

# Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan

December 2024



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**Monteith ♦ Brown**  
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**LEES**  
ASSOCIATES



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December 2024

Prepared by:



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# Acknowledgements

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

## **Municipal Council (2022-2026)**

Mayor: Walter McKenzie

Deputy Mayor: W. Dean Trentowsky

Councillors:

Fullarton Ward - Steven Herold, Alex Foster

Hibbert Ward - Nicholas Vink, Andrew Fournier

Logan Ward - Ryan Duck, Diane Chessell

Mitchell Ward - Doug Feltz, Phillip O'Donnell, Murray Rose

## **Master Plan Project Committee**

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## **Project Consultants**

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

LEES + Associates



Veterans Park

# Section 1.

## Introduction

### 1.1 Master Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan (“Master Plan”) update is to provide a roadmap to strategically manage the direction of recreation, parks, and trail services until the year 2034 (10 years). This Plan builds on the successful foundation laid out by the 2016 Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, which led to a wide range of service and facility improvements, such as the expansion of programming and park redevelopment projects.

Specifically, this updated Master Plan provides an overall vision, direction, and guidance to staff and Council through recommendations supported by public input, best practices, demographic shifts, growth forecasts, and trends. This project includes a comprehensive and inclusive process to accommodate the full scope of needs relative to municipal parks and recreation facilities and services, as well as trail connectivity, extensions, and associated cycling infrastructure.

In doing so, the Plan provides analysis and recommendations for associated policy development, capital investment, and service delivery, with a focus on emerging demands and opportunities. Full implementation of the Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan will require an ongoing commitment and coordination between Municipal officials and staff, affiliated agencies, local organizations, and community volunteers.

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and Lees + Associates were retained by the Municipality of West Perth to prepare the Master Plan, with guidance and assistance from a Project Committee consisting of key municipal staff. The findings and recommendations of the Master Plan are the outcome of a study process that included diligent research, effective public engagement, and a comprehensive assessment of West Perth’s recreation, parks, and trails services and facilities.

## 1.2 Key Objectives

The Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan is guided by the following objectives:

- Implement an effective and inclusive **public consultation** process to collect input from residents, visitors, and other stakeholders of the Municipality.
- Assess the Municipality's **current capacity** to effectively deliver parks and recreation facilities and programs, including an inventory review of facilities, services and programs, location and proximity to similar programs, activity levels, governance, revenue and expenses, and potential land acquisition.
- Evaluate the Municipality's readiness to meet **future needs** until the year 2034, as well as assess the impact and opportunities emerging from local and wider trends that may have an impact on the type and delivery of these services.
- Assess the role of West Perth's community groups, organizations, private sector stakeholders, and other potential partners in order to sustain a consistent level of service.
- Evaluate **staffing needs** and a suggested departmental composition, if appropriate. Review the Municipality's capacity for ongoing facility maintenance, and to implement service improvements, taking into consideration its budgetary constraints.
- Identify **recommendations** for maintaining a high level of recreation and leisure service delivery over the next ten years and the policies needed to support the Master Plan's implementation. Establish performance measures to evaluate the successful implementation of the Master Plan and its ability to continue to respond to community needs.

## 1.3 Planning Process

The primary goal of this study is to research, develop, design, and produce a community-supported Master Plan document for recreation facilities and programs, parks, and trails services. This was achieved through three project phases.

**Phase 1** involves conducting background research and public consultation and engagement to gain a thorough understanding of West Perth's current service levels and facility inventory to produce a Research and Consultation Report to inform future phases.

**Phase 2** outlines a series of strategic directions based upon public and staff/Council input, as well as background research conducted in Phase 1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the Municipality's programming and events, recreation facilities, parkland and park policy, and trail network was undertaken to evaluate the provision, distribution, gaps, and capacity to meet the needs of the current and future population. The assessments led to the recommendations contained within the Master Plan.

**Phase 3** included a multi-year strategy for implementing the Master Plan action plans and financial and cost considerations. A second stage of public engagement was held, and the final Master Plan was presented to Council.

The following schematic illustrates the interrelation of the various components of the master planning process.

**Figure 1: Master Plan Framework**



## 1.4 Methodology

This Master Plan employs a mixed-methods analytic approach to inform its findings and recommendations. The Plan utilizes both primary and secondary data in its analysis of the current service levels and future needs of West Perth’s recreation, parks, and trails programs and facilities. Primary research was conducted through a comprehensive community engagement strategy, which includes community group workshops, an online community survey, key informant interviews and focus groups, and a youth survey. This allowed for the collection of up to date, fine-grained data indicative of the Municipality’s present recreation, parks, and trails system.

Other research employed within this plan comes from a variety of sources, such as Statistics Canada, participation and trend studies, and municipal reports and initiatives. The facility, park, and trail assessments are informed by “provision targets” that represent a recommended measure of local demand, designed specifically for West Perth. The findings and recommendations within this Master Plan are supported by the key themes that emerged over the course of this process and will assist the Municipality and community in maintaining a high level of delivery of recreation, parks, and trails over the next ten years.



West Perth Pollinator Garden

## Section 2.

# Planning Context

### 2.1 Community Profile

#### Population and Growth

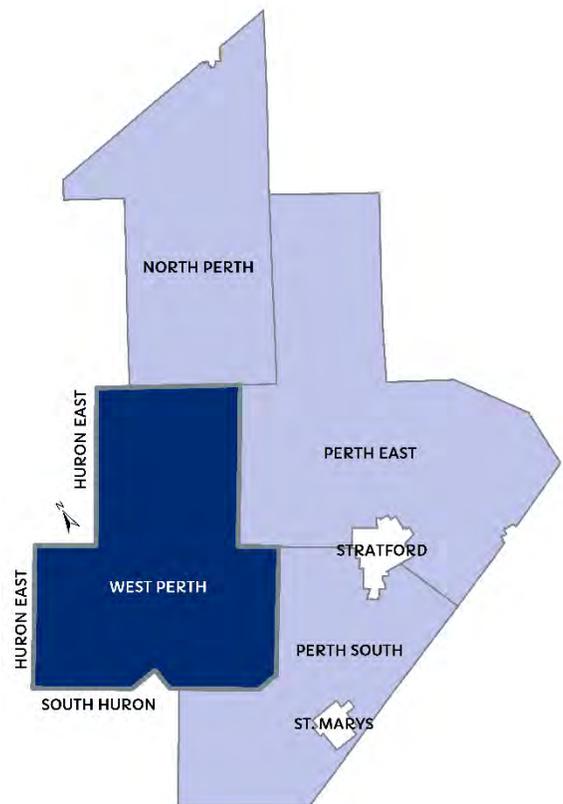
The Municipality of West Perth was amalgamated by the Townships of Logan, Hibbert, and Fullarton, and the Town of Mitchell in 1998. The Municipality features a population of approximately 9,435 residents and significant contributions from agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors.<sup>1</sup>

The Municipality is located at the western portion of Perth County in Southwestern Ontario. West Perth is approximately 25 minutes' drive from the City of Stratford, and an hour to the Kitchener/Waterloo and London areas. It is bounded by the municipalities of North Perth, Perth East, Perth South, Huron East, and South Huron.

West Perth is a mostly rural municipality with multiple settlement areas such as Brodhagen, Cromarty, Dublin, Fullarton, Monkton (split with North Perth), Russeldale, St. Columban (split with Huron East) Staffa, and the largest settlement area in Mitchell. West Perth has had a recent decrease in population in Fullarton, Hibbert, and Logan wards and an increase in Mitchell.

The Municipality boasts an extensive array of recreational amenities, parks, and trails set amidst its picturesque rural landscape, ranging from the nature trail through Mitchell from northeast to southwest, to the Fullarton Conservation Area and the West Perth Wetlands. The Municipality's distinct collection of spaces and resources offer stimulating prospects for individuals seeking to embrace a vibrant, health-conscious lifestyle.

Figure 2: Perth County Municipal Boundary Map

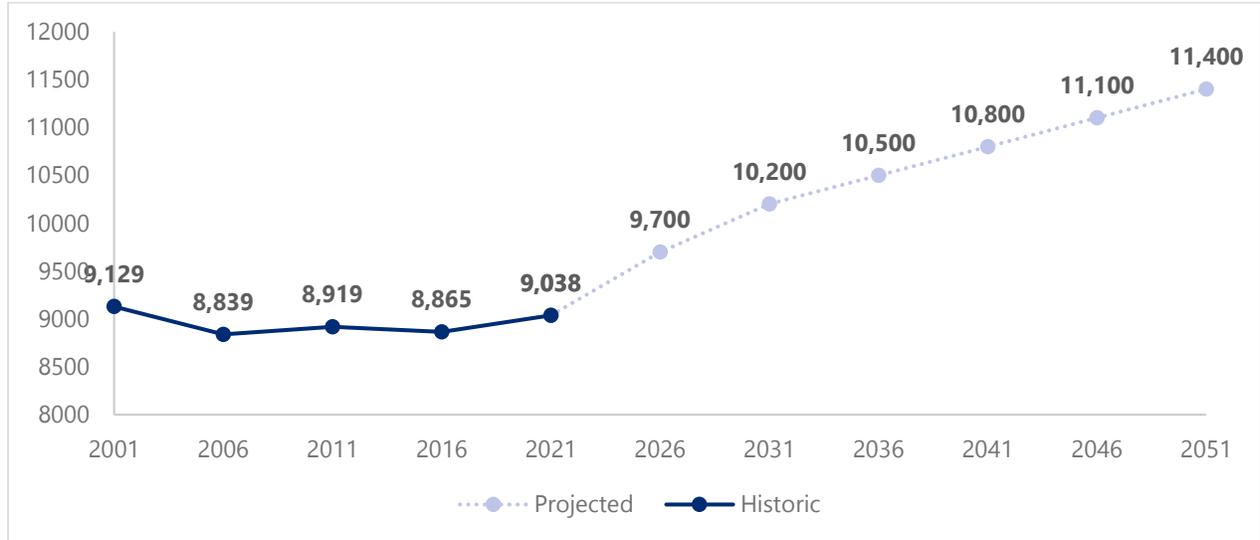


Data source: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (2023)

<sup>1</sup> 2024 population estimate is based on a straight-line interpolation built off of the 2021 Statistics Canada Census population

Between 2016 and 2021, the population in West Perth increased by 2% from 8,865 to 9,038.<sup>2</sup> The population is projected to increase to 11,400 by 2051 – 26% growth.

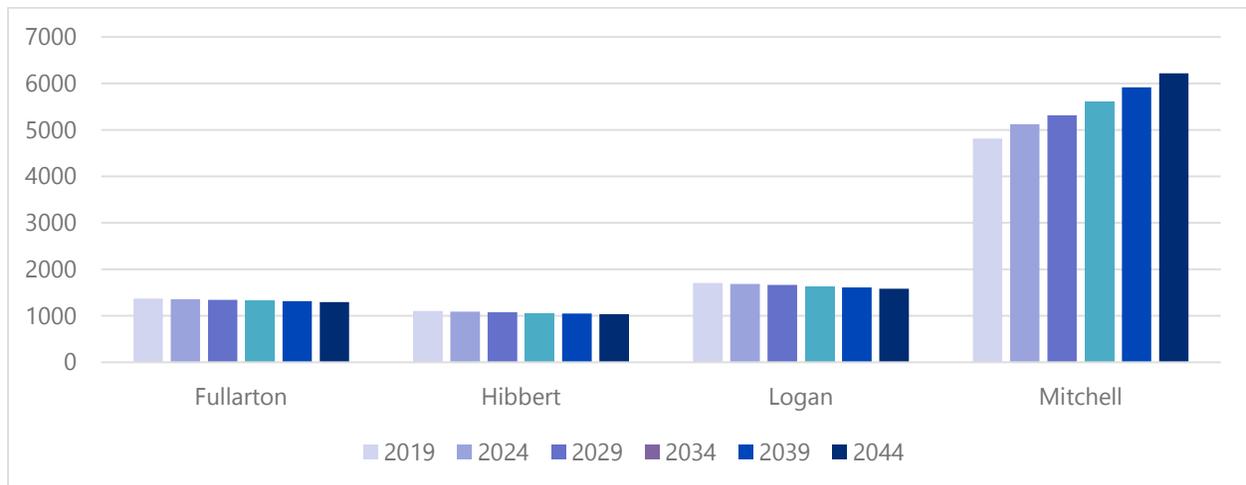
**Figure 3: Historical & Projected Population in West Perth (2001-2051)**



Sources: 2011-2021 Statistics Canada Census, Perth County 2023 Official Plan Update – Comprehensive Review

The Mitchell Ward is the largest population centre in the Municipality (55%) and will continue to be the primary location for future residential growth. There are several plans of subdivision planned for Mitchell. Mitchell is forecasted to accommodate an additional 883 residential units by 2051. Due to a declining number of persons per households, the population in rural communities is forecasted to decline slightly over time.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 4: Population Projections of West Perth Wards, 2019-2044**



Source: Municipality of West Perth Development Charges Background Study, 2019

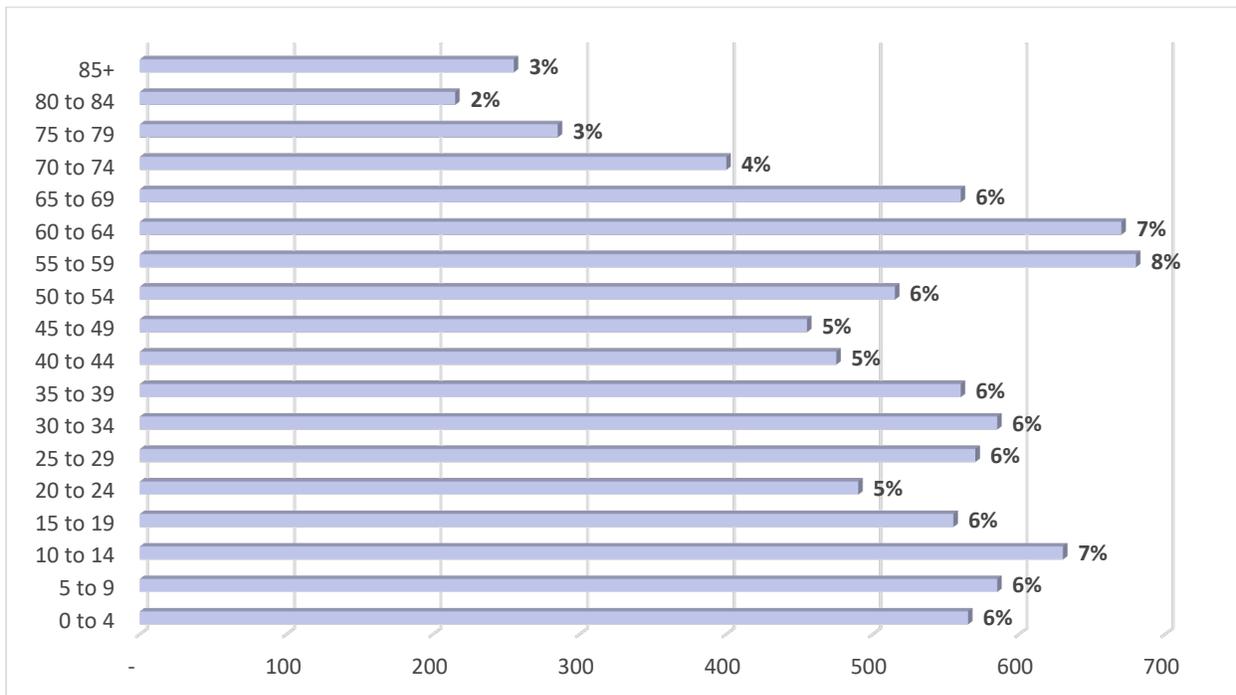
<sup>2</sup> 2021 Statistics Canada Census

<sup>3</sup> Perth County 2023 Comprehensive Review, Appendix E-11

## Age Structure

Age structure is an important factor when planning for recreation, parks, and trails. A primary focus of this Master Plan is to meet the needs of all ages in the community, while ensuring that age appropriate activities are available where necessary. West Perth’s average age (40.8 years) is slightly younger than Perth County (42.4 years) and Ontario (41.6 years) but has experienced a decline in its younger age cohorts (0-14 years) over the years.<sup>4</sup> The availability of affordable housing of various forms as well as employment opportunities will have an impact on the appeal of the community to younger and/or older residents in the future.

