority playground replacement projects over the next ten years include Rotary Park, Lions Park, and Dublin Lions Park. Convert playground surfaces to engineered wood fibre upon replacement (rubber surfacing may be considered for playgrounds in community parks). Consider installing a naturalized playground (with boulders, logs, rope bridges, and other natural features) at one location to offer variety in play value.	High	Ongoing	Moderate (\$\$)
29. Ensure that all playgrounds with accessible components are connected to the sidewalk and/or parking lot by an <b>accessible pathway</b> (e.g., Keterson Park, etc.).	High	Ongoing	Minor (\$)
30. Identify a location for a <b>playground in southwest Mitchell</b> to provide equitable access to this neighbourhood.	High	Short-term	Moderate (\$\$)

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
31. Consider the <b>future development of playgrounds</b> in new residential subdivisions in order to achieve the distributional target of one playground within 500 to 800 metres of all residences within urban areas. Explore co-funding opportunities with local service clubs for future playground development.	High	Ongoing	Tied to development activity
32. Maintain the <b>Lions Pool</b> until such point as major capital replacement (e.g., to the tanks, bathhouse, mechanical systems, etc.) can no longer be deferred. Consult with the public as to future options at that time.	High	Ongoing	Costs dependent on need and lifecycle renewal timing
33. Should opportunities arise, consider mutually beneficial partnerships with other providers to enhance <b>access to indoor aquatic activities</b> for West Perth residents.	Lower	Ongoing	May require project-specific funding
34. Consider installing a <b>misting station</b> at Keterson Park or a future park in southwest Mitchell in order to improve geographic access to water/cooling features.	Medium	Medium-term	Minor (\$)
35. Install <b>lighting</b> on the tennis/pickleball courts at Veterans Park to allow for evening play. Monitor usage of these courts to help inform future needs and reviews.	Lower	Medium-term	Minor (\$)
36. Develop an <b>outdoor basketball court</b> (half or full) within a future park, such as the one proposed for southwest Mitchell.	Medium	Short-term	Minor (\$)
37. Reconsider plans to establish an <b>ice skating rink under the Keterson Park</b> pavilion due to its short season and operational/staffing requirements. If this project moves ahead, an agreement and volunteer commitment with stakeholders are necessary to ensure ongoing community support for its operation.	Low	Short-term	Staff-led; external funding anticipated



Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
38. Replace the existing skateboard park with a <b>permanent all-wheels park</b> in its current location within Keterson Park. Initiate a fundraising campaign to help offset costs.	Medium	Short-term	Moderate (\$\$)
39. Continue to add <b>shade</b> (additional trees or small shelter/shade sail) to the Kinsmen Park off-leash dog park.	Lower	Medium-term	Minor (\$)
40. Encourage the integration of volunteer-managed <b>community vegetable gardens</b> within the Municipality's park network, focusing on under-utilized lands that have adequate access to a water source and parking.	Medium	Ongoing	Minor (\$)
41. Work with the conservation authority to support <b>paddling activities in the North Thames River</b> and install additional signage and promotion of the kayak/canoe launch in Lions Park.	Lower	Medium-term	Minor (\$)

Table 3: Summary of Recommendations – Parkland & Park Policy

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
42. Use the Master Plan's <b>parkland classification system</b> to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
43. Institute a program to <b>actively monitor parkland acquisitions</b> and <b>track annual spending</b> and allocation of parkland cash-in-lieu funds.	High	Ongoing	Required by Planning Act

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
44. Adopt a <b>“Parkland First” approach</b> that prioritizes parkland conveyance (new parks should generally be a minimum of 0.5 hectares) over cash-in-lieu of parkland in order to address future parkland requirements.	High	Ongoing	Tied to development activity
45. Utilize <b>alternative parkland acquisition approaches</b> beyond traditional land conveyance mechanisms as necessary to meet the Municipality’s long-term parkland target.	High	Ongoing	Tied to development activity
46. Work with the County to ensure that the Municipality’s Director of Community Services is <b>circulated on land development applications</b> in order to provide comment on parkland requirements.	High	Short-term	Staff-led
47. Over a one to three-year period, phase in an increase to the residential <b>parkland cash-in-lieu amount</b> to a minimum of \$5,500 per lot for consents (and a minimum of \$2,200 per lot for non-residential development). Require independent appraisals for residential lots within plans of subdivision or condominium where parkland dedication is not required.	High	Short-term	Staff-led
48. Develop a <b>Parkland Dedication By-law</b> to formalize the policies and procedures associated with parkland conveyance in the Municipality.	High	Short-term	Minor (\$)
49. Continue to target a municipal-wide <b>parkland provision of 3.0 hectares per 1,000 residents</b> . Additional parkland will be required to improve access and to serve future growth in urban areas.	High	Ongoing	Tied to development activity