**Figure 5: Population Age Structure (2021), Municipality of West Perth**

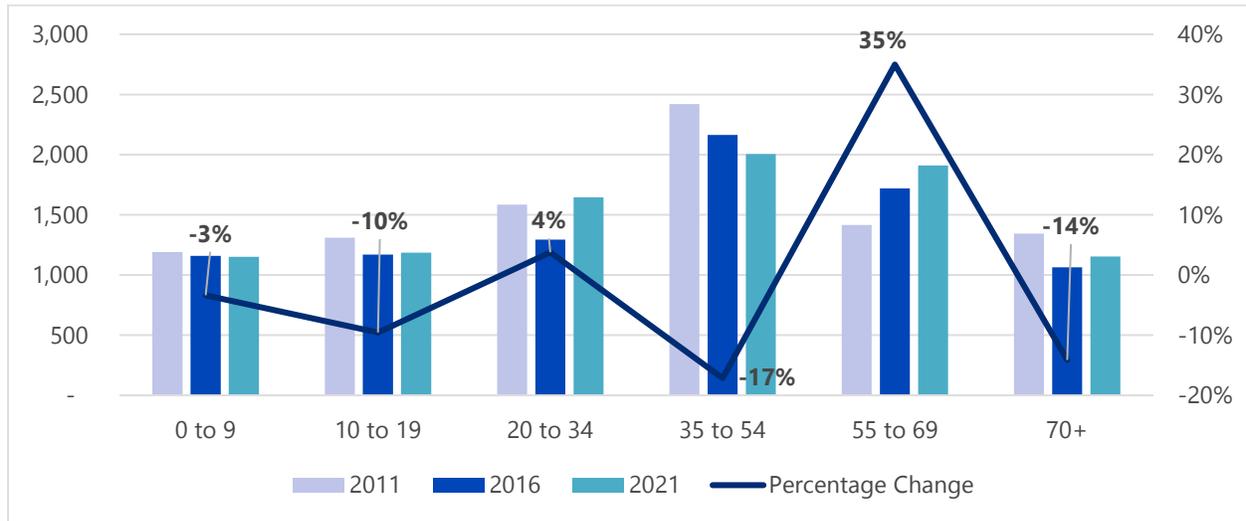


Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2021

A review of West Perth’s population composition from 2011 to 2021 reveals that the Municipality is transitioning into a period where the largest portion of its adult population will consist of adults (35 to 54) and older adults (55 to 69). However, the adult age group (34 to 54) has been decreasing since 2011 while the older adult age group (55 to 69) increasing. There is a decrease in the 0-9 and 10-19 age groups in West Perth since 2011 suggesting that the population-driven demand for recreation, parks and trails should consider the needs of all age groups when thinking about recreation amenities and programs.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2011-2021

**Figure 6: Population Change by Age Cohort, Municipality of West Perth, 2011 to 2021**



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2011 to 2021

### Other Socio-demographic Considerations

West Perth’s median household income after-tax was \$81,000 in 2021, which was higher than the County median of \$74,500.<sup>5</sup> Ample research exists which points to the positive relationship between higher income levels and active recreation participation rates.<sup>6</sup> This is due to the correlation between higher incomes and disposable incomes that can be allocated towards recreation, park, and trail activities, many of which can be costly (e.g., higher-performance sports, etc.). The income levels in West Perth suggest that residents have a higher chance of participating in the Municipality’s recreation, parks, and trail services. We also note that the Municipality is also home to many lower income levels with 7.4% of the residents being in the low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) category.

Educational attainment is an indicator commonly associated with an individual’s leisure time and physical activity rate. Higher educational attainment can translate into higher levels of leisure time activities. West Perth residents ages 15 years and older have who have obtained a high school diploma equate to 34%, while postsecondary certification (diploma or degree) is 47%. West Perth’s educational attainment is in-line with Perth County where people with high school diplomas equate to 31% and postsecondary certification is 47%. The educational attainment in the West Perth community can suggest that the recreational activity levels are likely to be in-line with the regional average.

Another key factor in recreational activity choices is ethnicity. People from more diverse backgrounds tend to favour non-traditional leisure pursuits. The following table identifies the five most common ethnic backgrounds of West Perth residents. Residents that identify as European origin are expected to have similar recreational traditions that have been popular in Canada over the past few decades. It is to be

<sup>5</sup> 2021 Statistics Canada Census

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s Position Paper titled “Everybody gets to play – Recreation without barriers”, downloadable at: <https://youthrex.com/toolkit/everybody-gets-to-play/>

noted that the preference for different recreational activities can change independently to the community's ethnicity.

**Table 1: Ethnic Origin of Population in West Perth, 2021**

Ethnicity	Persons*	%
English	2,745	30.8%
German	2,675	30.0%
Scottish	2,295	25.8%
Irish	2,150	24.1%
Canadian	1,650	18.5%

Source: 2021 Statistics Canada Census

\*Multiple responses allowed

West Perth's immigrant population is around 6% of the total population.<sup>7</sup> In comparison, Statistics Canada reported that 23% of the total Canadian population in 2021 were immigrants. Recent immigrants in West Perth equate to under 1% of the population. This indicates that West Perth has a limited number of immigrant residents, suggesting that recreational activities are likely to remain traditional, for the time being. It is to be noted that Canada's immigration policy includes welcoming 500,000 new residents every year; in 2023, nearly 30% of new immigrants that came to Canada were from India.

## 2.2 Policy Context

This study has reviewed a non-exhaustive list of relevant county and municipal policies, which collectively forms the basis for West Perth's current recreation, parks, and trails services provision framework. They include:

- West Perth Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (2020)
- West Perth Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan (2016)
- West Perth Keterson Park Master Plan
- West Perth Development Charges Background Study (2024)
- County of Perth Official Plan (2024)
- Community Safety and Well-being Plan (2021)

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<sup>7</sup> 2021 Statistics Canada Census

## West Perth Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (2020)

The Strategic Plan for the Municipality defines the future direction of the municipality (2019-2022) and guides its progress in getting there; this plan was reviewed by the 2022-26 Council and the directions reaffirmed. The strategic framework consists of a mission, vision, community and corporate values, goals, priorities, and actions.

### **Mission:**

West Perth is a municipality that balances rural and urban. We celebrate our agricultural heritage, our abundant outdoor spaces and our strong sense of community.

### **Vision:**

West Perth aspires to be a strongly-community oriented municipality where citizens are involved, businesses succeed and residents at all life stages can thrive. The municipality strives to preserve our agricultural heritage, sustain a diverse commercial sector and build an exceptional community where people are proud to belong.

### **Community Values:**

Diversity, participation, size, successful, safety, commitment, proximity, opportunity, rural roots, and affordability

### **Corporate Values:**

Fiscal responsibility, innovative, supportive, commitment, leadership, and community focus.

Some of the goals and actions that may influence this Master Plan include:

- Goal 2 – Service Effectiveness
  - Ensure effective delivery of services that make a difference in sustaining the community
  - Clarify and define services and service levels provided by the municipality
  - Proactively communicate committed services and service levels to new and existing residents
  - Explore opportunities to optimize the delivery of committed services
  - Identify and establish partnerships to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services
- Goal 3 – Community Development
  - Build trail linkages and actively promote wetlands and the trail system to tourists as well as residents
  - Establish and promote a tree-planting program that combines municipal involvement and resident participation
- Goal 4 – Volunteerism & Community Participation
  - Provide support, guidance and assistance to help sustain the viability of community groups
  - Build connections and encourage collaboration between groups and volunteers and optimal use of community facilities
  - Develop and implement a volunteer strategy to encourage and sustain a culture of volunteerism and community participation
  - Support and deliver programs that appeal to a broad range of residents, including sports, culture, arts, outdoors and active lifestyles

- Develop and sustain partnerships to support and enable the delivery of a diverse array of programs
- Develop and support events and activities throughout the municipality
- Implement and sustain a youth strategy

### West Perth Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan (2016)

Monteith Brown prepared a Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan for the Municipality of West Perth in 2016. Through research and public consultation, this Plan assesses the Municipality’s capacity for delivering parks and recreation facilities, evaluates future needs, identifies, and prioritizes improvements to aging infrastructure, and contains recommendations and policies for recreation service delivery over the next ten years.

The Plan has been pivotal in supporting several recent service enhancements and capital projects within the Municipality. A summary of the current completion status of the recommendations from the 2016 Master Plan can be found below. Of the 56 recommendations in the 2016 Master Plan, **89% have been completed or are in progress**. Full recommendations and their status can be found in **Appendix A**.

**Table 2: Report Card of 2016 Master Plan Recommendation Status**

Action (to date)	Number of Recommendations	Percent
Complete	22	39%
Ongoing / In Progress	28	50%
Incomplete	3	5%
Timeframe not reached	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>

With the grounding from this Plan, the Municipality has been able to achieve many **accomplishments**. Some key highlights include:

- Development of the Keterson Park pavilion (\$1.5 million) and looped trail
- Redevelopment of Veteran’s Park (addition of tennis/pickleball courts and raised garden beds)
- New junior ball diamond at Kinsmen Park
- Improvements to Lions Pool (\$300,000 in capital projects)
- West Perth Arena & Community Centre improvements (roofing, cladding, etc.)
- Various park improvements (diamond lighting replacement, pavilion in Lions Park, etc.)
- Reintroduction of Youth Centre and day camps
- Expanded program offerings for children, youth, adults and seniors, in collaboration with the Municipality and others, such as:
  - Indoor pickleball (at the high school, gym space, and West Perth Community Centre)
  - Senior Dances
  - Youth Cooking classes
  - Partnering with West Perth Public Library to offer programs

The three recommendations from the 2016 Master Plan that have not yet been implemented include:

- Recommendation 36 – Prepare an updated Needs Assessment / Feasibility Study for West Perth Arena & Community Centre in five to ten years’ time in order to assess the demand for a second

ice pad, other community spaces, and renewal or redevelopment options. (note: facility needs are reassessed through this master plan update).

- Recommendation 41 – Remove the Brodhagen and Dublin ball diamonds from the active inventory. Continue to maintain these diamonds to a standard that is consistent with casual play, but remove the lighting, fencing, and/or bleachers when they become unsafe. A commitment to usage and substantial fundraising would be required to improve these diamonds.
- Recommendation 48 – Work with local service clubs, stakeholders, and the community to install a permanent skate park at a location within Keterson Park in Mitchell.

### **West Perth Keterson Park Master Plan (2019)**

The Keterson Park Master Plan was created to provide an opportunity to West Perth to address specific recommendations from the Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan (2016). Recommendations 17, 30, 46, 47, and 48 from the 2016 Master Plan relate to Keterson Park. The Keterson Park Master Plan outlines recommendations based off the 2016 Master Plan. The recommendations included:

- Multi Use Pavilion (Complete)
- Accessible Path (On-going)
- All Wheels Park (Incomplete)
- Crystal Palace Access Improvements (Complete)
- Review of the Master Plan (On-going)

### **West Perth Development Charges Background Study (2024)**

The Municipality of West Perth 2024 Development Charges Background Study supports updated development charges (DC) policies for the Municipality. Notably, the Study contains development-related capital requirements for Parks and Recreation Services, including (but not limited to):

- parkland development (\$200,000 between 2024-2033);
- provision for additional indoor recreation space (\$500,000 between 2024-2026)
- outdoor rink at Keterson Park (\$115,000 in 2024)

The West Perth Development Charges By-law is anticipated to be updated in Q4 2024.

### **County of Perth Official Plan (2024)**

The Perth County Official Plan was locally adopted in October 2024. The Official Plan directs growth and development, consistent with provincial policy. Once approved by the Province, this Plan will replace the Official Plan for the Mitchell Ward (approved in 2010).

Relevant recreation objectives are outlined in section 3.9.1 (Recreation), section 4.1.2 (Tourism and Recreation), and section 4.3 (Community Services and Facilities) in the Official Plan; selected excerpts include:

“To recognize existing recreational developments and, where feasible, permit new recreational developments which will not interfere or conflict with the agricultural land use activities in the County.”

“To promote recreational design that is sensitive to and harmonious with the physical characteristics and the natural features of their respective sites.”

"To encourage the provision of those recreational activities that serve the residents of the County."

"To limit the location of new recreational activities to those lands that have lower soil capabilities for agriculture (e.g. other than Class 1, 2, and 3 lands) or to vacant lands within the settlement areas in the County."

"Encourage local municipalities to undertake the preparation of Recreation Area Master Plans to promote and facilitate recreation-based tourism opportunities. Recreation Area Master Plans should be implemented by way of amendment to the County Official Plan, and will generally provide for: i. The promotion of resource-based recreation and tourism development which will accommodate appropriate accessory uses and activities, including recreation related residential developments and limited commercial development. ii. An appropriate servicing strategy to accommodate the proposed uses and in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner."

"The provision of community infrastructure will be encouraged within larger development proposals, where practical and appropriate."

"The County will encourage local municipalities to support the co-location of community services and facilities in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation."

The relevant parks and open spaces objectives are found in section 4.4 (Parks and Open Spaces) of the Official Plan; selected excerpts include:

"The County and local municipalities will promote the provision of parks and open spaces in areas of the County that provide opportunities for active, passive and programmed community recreation and leisure, including pedestrian, cycling and trail linkages."

"The County will assist local municipalities in achieving the maximum benefit of the Planning Act with respect to parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of parkland from development."

"Local municipalities shall assess the feasibility of acquiring new parks, improving existing parks and facilities and providing public parks to meet the needs of the community, as well as to address existing park deficiencies."

"The County will encourage appropriate recreational development in parks, open spaces, along natural features and other similar areas of the County that provide opportunities for active, passive and programmed community recreation and leisure, and that contribute to the conservation and protection of open space and the natural environment."

"The County will encourage local municipalities to provide public spaces, parks and greenspaces where residents can meet, connect and congregate for social interaction. The County will encourage non-profit and private recreation development to complement public recreational opportunities, and encourage and support involvement by private recreation groups within the area."

"Parks and open spaces shall provide lands that contribute to the greening and beautification of the County via both natural and planted materials and venues, and shall create unique identifiers and focal points for the community."

"The retention and expansion of parks and open spaces is of a high priority and shall be encouraged subject to the land ownership, location, and existing conditions. Prior to acquiring new Parks, the property owner will be required to provide an Environmental Site Assessment, and

may be required to submit a Province-acknowledged Record of Site Condition (RSC) to demonstrate that the lands are suitable for use as parkland and open space.”

The relevant trail objectives are outlined in section 4.1.2 (Tourism and Recreation) and section 4.4 (Parks and Open Spaces) of the Official Plan; selected excerpts include:

“The County and local municipalities are encouraged to develop, improve and promote the provision of trails, to accommodate a variety of uses (e.g., walking/hiking, cycling, all-terrain vehicle, snowmobile, and equestrian), where appropriate on the lands within the ‘Agriculture’ designation.”

“The County will encourage local municipalities, government agencies and non-governmental authorities to seek opportunities to create linked open spaces through the integration of: i. Natural environment features and areas in public ownership; ii. Existing municipal rights-of-way; iii. Established and proposed service and utility corridors; iv. Existing park and open space lands; v. Sidewalks, trails and pathways; vi. Natural resource-based recreational opportunities; vii. Linkages provided through the draft plan of subdivision approvals process; viii. Agreements with private landowners; ix. Retention or acquisition of access easements; and x. Land acquisition.”

“The County and local municipalities will actively encourage residential, commercial and industrial developers to connect with and provide opportunities to extend the County and local municipal trail systems.”

“New development may be required to incorporate an active transportation trail, to provide pedestrian and cycling access routes between neighbourhoods, commercial areas, schools, public buildings, and major recreational facilities.”

“The County and local municipalities may work with private land owners to develop a linear park system along unused rail corridors and utility corridors.”

“The County may establish design principles to accommodate parking at strategic locations along the linked open space system.”

“The County and local municipalities shall encourage residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional developers to connect with and provide opportunities to expand the trail system.”

Policies for Active Transportation are identified in section 4.7.6.

Additionally, the Official Plan contains policies for parkland dedication (section 4.4.1):

“All local municipal councils shall require the dedication of parkland, in accordance with the Planning Act, for all development, redevelopment, or Plan of Subdivision, and will aim to secure the maximum benefit permitted under the Planning Act.”

“Parkland dedication does not apply to the creation of additional residential units nor to the creation of non-profit housing development, as defined by the Development Charges Act.”

“Where land is to be developed for residential purposes, the County and municipalities may require the conveyance of land for park purposes or the equivalent cash-in-lieu in accordance with the maximum of the following criteria or combination thereof: i. Five percent (5%) dedication of the gross area of the land proposed for development; and/or ii. Dedication at a rate of one hectare for each 600 net residential units proposed; and/or iii. Cash-in-lieu equivalent of one hectare for each 1000 net residential units proposed.”

"Where land is to be developed or redeveloped for industrial or commercial purposes, the County and municipalities may require conveyance of land for park purposes or equivalent cash-in-lieu at a rate of two percent (2%) of the gross area of the land proposed for development."

"Where land proposed for development or redevelopment is to be used for any use other than residential, industrial or commercial purposes, the County and municipalities will require conveyance of land for park purposes or equivalent cash-in-lieu at a rate of five percent (5%) of the gross area of the land proposed for development."

"The County and municipalities will only accept parkland dedication land resources under the following circumstances:

- The lands meet the park and open space classification and hierarchy standards and provision requirements of the Municipal Parks and Recreation Master Plan, where applicable;
- The land is generally flat, open, and are of a sufficient size and shape to support space for passive and active recreation purposes.
- The lands effectively support the development of park and open space-based facilities and amenities in accordance the policies of this Plan; and
- The lands are not identified as hazard lands, wetlands, significant woodlands, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related undevelopable lands."

"All land dedicated to the municipality will be conveyed in a physical condition satisfactory to the County and municipality, and will meet minimum standards in terms of drainage, grading and general condition. The lands will also be in full compliance in regards to any environmental hazards, contamination or related requirements."

"Where new development is proposed on a site, part of which has physical limitations or hazards, then such land will not necessarily be acceptable as part of the land dedication under the Planning Act."

"Municipalities may accept cash-in-lieu of the parkland dedication to be paid into a special account and used as specified in the Planning Act. The County and municipalities will consider cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication under the following circumstances: i. Where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development as public parkland to meet the intended park and open space requirements in accordance with the policies of this Plan; ii. Where the required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development; iii. The area is well served with park and open space lands and no additional parks and open spaces are required; and/or iv. Where the municipality is undertaking broader land acquisition strategies for larger parks and it is preferable to have consolidated parkland of a substantial size servicing a wide area.

"As a condition of development approval, a proponent may be required to provide a park facility design satisfactory to local municipality for any park within the development. The park facility design will have regard to all park standards and urban design policies in Section 4.8 of this Plan. However, in order to ensure that the size, configuration and orientation of the park is such that it can be programmed in an efficient manner, it may be necessary to prepare a park facilities design prior to development approval."

## Community Safety and Well-being Plan (2021-2024)

The Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB Plan) provides a guide for communication, collaboration, and coordination of initiatives and interventions that reduces risks and improves safety and well-being of Perth County residents.

Residents in Perth County who partook in the CSWB Plan engagement survey indicated their top 5 key priorities out of 9 choices. The key priorities of West Perth residents, listed in order were:

- 1 Access to health care services
- 2 Overall community security and safety
- 3 Recreational activity opportunities
- 4 Adequate and affordable housing
- 5 Food security and access

West Perth residents indicated that recreational activity opportunities are within their top five priorities. Out of the six municipalities in Perth County, West Perth rated recreational activity opportunities higher than four other municipalities.

## 2.3 Trends & Best Practices

An effective Master Plan must take into consideration current and emerging trends that could potentially impact the facility, program, and service needs of the West Perth community. In addition to socio-demographic changes that are observed within the Municipality, a review of regional and national trends in participation, facility provision, and service delivery is also necessary.

This Master Plan has reviewed recent provincial and national research and identified several broad trends and best practices in recreation, parks, and trails planning relevant to the West Perth context. The content below is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but will be used to inform the needs assessments that follow.

### Park Use Skyrocketed During the Pandemic

Communities have witnessed increased park use and demand for unstructured outdoor recreation activities within parks and trails since the COVID-19 pandemic. Parks have increasingly been used as “outdoor living rooms” across all four seasons, strengthening connections with nature and introducing many people to new activities within their neighbourhood. 82% of Canadians said that parks and outdoor spaces became more important to their mental health during COVID-19 and 70% indicated that their appreciation for parks and green spaces had increased during the pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

With this renewed interest, residents expect more from their parks in terms of amenities and quality. Public demand is especially strong for year-round washrooms in parks and natural areas. Recent surveys have found that 87% of Canadians support more investment in parks, including more places to experience

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<sup>8</sup> Park People. The Canadian City Parks Report. 2020. <https://ccpr.parkpeople.ca/2020/>

nature close to home.<sup>9</sup> Further, there continues to be great potential to animate unused or non-traditional outdoor spaces for community activities and nature-based programming.

### **Supporting Active Transportation**

Active transportation offers many personal health and wellness benefits and is a core element of complete communities. Active transportation reduces road congestion and vehicle-related greenhouse gas emissions, therefore making it environmentally friendly. During and since the pandemic, municipalities observed a surge in recreational trail use as residents participated close-to-home and sought connections with nature. Expanded use of these networks can be expected to continue – interest in bike lanes, off-road trails and cycling infrastructure, paved paths are common requests in most communities.

### **Combating High Levels of Physical Inactivity**

Physical inactivity rates remain alarmingly high, particularly among children and youth in both school and community settings. Physical inactivity has been found to be a contributor to Canada’s growing obesity problem. Among children and youth (5 to 17 years) in Canada, only 39% met the recommended 60-minutes of physical activity per day.<sup>10</sup> In 2017, a study by Statistics Canada found that nearly one-third of Canadian children and youth (age 5-17) are obese or overweight, which was an increase from 23% reported in 1979.<sup>11</sup> During the same period, almost two-thirds (64%) of adults over the age of 18 were found to be obese or overweight, which was an increase from 49% in 1979.<sup>12</sup> The downstream health care costs are significantly higher than the upfront preventative costs associated with active living.

For many, municipal parks and recreation services provide critical supports to maintain personal health and physical literacy by addressing inactivity levels, social isolation, stress, and anxiety. Access to outdoor spaces, physical literacy, and affordable, accessible leisure activities are key determinants in engaging people in active recreation. There is evidence that larger parks have a more direct impact on physical activity as they have the space to accommodate a wider variety of amenities and experiences. Proximity to parks and facilities is also correlated with higher levels of physical activity.<sup>13</sup>

### **Making Parks and Recreation Accessible for All**

Older parks and facilities were designed to the standards of the day and many lack full barrier-free accessibility, which creates challenges for some users. One in five Canadians aged 15 years and over have one or more disabilities relating to physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health.<sup>14</sup> Play and exercise are essential for one’s physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development and access to the outdoors can also be valuable in providing therapeutic relief. All new and redeveloped parks must be designed with accessibility at the forefront. For example, many communities are beginning to incorporate spaces that

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<sup>9</sup> Park People. Surfacing Solutions. 2023. <https://ccpr.parkpeople.ca/2023/>

<sup>10</sup> ParticipACTION. Rallying for Resilience: Keeping Children and Youth Active in a Changing Climate. The 2024 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Toronto: ParticipACTION; 2024.

<sup>11</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada. [Tackling obesity in Canada: Childhood obesity and excess weight rates in Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/obesity-excess-weight-rates-canadian-children.html). 2017. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/obesity-excess-weight-rates-canadian-children.html>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Urban Institute. [The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts: A Review of Literature](#). February 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disability. 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

directly benefit persons with disabilities, such as sensory gardens, quiet areas, raised garden beds (like in West Perth), and autism-friendly play areas.

In addition, all communities have a role to play in recognizing the importance of Indigenous voices in parks, recreation, and sport. Some municipalities are showcasing Indigenous history through public art and plaques in community centres and parks, along with exploring sports programs and ceremonial events that deepen our understanding of these cultures.

Ensuring that parks and recreation facilities provide attractive and comfortable experiences is also paramount to encouraging high levels of appropriate use. Multiple elements go into contributing to user safety, comfort, and convenience, such as signage, comfort amenities, lighting, seating, shade, washrooms, and parking. Park projects should be designed with user safety in mind through the application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and other contemporary design principles.

### **Park Activation and Year-Round Programming**

Municipalities across Canada are experiencing increased demand for “activation” and programming in parks, such as social gatherings, community events, art displays, movie nights and more. Viewing parks as “outdoor living rooms” helps to expand the scope of use and engages a broader range of residents and visitors, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization. Non-programmed spaces oriented to social interaction and gathering can also draw people from their homes and into the park setting.

### **Engaging the Aging Population**

Canada’s population has been getting older for many decades. In 2021, the median age in Canada was 41.6 years, an increase of four years since 2001 (37.6 years). Aging is a significant driver of increased health care costs and is also significantly influencing parks and recreation opportunities. Furthermore, people are living longer and spending more time in retirement, which means that service needs are growing as they want to stay active throughout this stage of life. An aging population may also mean demand for activities that support social connections and healthy active aging, including more daytime services. Recreational spaces create opportunities for social connection—either through intentional or casual gatherings.

In response, municipal recreation departments are offering an increased variety of older adult programming opportunities for those wishing to remain active as they age, including those seeking lifelong learning opportunities, persons managing chronic illness and disease, and those that are seeking low-impact, therapeutic, and rehabilitative programs. Recreation is a great way to meet new people and connect with friends, both through activities and volunteer opportunities. However, there can be significant variation among different segments within the older adult community based on age, abilities, lifestyles, and interests – as a result, there is no “one size fits all approach”. Developing and delivering intergenerational programming also creates social benefits for older adults and young people. Age-friendly planning has also been a prominent theme for nearly two decades now as municipalities seek ways to increase participation and access for persons of all ages and abilities.

## **Growing Concerns over Affordability**

Affordability is a concern for many households given the current challenging economic climate and the fact that participation in leisure activities is one of several spending choices for discretionary income. Income can be a significant barrier to participation in organized sports where equipment, travel and rental fees result in greater costs to the participant. For households experiencing financial barriers, the provision of subsidy programs and low-to-no-cost programming options can help reduce the financial burden of participation.

Research from 2018 found that the cost of children’s activities put a strain on the finances of a majority (55%) of Canadian parents. Further, as many as one in three (32%) Canadians used debt to fund the extracurricular activities of their children. Hockey topped the list as the most expensive extracurricular activity (an average cost of nearly \$750) and the research found that parents were increasingly less likely to enroll their children in hockey as a result. Conversely, swimming was one of the most affordable and popular after-school activities for children.<sup>15</sup>

## **Meeting the Demand for Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities**

Participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured, and self-directed participation options. This is compounded by changes in demand for prime-time access – more adults and seniors are seeking activities during the evening, a shift from traditional daytime (seniors programming) or late-evening provision (in the case of many adult sports). Participation in adult recreational activities is also growing at the same time as municipalities seek new ways to engage youth in meaningful activities.

A lack of free time is commonly identified as a barrier to participation. Activities such as organized sports, particularly at competitive levels, often require considerable time commitment for training, practices, travel and other league activities. With increasingly busy lifestyles, competing interests, and inability for people to commit to structured activities, unstructured activities can help to fill the void as many do not require advanced registration and can be self-scheduled. Many municipalities are working to provide flexible opportunities to engage in casual activities and increasing the range and frequency of drop-in programs. There is also a growing desire for innovative programming and space for unstructured activities.