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>50. Address the need for active parkland in <b>southwest Mitchell</b> through land dedication, acquisition, or re-use of surplus lands. Investigate the suitability of using the vacant Nelson Street property as a neighbourhood park and develop a concept plan (with community input) incorporating elements such as a playground, basketball court, open space, community gardens, pathways, seating, etc.</p>	High	Short-term	<p>Design: Minor (\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)</p>
<p>51. Declare the undeveloped <b>Russelldale park block</b> as surplus and initiate the process for disposition. Redirect any proceeds back into the municipal parks and recreational system.</p>	Lower	Short-term	<p>Any revenues should be used to offset park improvements</p>
<p>52. Maintain a commitment to <b>universal accessibility, safety, and comfort</b> within the municipal parks system. Regularly consult with the County's Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike parking, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types.</p>	High	Ongoing	<p>May require project-specific funding</p>
<p>53. Create a <b>consistent standard of supporting amenities</b> in parks, including seating, garbage receptacles, shade, emergency location signage, etc. in order to ensure minimum levels of service and support sustainability.</p>	High	Ongoing	<p>May require project-specific funding</p>
<p>54. Establish consistent and <b>high quality</b> signage at all parks, trails, and municipal facilities to enhance branding and wayfinding.</p>	High	Ongoing	<p>Minor (\$)</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
55. Initiate a site-specific planning exercise to guide the <b>long-term improvement and renewal of Lions Park</b> . This concept plan should be prepared in consultation with the community and stakeholders and seek to matter such as address circulation, parking, signage, pathways, comfort amenities, emerging needs, and aging infrastructure.	Medium	Long-term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)
56. Prepare a <b>Greening Strategy</b> to guide the efforts of the Municipality, partners, and volunteers in the beautification, naturalization, and preservation of key sites throughout West Perth. The Strategy should address items such as tree planting, remediation, maintenance, resourcing, education programs and stewardship initiatives, etc.	Medium	Medium-term	Study: Minor (\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)
57. Support <b>year-round park use and outdoor education and programming</b> through community development activities, special event coordination, and partnerships.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led

Table 4: Summary of Recommendations – Trail Network

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
58. Complete infill of <b>trail gaps</b> to complete connections.	High	Short-term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)
59. Complete <b>trail upgrades</b> to the new trail classification standards in <b>high-volume areas</b> (Lions Park, main route through Thames River valley).	Medium	Medium-Term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)
60. Complete <b>trail upgrades</b> to the new trail classification standards for <b>remaining trails</b> with lifecycle renewal.	Lower	Long-Term	Costs dependent on need and lifecycle renewal timing.