## **Improving Gender Equity and Women’s Sports**

A substantially higher percentage of boys and men participate in sport compared to girls and women. Starting in late adolescence, one-in-three women leave sport (including, but not limited to, ice sports) as compared to one-in-ten boys<sup>16</sup>. This trend has worsened since the onset of the pandemic, when it was reported that 90% of female sport participants were negatively impacted (specifically young women ages 6 to 18 years old). The research suggests that young women are participating substantially less than they

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<sup>15</sup> Ipsos. [One in Three \(32%\) Families Going into Debt to Fund their Children’s Extra-Curricular Activities, Up 5 Points from Last Year](https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/back-to-school-2018). 2018. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/back-to-school-2018>

<sup>16</sup> Canadian Women & Sport. The Rally Report. 2020. <https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Canadian-Women-Sport-The-Rally-Report.pdf>

did pre-pandemic and that 25% are not committed to returning to sport after the pandemic<sup>17</sup>. Among the barriers cited, girls stated low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills and feeling unwelcomed in a sport environment.

Many municipalities and recreation providers have been instrumental in providing leadership opportunities, gender-specific sport leagues, and local engagement initiatives. To bolster participation among women, the Federal government established a goal of achieving equity in sport participation by the year 2035.

### **Concussion Awareness**

There is growing awareness and mounting evidence of the long-term health impact of concussions suffered by athletes, including those at the recreational level. Legislation regarding concussion awareness and resources came into place in 2019 through Rowan's Law, with rules mandating sport organizations to put into place Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocols to improve concussion safety. Further, the revised Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport was released in March 2024. As our understanding of the causes and effects of concussions improve, it is possible that sports known to expose players to repeated head trauma may decline in popularity. This may impact programming decisions and safeguards put into place by the Municipality as it works to promote healthy living.

### **Declining Volunteerism**

Volunteers are critical to the delivery of community-based parks and recreation activities and events. Two-fifths (41%) of all Canadians aged 15 years and older are considered active volunteers across all sectors (not just recreation and sport), giving an average of 131 hours per year in 2018. However, the number of volunteers and their commitment are declining. In 2018, Canadian volunteers devoted about 1.65 billion volunteer hours, down from 1.96 billion in 2013 – a 16% decrease in only five years.<sup>18</sup> The pandemic has further accelerated this trend, as older generations more likely to limit their volunteer activities than younger generations.

In 2022, one-quarter (27%) of Canadian adults reported volunteering in a sport activity, spending approximately 105 hours per year on average. The most important factor preventing individuals from volunteering in sport was "time or busy schedule" (58%). The primary reasons for volunteering in sport consist of contributing to the community, meeting people, and social networking. More adults volunteer in an informal capacity (especially young adults), compared to a formal capacity (which is more common amongst older adults). The role of younger volunteers is vital to the sustainability of sport, especially in light of the pandemic and its greater impact on older populations.<sup>19</sup>

### **Increasing Focus on Environmental Design and Climate Change**

The climate is warming and we are witnessing increased extreme weather events. As a result, there is an increasing need to reduce our impact on the environment to be more sustainable and resilient to climate

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<sup>17</sup> Canadian Women & Sport and E-Alliance. COVID Alert Pandemic Impact on Girls in Sport. 2021. Retrieved from: <https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/COVID-Alert-final-English-July-2021.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada. [2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating](#).

<sup>19</sup> CFLRI. [Monitoring & Tracking the Field: Volunteering in Sport](#). 2022.

change. The way in which we design and operate our parks, facilities, and services can help us meet our environmental objectives. Increasingly, municipalities are designing facilities to meet “net zero” and “carbon neutral” targets using technologies that enhance energy efficiency, reduce waste, and lower our greenhouse gas emissions. Although these enhancements often come with a higher initial capital cost, they must be balanced against improved sustainability, resiliency, and potentially longer-term operational savings.

Already thought of as “green infrastructure”, parks are being positioned to be more environmentally sustainable through reducing grass cutting and naturalization initiatives, planting of native species, tree canopy targets, and programs that educate about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms or interpretive signage). More communities are also experimenting by piloting new approaches in parks, such as bioswales, rain gardens, pollinator gardens, habitat restoration, and biodiversity initiatives. Green infrastructure strategies that include directions for parks are becoming more common and helping to ensure these practices become standard.

### **Emerging Recreation Activities**

The variety of activities and sports available today are much broader than in the past and their popularity is affected by a variety of socio-demographic and lifestyle trends. Many new recreational pursuits have emerged in the past few decades that were never contemplated in the design of older facilities and parks.

There are several emerging recreation trends regarding the use of parks, indoor and outdoor spaces, including (but not limited to):

- Residents are increasingly choosing more informal and individual recreation activities that are more convenient and affordable;
- Activities and spaces such as pickleball, outdoor skating, off-leash dog parks, sport courts, disc golf, skateboarding and BMX biking, cricket, challenge courses and adventure play, and trails are increasing in demand;
- Public fitness opportunities are in higher demand (e.g., exercise equipment and loops), particularly for seniors;
- Casual group spaces for diverse exercise and recreation experiences are in high demand (e.g., tai chi, BBQ pits, picnic spaces, etc.);
- Greater frequency of requests by private groups to schedule community events, permitting the public to be involved in programming;
- Demand for digital infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi in parks;
- Changes to drinking laws that have prompted some Ontario municipalities (e.g., Toronto, Stratford, etc.) to pilot programs to allow the consumption of alcohol in parks (with restrictions); and
- Passive recreation spaces that support casual and informal activities are equally important to active programming (e.g., community gardens, outdoor classrooms, unstructured spaces, etc.).



Mitchell Community Centre - Public Open House #1

## Section 3.

# Community Input

Engagement of the community is critical to the Master Plan. A comprehensive public engagement strategy was undertaken to solicit input on the key objectives of this Master Plan. Feedback was received from members of the public, local stakeholder groups, Municipal Council, and Municipal Staff. To date, community engagement tactics included:

- Public Open Houses (3 – 110 engaged participants)
- Community Survey (269 responses)
- Youth Survey (140 responses)
- Stakeholder Workshops and Interviews (6 sessions with 17 organizations)

The insights collected through these initiatives highlight the Municipality's strengths, challenges, needs, and opportunities as they pertain to recreation, parks, and trails services. Public engagement opportunities were promoted through the Municipality's webpage, media release, social media, posters, digital roadside sign, etc.

This section summarizes the findings gathered from above. The recommendations in this Master Plan have been informed by community input and complemented by secondary research and background document review.

### 3.1 Initial Public Open Houses

Two public input sessions were held on February 23 and 24, 2024 to introduce the Master Plan process to the West Perth community and to gain insight into the development of this Master Plan. These sessions were part of the Municipality's Registration Night event.

Approximately 85 persons engaged with the project team at the two sessions. Attendees were asked to provide their thoughts and ideas on existing parks, recreation, and trails in West Perth through discussion, written comments, and a voting station to identify priority facility needs. The feedback is summarized below.

#### **Tell us what you love about recreation, parks, and trails in West Perth.**

- Playgrounds that are accessible for younger kids
- Interested service clubs that fundraise for the community

#### **How can we improve our recreation programs and indoor facilities?**

- More senior programs (bingo, etc.)
- Add a mini stick area at the arena
- Fix the parking lot at the arena
- Organize a seniors workshop to discuss ideas
- Create larger meeting rooms for gatherings and events
- Indoor recreation amenities (fitness area, etc.)
- Improve cleanliness of change rooms and washrooms at the arena
- Rock climbing wall in Crystal Palace

- Turn the skateboard park into parking for Crystal Palace

#### **How can we improve our parks and open spaces?**

- Information and signage for kayaking at Mitchell Dam and Reservoir (e.g. where to launch, meeting points, parking, etc.)
- More support for paddling sports in West Perth
- Better management at the Fullarton Conservation Area and Ballpark (garbage, inspections, etc.)
- More on-leash signage
- More garbage bins in the Winter season at the Off-Leash Dog Park
- More naturalization in parks with educational signage
- More trees around the accessible playground at Lion's Park
- Expand the splash pad
- Create more gardens
- Add more shade in seated areas throughout West Perth parks
- Garbage cans at all parks (emptied often and all season)
- Playground in North West and South West part of Mitchell

#### **What keeps you from using trails, walking and/or cycling more often?**

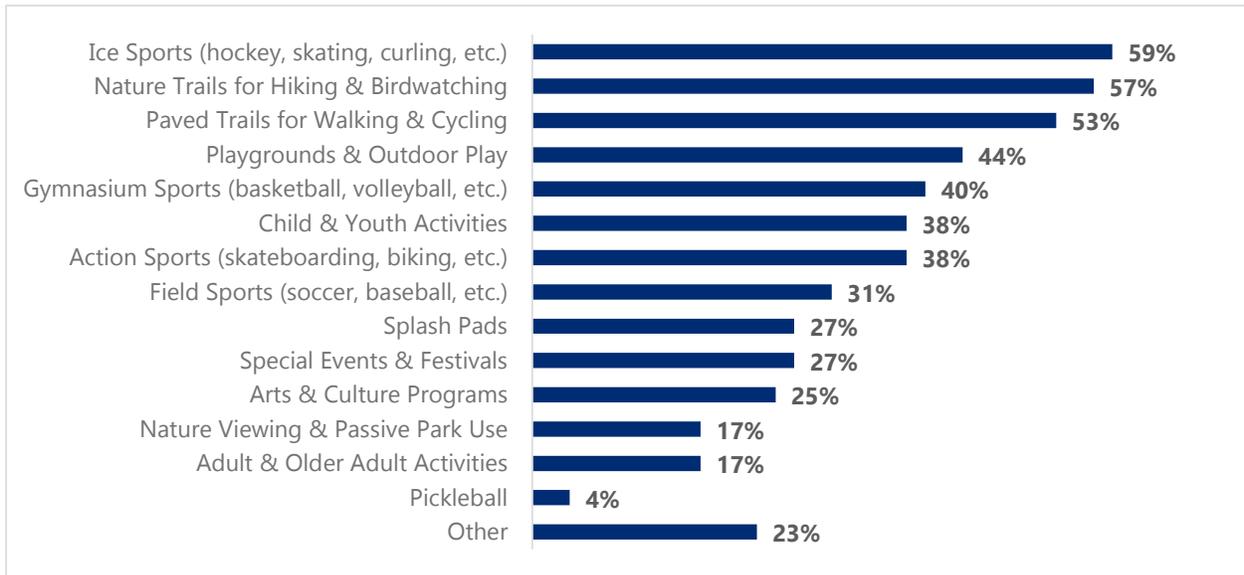
- Need more winter activities
- Not enough biking trails
- Trails/paths are not maintained in the winter
- Consider options to clean up debris from Mitchell Dam in the winter
- Suggestion for trail classification system (difficulty, surfacing, etc.)

#### **How can we improve our trails and overall connectivity (sidewalks, cycling routes, etc.)**

- Consider cleaning up the old dump in Logan and creating a recreation use
- Need more information on trails in West Perth (signage and website)
- More woodland trails with signage/markers
- Create more walking loops
- Need more access points to trails that have good connectivity
- Plow East-West Street sidewalks in the winter
- Better surfacing to decrease how slippery the paths are when wet
- Use volunteers for trail clean-up
- Implement trail lighting
- Create a better pedestrian crossing at HWY 23 and 7/8
- Add more garbage stations

At the open house attendees were asked to vote for what they would like to see more of in West Perth, the results are below. Categories were provided and residents voted on their highest priorities.

**Figure 7: Jar Voting Results at Public Open House**



From the chart above, "other" suggestions included:

- Dedicated senior swim time daily with music
- Evening adult swim (2x a week)
- Gardens
- Indoor activities
- Kayak launch at Mitchell Dam and Reservoir
- Rock climbing
- Ultimate frisbee



## 3.2 Community Survey

An online community survey was launched to collect feedback on residents' participation and use of the Municipality's recreation, parks, trails. This survey provides for an informed assessment of the Municipality's existing service levels, challenges, opportunities, and future directions.

The survey was active for nine weeks from February 18, 2024 to April 21, 2024 and was promoted through various media including the community open house, local newspaper, Municipal website, and posters available throughout municipal facilities. A total of **269 respondents** completed the survey, representing the opinions of not only these individuals but also the households to which they belong. The survey data is summarized and presented below. As not all respondents answered all questions, the summary data has been adjusted to account for non-response. We also note that the findings of the online survey are not considered statistically significant due to its self-administered, non-random nature.

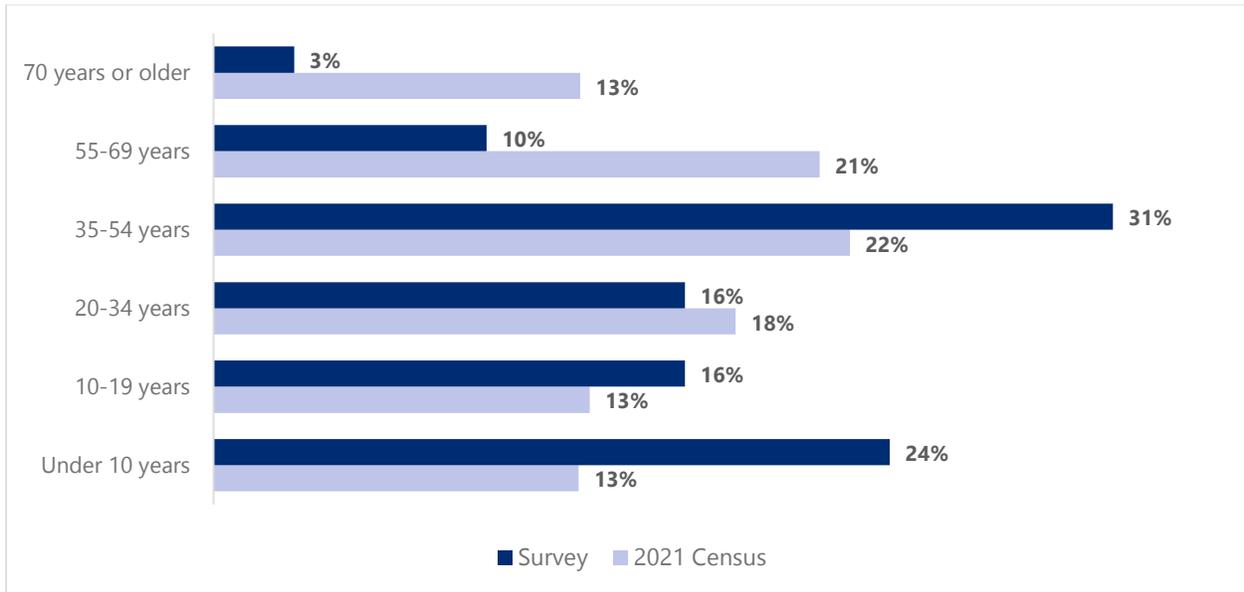
The findings of the online survey should be interpreted in conjunction with input from other public consultation initiatives, as well as data collected through background document review and site visits. The complete set of survey data is included in **Appendix B** of this document.

### Profile of Respondents

We asked residents general demographic questions to understand the respondents' socio-demographic makeup and to allow for an in-depth analysis. Key findings include:

- The average household size was 3.0 persons, slightly higher than the Municipality's average of 2.6 persons per household (2021 Statistics Canada Census).
- 96% of respondents reported living within the Municipality of West Perth with 71% living in the Mitchell Ward, 10% in Logan Ward, 9% in Fullarton Ward, and 9% in Hibbert Ward.
- Respondents who do not live in West Perth indicated that they live elsewhere in Perth County, Huron County, and/or London-Middlesex.
- As shown in the following graph, the age distribution of respondent households was different than the 2021 Statistics Canada Census. Over-represented within the survey are residents aged 35-54 years and under 10 years of age. The majority (48%) of respondents who took the survey indicated they were born between 1980 and 1989. People aged 55+ years were under-represented in the survey. This is common in surveys of this type as recreation participation rates are highest amongst younger families, which in turn means they have an interest in providing input.

**Figure 8: Including yourself, please indicate the number of people within your household that fall into the following age categories.**

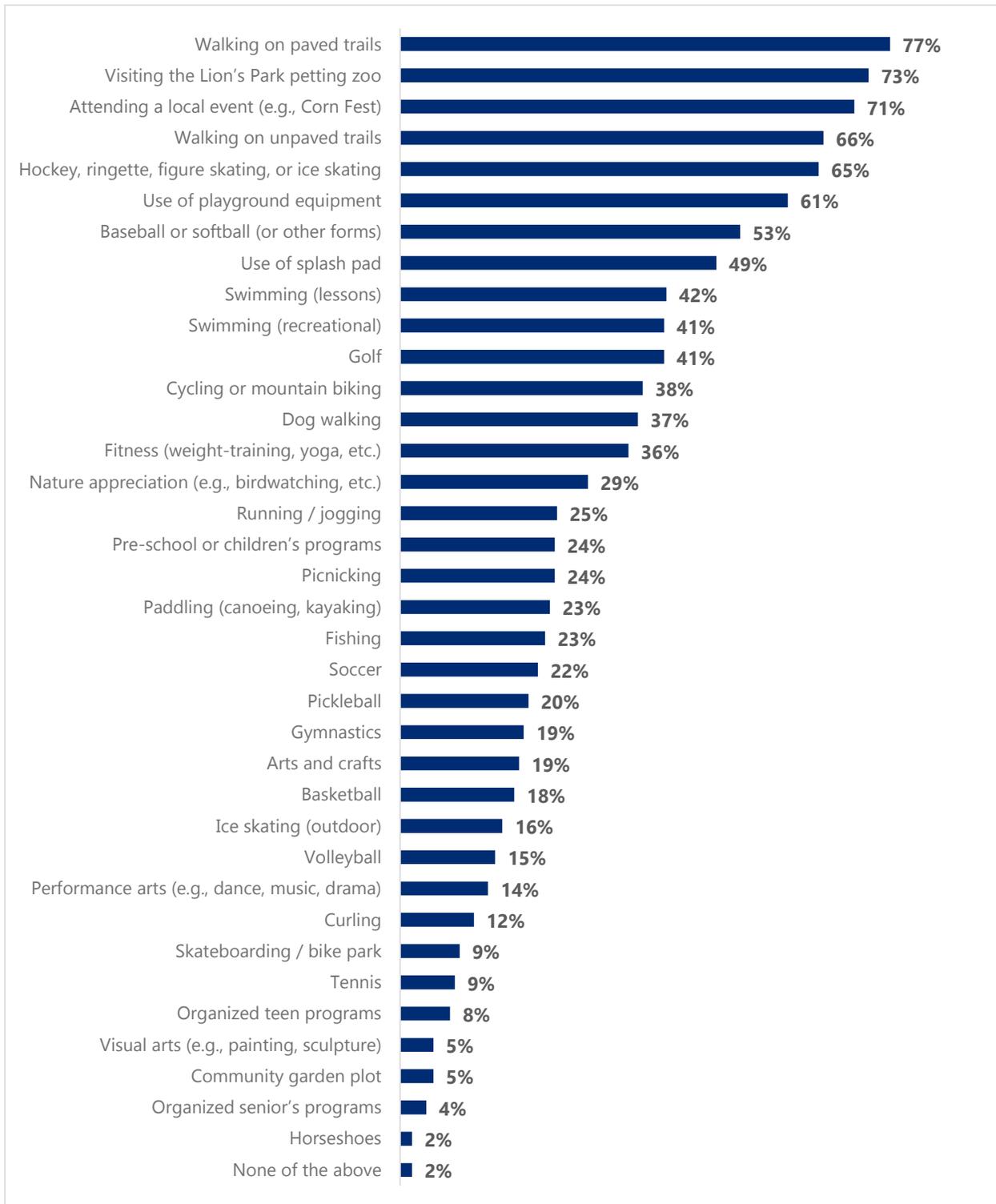


### Participation and Barriers

Respondents were asked to identify parks and recreation activities in which their household has participated in over the past 12 months. The top three activities are walking on paved trails (77%), visiting the Lion’s Park petting zoo (73%), and attending a local event (e.g., Corn Fest) (71%).

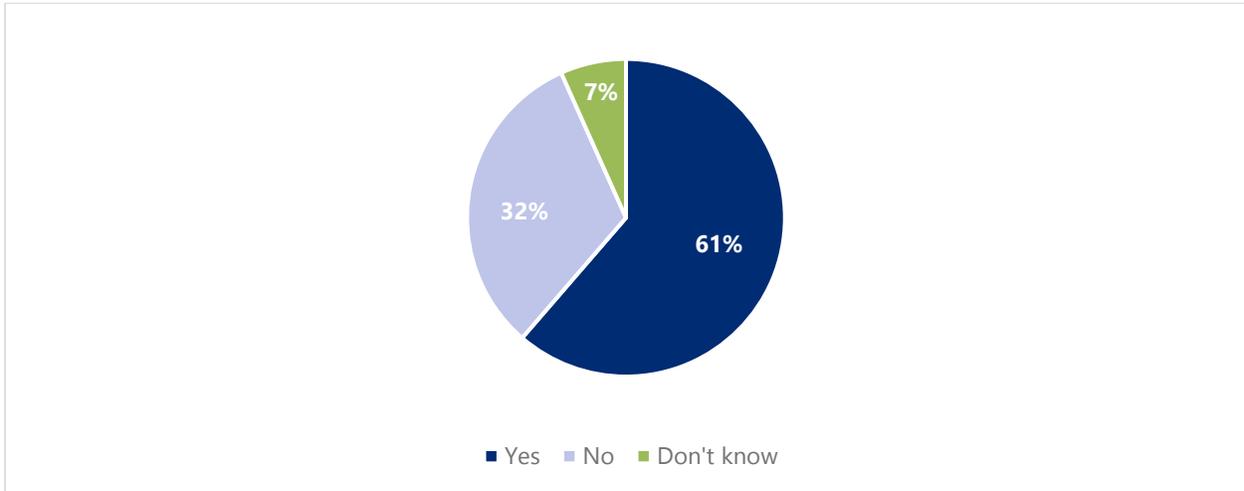
Most of the top activities are casual, self-scheduled pursuits that people of all ages and abilities can participate in. The most popular sport was hockey (and other ice sports) at 65%, followed by baseball/softball at 53%. Compared to the 2016 Master Plan survey, interest now appears to be higher in walking (especially on paved trails), the Lion’s Park petting zoo, and playing pickleball.

**Figure 9: In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in West Perth or elsewhere?**



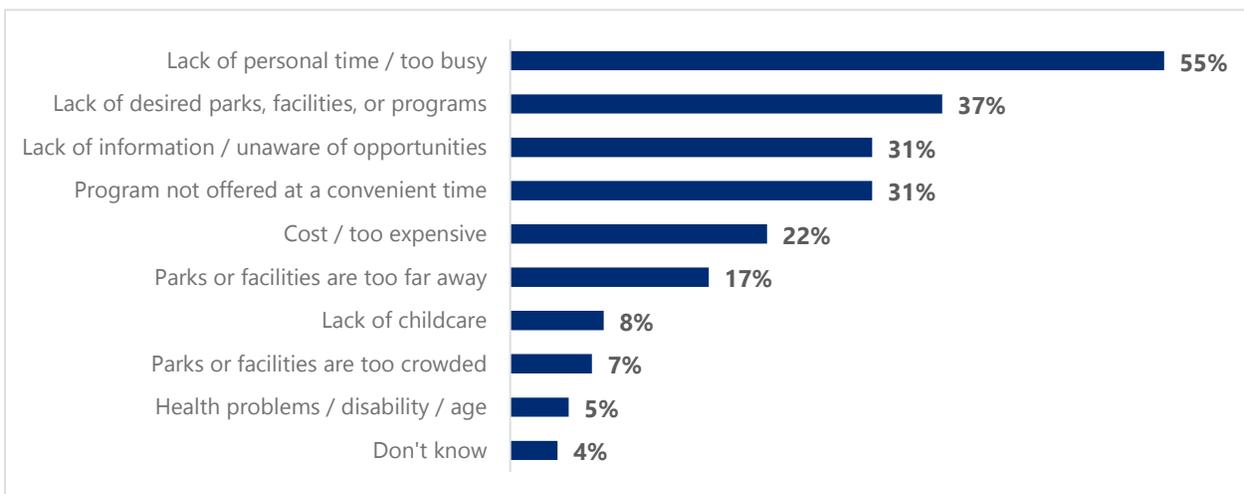
Residents were asked if they are able to participate in recreation and park activities as often as they would like. 61% answered yes, 32% no, and 7% unsure. This means that approximately one-third of households are experiencing one or more barriers to participating fully in leisure activities.

**Figure 10: Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like?**



Residents that are unable to participate as often as they would like were asked to identify barriers. The most significant barrier is lack of personal time / too busy (55%), followed by a lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs (37%). Furthermore, 31% reported a lack of information and also indicated that programs are not offered at convenient times. More detail on potential facility and program needs can be found in subsequent questions of this plan. On a positive note, the number of respondents indicating a lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs has dropped from 59% when asked through the 2016 Master Plan survey.

**Figure 11: Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like? (multiple responses permitted)**



## Program and Activity Gaps

Residents were asked if there are any recreation and parks activities that their household would like to see offered, 43% responded yes (down from 69% in the 2016 Master Plan survey), 21% no and 36% unsure. The top ten activities/facilities that residents would like to see offered are (in general order of priority):

- Indoor pool
- Indoor walking track
- Outdoor ice rink
- More hiking trails and better maintenance to existing trails
- Indoor drop-in pickleball with better courts
- Biking trails
- Volleyball/beach volleyball
- Public fitness facility (weight training)
- More walking/running paths
- More inclusive/accessible playgrounds and activities

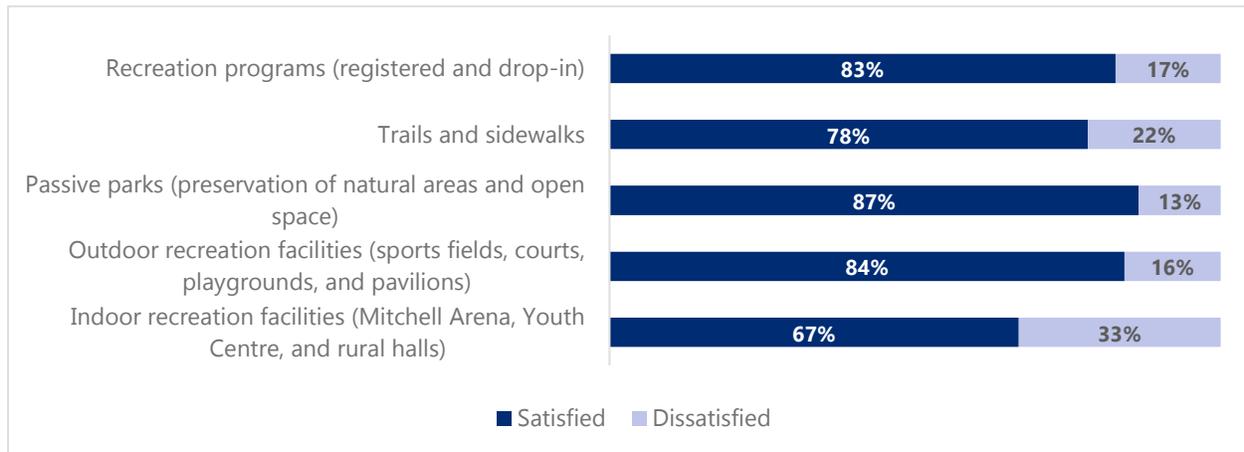
## Importance and Satisfaction

Respondents were asked their level of importance to a series of facilities, amenities, and programs. Below is the percentage of residents that think the following statements are important to their household, as well as the percentage that are satisfied with the existing amenities in West Perth.

- Outdoor recreation facilities (sports fields, courts, playgrounds, pavilions)
  - 96% - important / 4% - not important
  - 84% - satisfied / 16% - not satisfied
- Trails and sidewalks
  - 95% - important / 5% - not important
  - 78% - satisfied / 22% - not satisfied
- Indoor recreation facilities (such as arenas, youth centres, and halls)
  - 93% - important / 7% - not important
  - 67% - satisfied / 33% - not satisfied
- Passive parks (preservation of natural areas and open space)
  - 89% - important / 11% - not important
  - 87% - satisfied / 13% - not satisfied
- Recreation programs (registered and drop-in)
  - 86% - important / 14% - not important
  - 83% - satisfied / 17% - not satisfied

A comparison between levels of importance and satisfaction reveals a sizable gap between how important indoor recreation facilities are to the respondents, and how satisfied they are with those currently offered in West Perth. A smaller but still notable gap also exists for trails and sidewalks, suggesting that these amenities are not meeting residents expectations.