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>61. Establish and maintain sanctioned trails through the <b>woodlot and landfill property</b>. Investigations have concluded that the current trail alignments fall within a buffer outside the licensed landfill area that does not restrict compatible land uses such as trails.</p>	High	Short-term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Minor (\$)
<p>62. Trail routes will need to be secured in <b>future land development areas</b>. As each development is small, the municipality will need to manage opportunities to align routes in segments, carving out a trail allowance of 8-10m width. Priority should be placed on achieving an off-road route in parallel with drainage chalets, parks, spaces, etc.; however, it could be executed with ROW by applying the green street typology.</p>	High	Ongoing	Tied to development activity
<p>63. Complete a <b>scoped active transportation plan</b> to further explore cycling and pedestrian infrastructure over the West Perth road network. Planning should be done ahead of willingness to invest in infrastructure to allow for Grant applications and coordination with neighboring municipal and County projects.</p>	Lower	Medium-Term	Design: Moderate (\$\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>64. Actively seek opportunities to develop <b>off-road rural routes</b> connecting Mitchell with St. Marys and Monkton. This will require coordination with the conservation authority and private landowners to form partnerships and establish land use agreements and/or land acquisition. Secure land in segments, revisit sections as property owners change, and implement sanctioned trails once continuous segments can be formed between concessions. This activity is a 'stretch goal' as it may require significant staff hours and is a high-cost project. Addressing opportunities over time will offer savings and allow to revisit reluctant landowners.</p>	Lower	Long-Term	<p>Design: Moderate (\$\$)</p> <p>Development: Major (\$\$\$)</p>
<p>65. Develop a <b>dedicated ATV priority trail network</b> and capitalize on ATV tourism for more significant community benefit. This activity is a 'stretch goal' as it may require significant staff hours and is a high-cost project. Excellent tourism opportunity. Volunteer implementation support potential.</p>	Lower	Long-Term	<p>Design: Moderate (\$\$)</p> <p>Development: Moderate (\$\$)</p>
<p>66. Install <b>controlled street crossings and underpass connections</b>, and upgrade existing street crossings, including: (a) Controlled crossings at new street west of Wimpole St, St. Andrew St, Colbourn St, and Arthur St (requires a traffic study and engineered design); and (b) Signalized intersection at Hwy 8 and 23 or underpass trail connections along the River corridor at Hwy 8 and another at Frank Street. Note that crossings may need to be phased over longer periods of time due to cost and in coordination with other road projects. The frequency of crossings and the risk to users should inform prioritization.</p>	High	Medium-Term	<p>Design: Major (\$\$\$)</p> <p>Development: Major (\$\$\$)</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
67. Install a <b>railway crossing</b> near the intersection of Georgina St and St. Andrew St (requires a rail safety audit). This needs to be completed prior to trail improvements and wayfinding signage in this area.	Medium	Short - Term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Minor (\$)
68. Install <b>pedestrian bridges</b> connecting Colbourn Street to Adelaide Street (will require several engineering and environmental studies). Demand will increase in the future when development areas are built out.	Lower	Long-Term	Design: Moderate (\$\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)
69. Complete a <b>dedicated wayfinding project</b> . This should include developing a signage design and location mapping. Trailheads typically include a hierarchy of larger main tailhead signs, smaller trailhead signs where mapping is desired, and smaller point-of-entry signs that include simple wayfinding.	High	Medium -Term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)
70. Reduce <b>mowing</b> in trail corridors to a maximum of 1.2m on either side of trail surfacing unless the area serves an active park use that requires mown turf. Establish naturalized meadows and promote the alternative landscape through a habitat program. This will reduce maintenance costs. Additional programming and planting can be volunteer led.	Lower	Short-Term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Minor (\$)
71. Address <b>greenways</b> through scheduled road improvements or special projects where deemed a critical connection. Requires coordination with road reconstruction programs.	Medium	Medium to Long-Term	Design: Moderate (\$\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)

Table 5 Summary of Recommendations – Implementation

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
72. Use the Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan as a resource in developing West Perth’s <b>long-term capital forecast</b> , development charge studies, and related reports.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
73. Ensure that Municipal Council is informed of <b>operating cost implications</b> prior to approving major capital projects.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
74. Continue to seek <b>alternative funding and cost-sharing options</b> (e.g., fundraising, sponsorships, grants, etc.) to supplement traditional funding sources and to enable full implementation of the Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
75. Contribute annually to a <b>reserve fund for major recreation infrastructure projects</b> (e.g., arena and indoor recreation facility) with consistent contributions through the Municipal budget process.	Medium	Ongoing	Cost dependent on desired funding levels
76. Conduct <b>feasibility studies and business plans</b> (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	High	Ongoing	Project-specific funding may be required
77. Implement a system for the <b>regular implementation, monitoring, and review</b> of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan, including the creation of an annual work plan. Update Council and the community annually on its status using the format previously adopted by staff.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
78. Undertake a complete <b>review and update of the Master Plan</b> no later than 2034. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	High	Long-term	Minor (\$)