**Figure 12: Thinking about spaces and services that currently exist in the Municipality of West Perth, what is your level of satisfaction with the following?**



### Recreation and Park Priorities

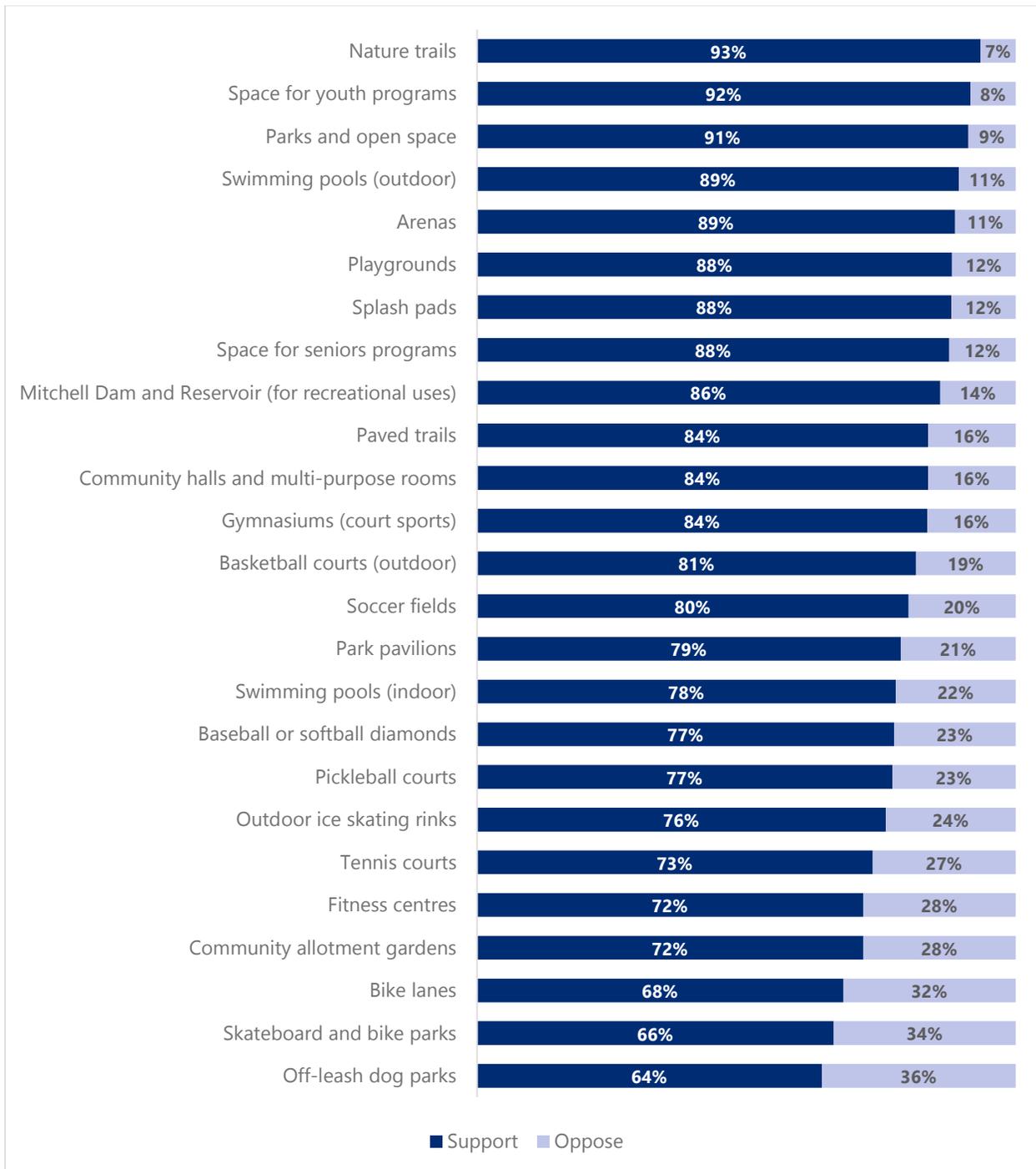
Respondents were asked to identify their priorities for additional investment in amenities and facilities. Top priorities for spending include:

- Nature trails (93%)
- Space for youth programs (92%)
- Parks and open space (91%)
- Outdoor swimming pools (89%)
- Arenas (89%)
- Playgrounds (88%)
- Splash pads (88%)
- Space for seniors programs (88%)
- Recreational uses at the Mitchell dam and reservoir (86%)

Residents' priorities have changed somewhat since the 2016 Master Plan. For example:

- those amenities that have been identified as a **higher priority today** include nature trails, paved trails, parks and open space, and outdoor basketball courts; and
- those amenities that have been identified as a **lower priority today** include indoor swimming pools, arenas, ball diamonds, and fitness centres.

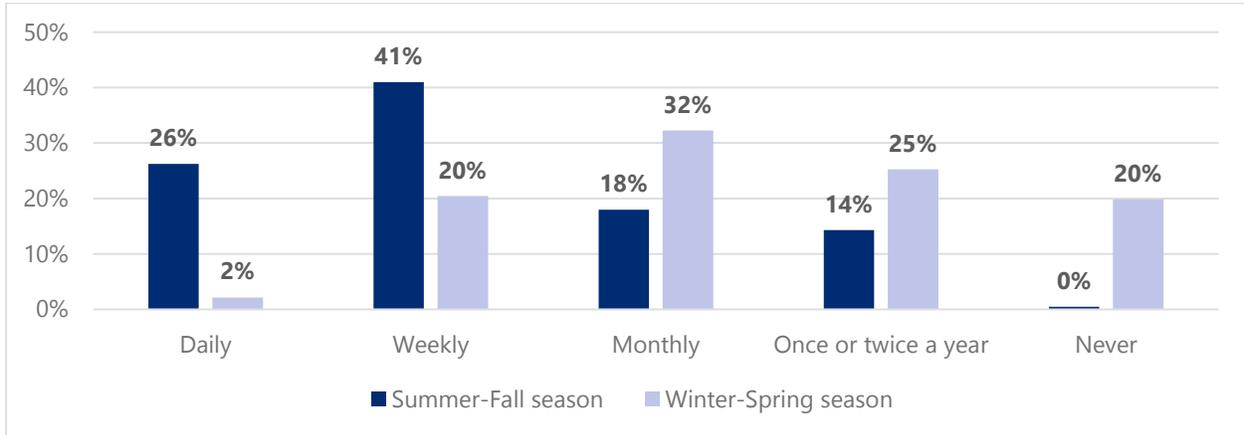
**Figure 13: To what degree do you oppose or support the Municipality and/or community spending additional public funds to improve the following types of facilities or build more facilities?**



### Trail Usage and Priorities

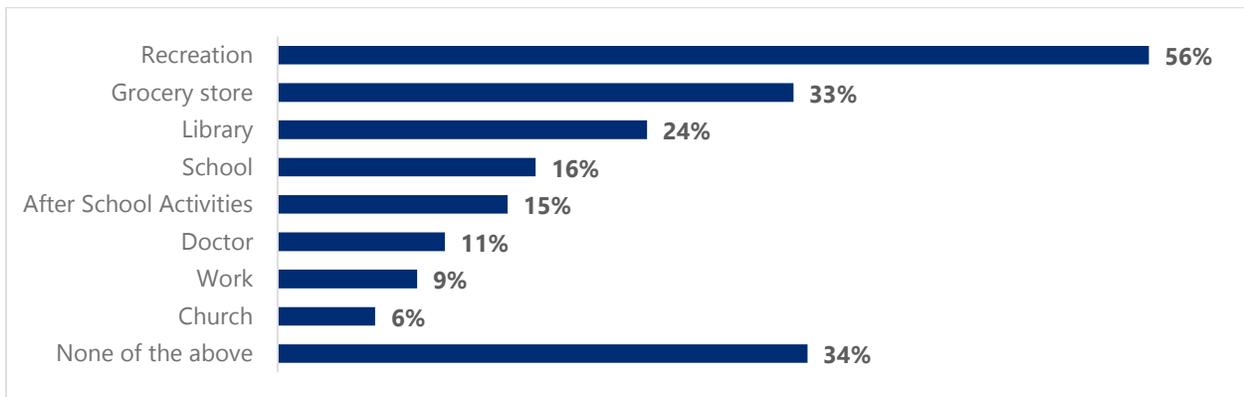
Residents were asked about their trail usage and priorities. Most residents indicated that they use West Perth’s trails weekly in the summer (41%) and monthly in the winter (32%).

**Figure 14: On average, how often do you use West Perth’s trails? (one selection per season)**



Residents were asked to indicate which services in West Perth they walk or cycle to. Most respondents walk or cycle to recreation services (56%).

**Figure 15: Do you walk or cycle to access the following day-to-day services? (multiple responses permitted)**

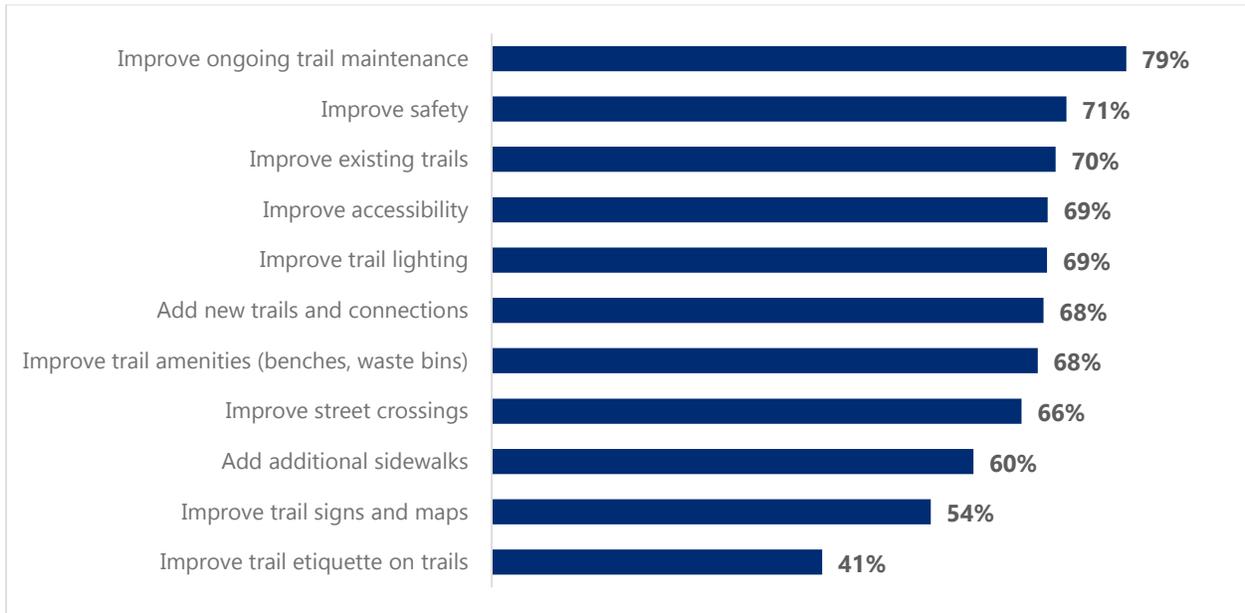


Residents were asked what keeps them from using trails, cycling, and/or walking more often. The top three answers are:

- 43% - Poor weather / Winter weather
- 37% - Lack of time
- 36% - Lack of lighting

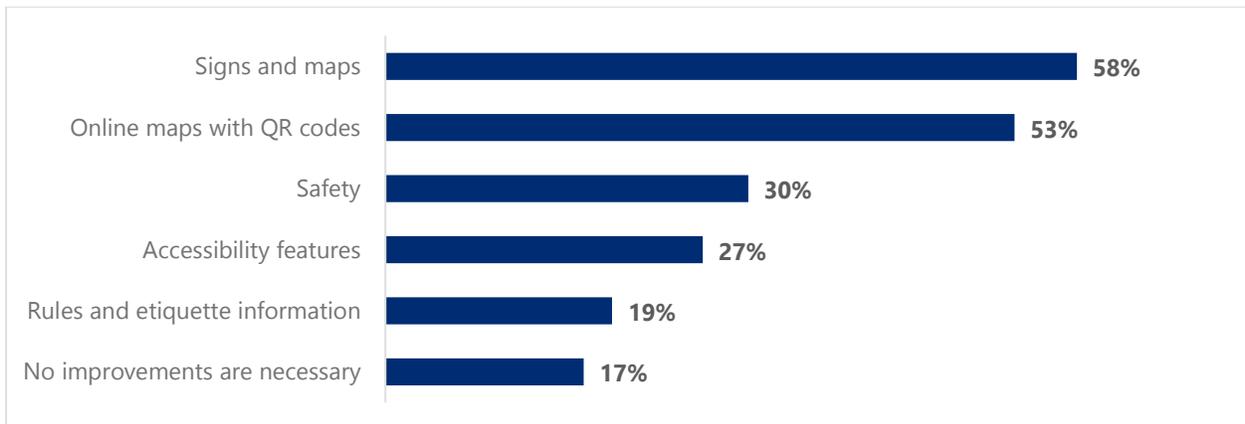
Respondents were asked their priorities for investment for local pedestrian and cycling routes. The highest priority is for improvement of ongoing trail maintenance (79%). Support was also expressed for improved safety (71%), improvement of existing trails (70%), improvement of accessibility (69%), improvement of trail lighting (69%), new trails and connections (68%), and improved trail amenities (68%).

**Figure 16: Where do you see the priorities for investment in local pedestrian and cycling routes? (multiple responses permitted)**



Residents identified how they think information about West Perth’s trail network and wayfinding can be improved. The top suggestions are to implement signs and maps throughout West Perth (58%) and to create online maps with QR codes (53%).

**Figure 17: How can information about West Perth’s trail network and wayfinding be improved? (multiple responses permitted)**



## Statements

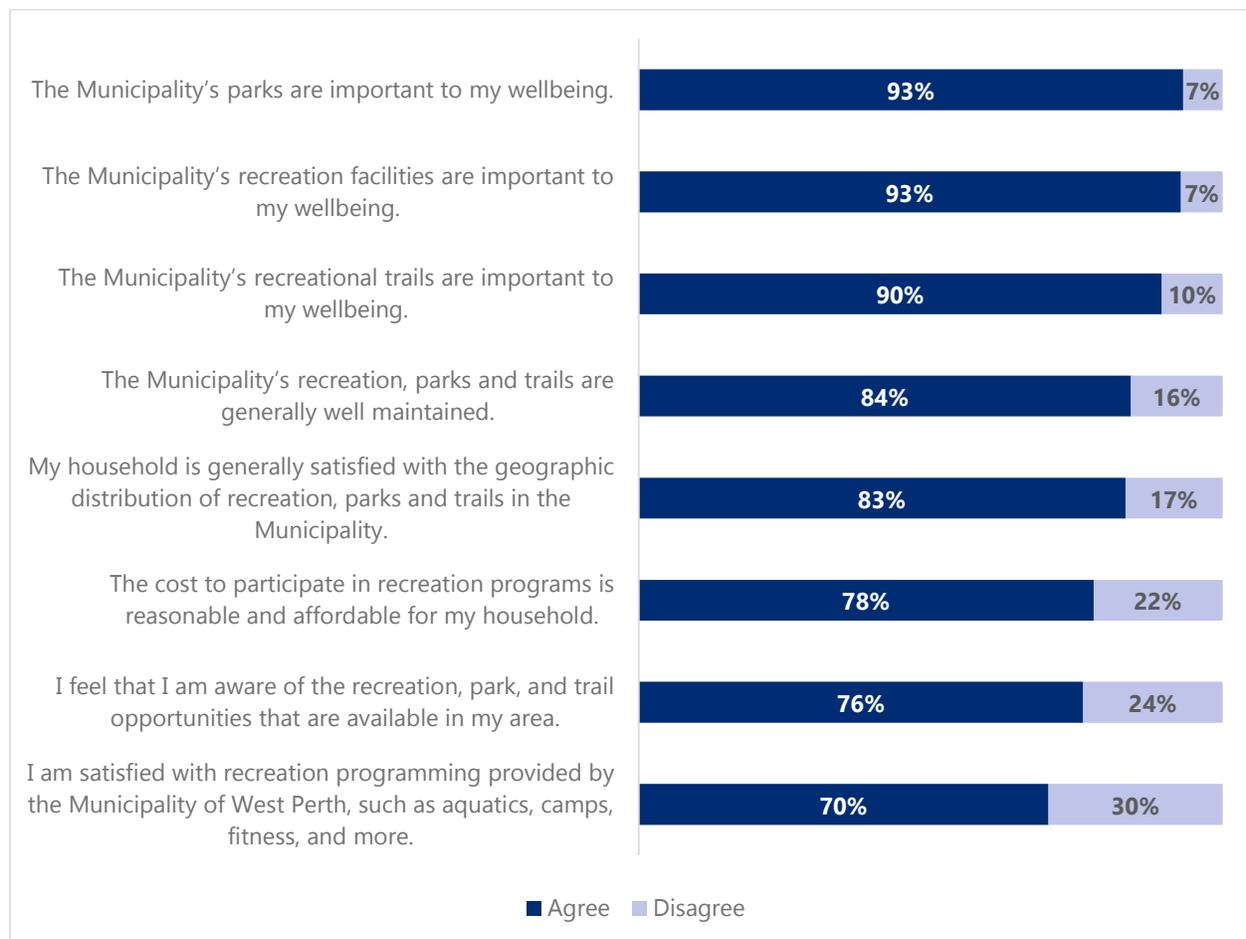
Residents were asked to state their agreement with the following statements. Agreement was strongest with the following statements:

- The Municipality's parks are important to my wellbeing. (93% agree / 7% disagree)
- The Municipality's recreation facilities are important to my wellbeing. (93% agree / 7% disagree)
- The Municipality's recreational trails are important to my wellbeing. (90% agree / 10% disagree)

While the majority agreed with the following statements, levels of disagreement were higher, suggesting that these may be areas where the Municipality could improve:

- I am satisfied with recreation programming provided by the Municipality of West Perth, such as aquatics, camps, fitness, and more. (70% agree / 30% disagree)
- I feel that I am aware of the recreation, park, and trail opportunities that are available in my area. (76% agree / 24% disagree)
- The cost to participate in recreation programs is reasonable and affordable for my household. (78% agree / 22% disagree)

**Figure 18: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**



## Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding recreation spaces, parks, outdoor spaces, and trails within West Perth. The key themes gathered from this input are as follows:

### Infrastructure needs:

- demand for improved sidewalks, street lighting, road safety measures, and signage
- concerns about existing facility conditions (arena, ball park and trails)
- requests for a public gym, indoor pool, and indoor walking track
- suggestions for enhancing accessibility (paved trails and sidewalks)

### Recreation facilities:

- requests to upgrade arena (more ice pads and a dedicated curling rink)
- desire for more diverse activities (indoor and outdoor options for all ages, not enough adult programs/activities during evenings and weekends)
- concerns about equitable access to facilities and ice time

### Maintenance and management:

- additional maintenance and upkeep of parks, trails, and recreational facilities
- suggestions for better organization, management, and coordination of recreational programs/activities
- requests for improved safety measures in public spaces
- concerns about graffiti, garbage disposal, and water quality
- preservation of green spaces and natural areas is key, while enhancing recreational opportunities

### Community engagement:

- desire for more community involvement in decision-making processes
- request for more advertising / communication about West Perth's recreational programming and facilities
- suggestions to promote local businesses and foster community connections

### Inclusivity and accessibility:

- advocate for inclusive recreational opportunities and programs for people of all ages, abilities, and interests
- concerns about accessibility barriers and safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists



### 3.3 Youth Input

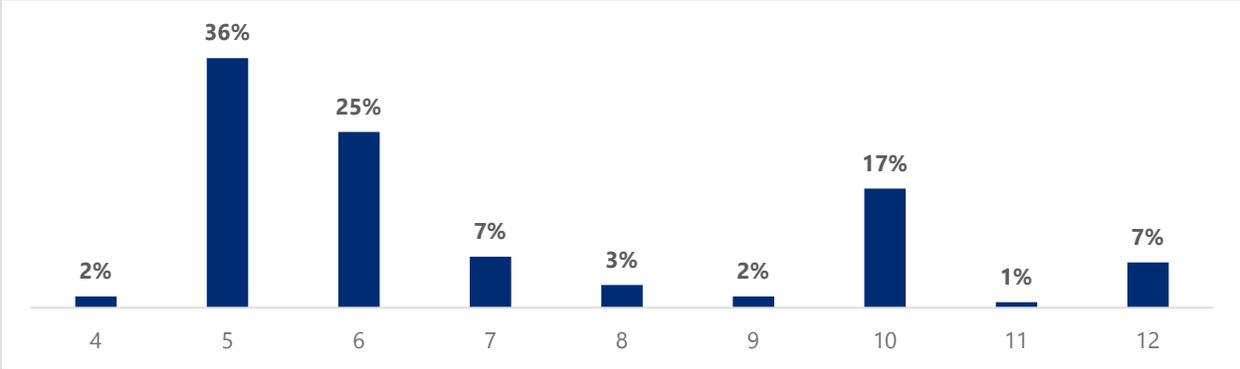
To better understand the recreation needs of West Perth youth, a questionnaire was distributed and completed by students in Grades 4 to 12. The Municipality reached out to local schools to encourage completion. As with the online community survey, the student survey offered an important opportunity to collect feedback from youth, but it is not statistically significant due to its voluntary nature.

Youth were asked about their usage of and satisfaction with a variety of recreational activities and facilities and given an opportunity to identify the types of new recreational opportunities they would like to see in their community. A total of **140 responses** were received and the findings are summarized below. Detailed data from this survey is contained in **Appendix C**.

#### Profile of Respondents

General demographic questions were asked to understand the socio-demographic makeup and to allow for an in-depth analysis. 98% of respondents indicated that they live in the Municipality of West Perth, with most youth who completed the survey being in grade 5 (35%) and grade 6 (25%).

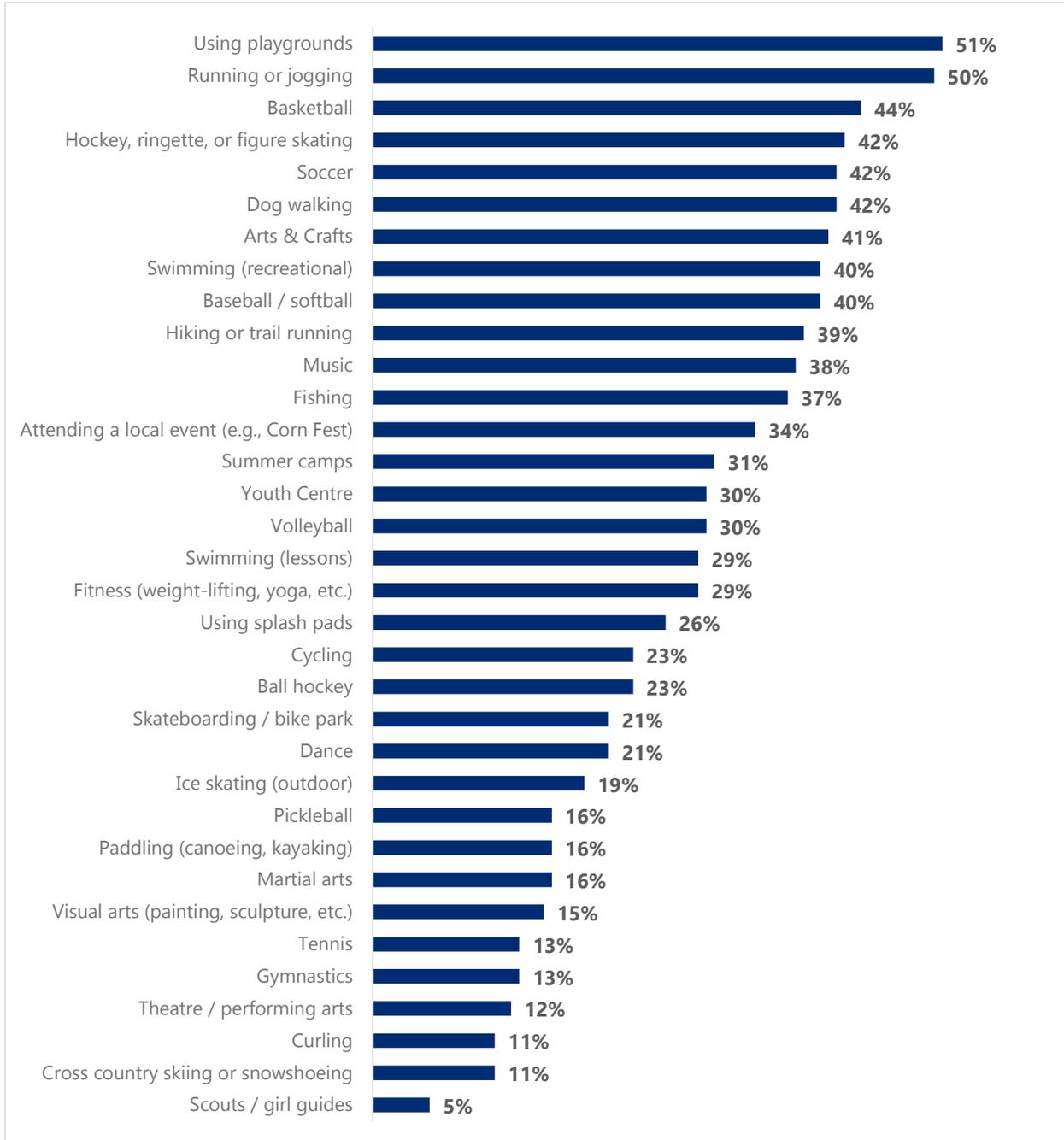
Figure 19: What grade are you in?



## Participation and Barriers

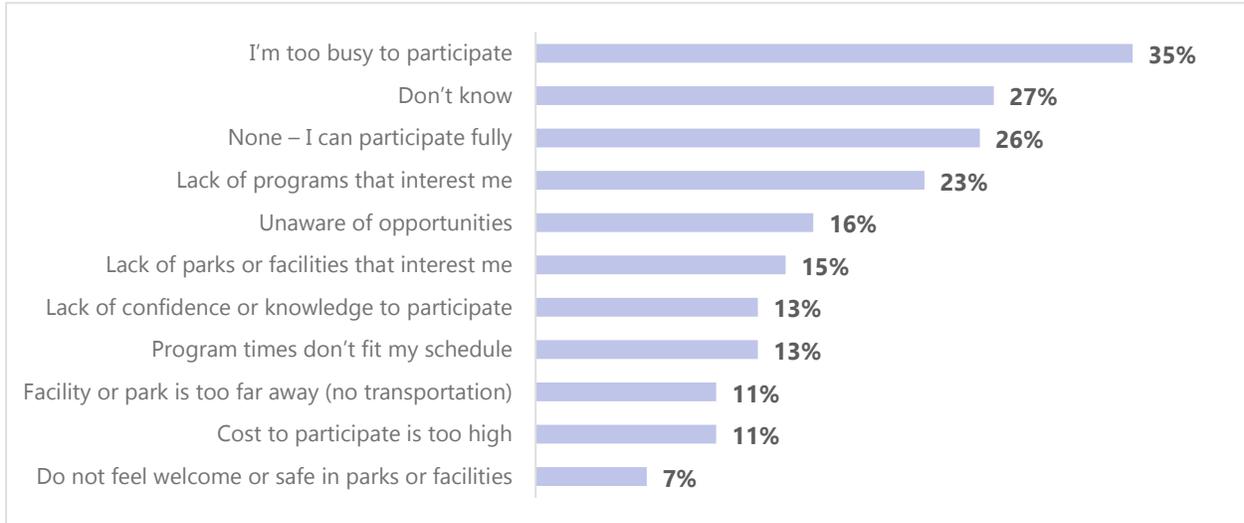
Youth were asked to identify the activities they or anyone in their household has participated in, in West Perth or elsewhere. The top six activities are using playgrounds (51%), running or jogging (50%), basketball (44%), hockey, ringette, or figure skating (42%), soccer (42%), and dog walking (42%).

**Figure 20: In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in West Perth or elsewhere? (select all that apply)**



Youth were asked why they are not able to participate in recreation, parks, and trail activities as often as they would like. 26% indicated that they could participate fully, but 35% felt that they were too busy to participate fully. Additionally, 23% indicated a lack of programs that interest them.

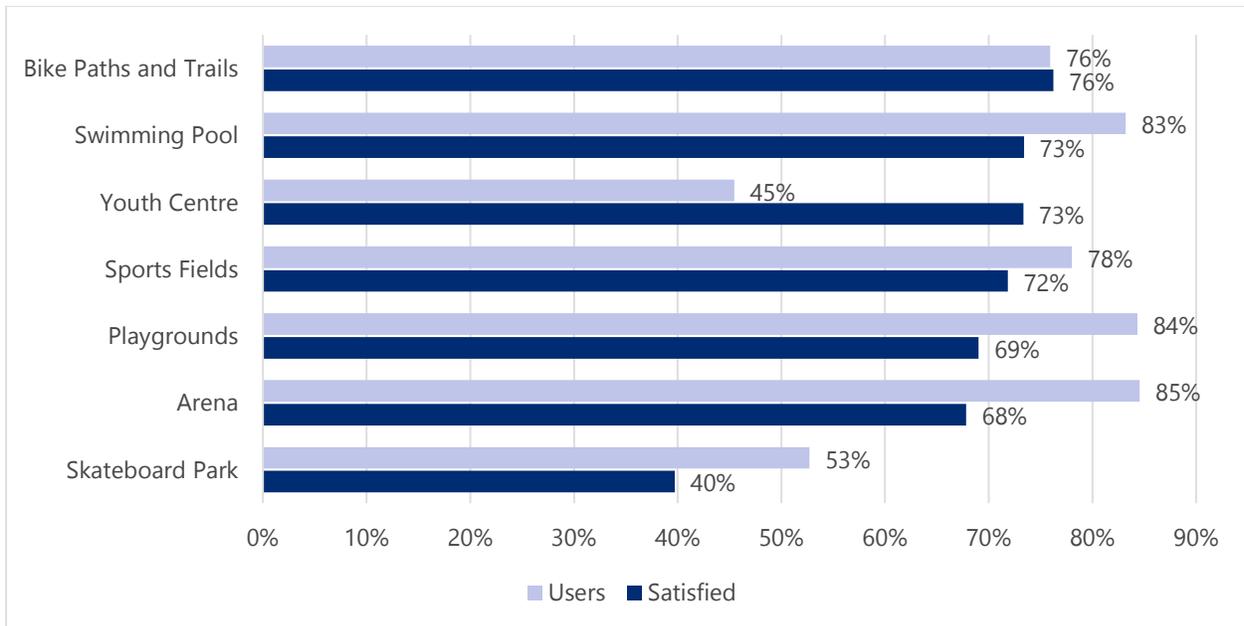
**Figure 21: What are the top reasons stopping you from participating in recreation, parks, and trail activities as often as you would like, if any?**



### Satisfaction

Overall, the youth are satisfied with parks and facilities available in West Perth, including bike paths, outdoor pool, youth centre (used by 45% of respondents), sports fields, playgrounds, and arena. Youth are least satisfied with the skateboard park (used by 53% of respondents).

**Figure 22: Thinking about the parks and facilities available in West Perth, tell us how satisfied you are with them.**



Youth were asked to provide any comments or suggestions regarding the improvement of recreation facilities, parks, and trails within West Perth, and how to make them more “youth friendly”. Key themes are summarized below.

**Table 3: Top Themes – Making West Perth more “Youth-Friendly”**

<b>Top Themes</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>
<b>Increasing Variety and Maintenance</b>	Enhancing existing facilities and maintaining them better. Suggestions to add more amenities to existing parks like playground equipment, trails, splash pads, sports fields, basketball courts, ball hockey pads and zip lines. Upgrading existing infrastructure such as the skate park and arena.
<b>Safety, Cleanliness, and Accessibility</b>	Ensuring safety through measures like maintaining trails and parks, picking up litter, preventing graffiti, and adding more garbage cans. Make facilities and recreation spaces more accessible and provide more seating options.
<b>Community Engagement and Events</b>	Holding events and activities to encourage community participation and usage of the existing facilities.
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	Providing more opportunities for youth involvement, such as clubs and programs.
<b>Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity</b>	Creating environments that cater to a diverse range of people, including 2SLGBTQIA+ acceptance, and including the youth in recreation, parks and trails decision making processes.

Youth were asked what new recreation parks and trail activities or programs they would like to see in West Perth and what time of day / week it should be offered. Key themes are summarized below.

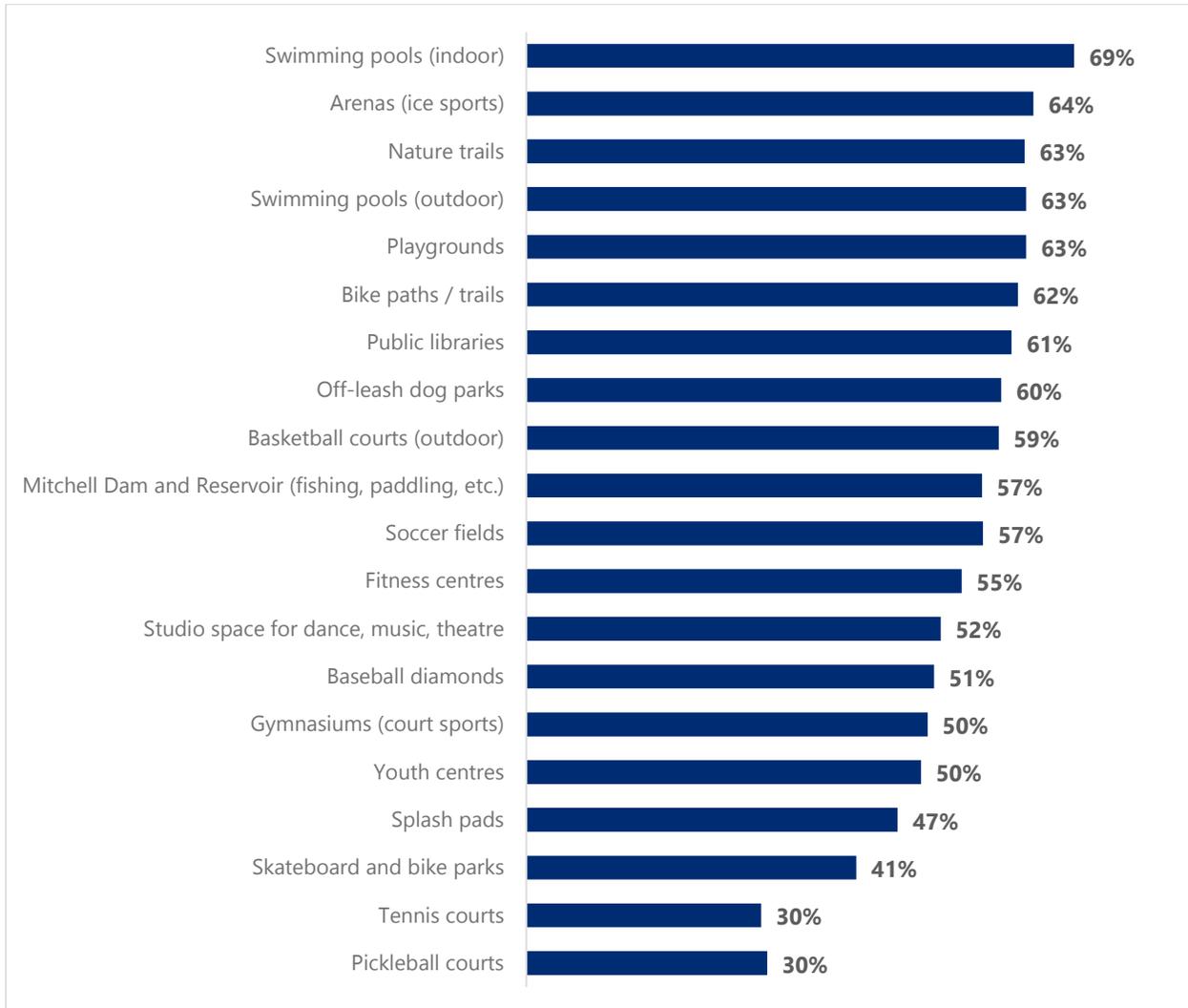
**Table 4: Top Themes – Program / Activity Requests**

<b>Top Themes</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>
<b>More Amenities and Infrastructure Upgrades</b>	Requests for amenities like basketball and tennis courts, gyms, swimming pools, skate parks, running tracks, hiking trails, and sports fields. Ideas for upgrading existing facilities like the arena, playgrounds, and trails to make them safer, cleaner, and more enjoyable for users.
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	Suggestions for programs and clubs tailored to youth interests, such as art groups, sports clubs, gaming club, outdoor activity clubs, writing and spelling club.
<b>Community Events and Programs</b>	Calls for more community events, walking groups, art activities, and organized sports camps to encourage social engagement and physical activity.
<b>Accessibility and Inclusivity</b>	Suggestions for facilities and programs that cater to people with disabilities, as well as requests for more weekends and evening options.
<b>Sport Opportunities</b>	Request for sport facilities such as soccer fields, hockey camps, ball hockey rinks, and cricket fields to support the varying interests of the community.
<b>Environmental Considerations</b>	Concerns about maintaining cleanliness in public spaces and preserving the natural environment. Requests for efforts to prevent littering by adding more garbage and recycling amenities.

Lastly, youth were asked to rate the importance of improving or providing more of various types of facilities. The top requests for improved or new facilities are for an indoor swimming pool (69%), arena (64%), nature trails (63%), outdoor swimming pool (63%), playgrounds (63%), bike paths/trails (62%), and public libraries (61%).

### Recreation and Park Priorities

**Figure 23: How would you rate the importance of West Perth improving or providing more of the following facilities?**



### 3.4 Stakeholder Input

To identify key issues and points of interest relating to recreation, park, and trail services in West Perth, a series of focus groups and stakeholder interview sessions were conducted in April/May 2024 with key stakeholders.

All groups that use municipal parks and facilities or are involved in local parks, recreation and trail services were invited to provide input. A total of 17 organizations participated, including:

- Brodhagen Community Centre
- Downtown Mitchell Business Improvement Area
- Dublin Lions Club
- Environment, Forestry and Trails Committee
- Huron Perth Public Health, including their Lived Experience Expert Panel
- Mitchell & Area Community Outreach
- Mitchell & District Agricultural Society
- Mitchell Curling
- Mitchell Lions Club
- Mitchell Minor Fastball
- Mitchell Minor Hockey
- Mitchell Optimists Club
- Mitchell Pioneer Hobby Club
- Mitchell Ringette
- Mitchell Skating
- Ritz Villa
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

The following is a high-level summary of the common themes expressed during these sessions.

- **Municipal Communication and Support.** Suggestions were made for enhancing communication between the Municipality and sport groups to help clarify scheduling and maintenance and set-up of the fields, diamonds, and arena. It was suggested that this could be facilitated through regular meetings between the community groups and the Municipality.
- **Maintenance and Safety.** Improved maintenance of the parks and trail system was requested. An example is maintenance of the Lions Park playground to allow for the safety of children and daily clean-ups at the skatepark in Keterson Park. Field users are requesting to have the fields cut more regularly. When constructing new trails, it was suggested that an adequate granular base composition be used to allow for a higher-quality surface with longevity.
- **Accessibility.** There is a desire for improved accessibility within facilities, trails, and parks. One idea was to replace the manual arena doors with automatic sensors. Improving accessibility to and in parks (paved paths, accessible parking spots, picnic tables, wheelchair pad beside benches, etc.) was also suggested. Also suggested was improved trail connectivity by filling the gaps in routes and upgrading trails in the natural areas south of Ontario Road in Mitchell.
- **Promotion of Programs.** Community and sports groups identified a desire for more municipal programs, activities, and amenities and for community clubs and opportunities to be promoted more. Suggestions were made to install an electronic sign at the Arena / Keterson Park and adding listings of amenities, programs, and service clubs in West Perth to the Municipal website.

More wayfinding signage within the community to connect people to recreational opportunities and destinations within the community.

- **Park Improvements.** The provision of benches, shade, garbage containers, bike parking, and year-round washrooms were noted as some of the most significant features that promote park use by all. Suggestions were received for the Municipality to partner with sports clubs to build a new permanent skate park, replace the posts in the Lions Park pavilion, repair the parking lot in Keterson Park, install new LED lights at Fullarton Centennial Ball Park, and install a playground at a new location in Mitchell. Sport users are hoping for more storage at Cooper Field in Kinsmen Park to allow for the equipment and tools to be stored away. One group suggested developing a formal boat launch near the dam to serve as a destination draw for the community. It was also suggested that improvements to the existing dog park might also allow for better use of the park (e.g., plant trees to help with drainage, shade shelters, drinking fountain, obstacle course, etc.).
- **Volunteerism and Fundraising.** Sport and community groups indicated challenges with attracting and retaining volunteers to help run programs and activities for the community. Groups also identified a strength of this community is the residents and their willing to support.
- **Participation.** Sport groups reported that their memberships are fluctuating. Minor ball in Mitchell is growing, while curling is slowing. Ice sport groups in West Perth have rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic. Ice groups indicated that their needs are largely being met locally (including at the Elma-Logan Arena) and did not feel that there was sufficient demand to support a second ice pad in Mitchell. However, ice users requested a review of the Seaforth Arena contract, as they are unable to rent ice there.
- **Trails.** The local conservation authority is satisfied with its continued partnership with the Municipality, including efforts to control invasive species in West Perth. The Business Improvement Area expressed an interest in discussing how trails can direct people to local businesses, engage residents in the community, and attract visitors through recreation tourism.

Opportunities and constraints related to West Perth's trail network were also discussed with the Environment, Forestry and Trails Committee, as well as site visits to review potential locations for new routes and trail improvements. Some suggestions included better wayfinding, improvement of woodlot trail and connection to the wetland trail, greater visibility of trail entry points, improvement of connectivity and addressing gaps in routes, safer crossing opportunities, trail improvements to allow for increased user safety and usage, and planning for trails within new development areas.

### 3.5 Key Themes Emerging from the Initial Public Input Phase

The public communication and engagement initiatives outlined above provide valuable insights into West Perth's current state of recreation, parks, and trails provision. The observations gathered through this process range from those pertaining to staffing and community support, to facility maintenance and service arrangements.

The key themes are summarized below but not listed in priority order. It is important to note that these suggestions are not necessarily to be taken as recommendations, but rather areas of public interest requiring further analysis.

#### 1. More Recreational Programs and Activities for All Ages.

Residents are seeking more options for recreational programs and activities for all ages and a variety of different times throughout the day. Most often heard was a desire for more evening and weekend adult activities, although all ages could benefit from expanded opportunities.

#### 2. Trail/ Path Improvements and Promotion.

A common request across all engagement tactics was for improving and maintaining trails, making pathways more accessible, and keeping them maintained in the winter. Requests were also received for informative signage, that includes trail length, route, native plantings / natural features, QR code to Municipal website, etc. There were some concerns about ATV use in the wetland trails, by putting up more signage around West Perth, users can be informed of the permitted uses.

#### 3. Strategy for Indoor Recreation Space Provision.

There is a demand for additional indoor recreation space for community programming such as pickleball. It was also recognized that the existing arena is aging, however, opinions were mixed about the need for a second ice pad. While some requests were also received for adding an indoor pool, the cost of maintaining this was identified by many to be prohibitive.

#### 4. Continued Parkland Improvements.

Community requests have been received for parkland improvements; playgrounds are one of the main reasons why residents use Municipal parks. The maintenance and additions to playgrounds as they age is critical to supporting their continued use.

#### 5. Development of New Parks and Trails to Support a Growing Population.

Requests were made to develop new parks, open space, and playgrounds within the new subdivisions in Mitchell.

#### 6. Maintaining Rural Parks and Facilities.

Community groups are supportive of greater use of all the parks and facilities in West Perth outside of the largest settlement area (Mitchell).

### 3.6 Feedback on the Draft Master Plan

An evening public open house was held on November 21, 2024 at the West Perth Municipal Office to obtain feedback on the Draft Master Plan. The open house was extensively promoted through social media, radio advertisements, posters, emails, and newspaper articles. The draft plan and a summary of recommendations were made available for two weeks prior to the session and written comments were also solicited through email.

Approximately 25 persons engaged with the project team at the open house and/or submitted written comments. Attendees were asked to provide their thoughts on what they like about the plan and if they think anything is missing from the plan. The public provided feedback through discussion and written comments. Overall, positive feedback was received on the Draft Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Key themes from the final phase of public feedback centered around:

- support for recommended facility improvements (ball diamonds, arena replacement, youth centre, multi-use space and walking track, all wheels park, proposed park in Southwest Mitchell, Greening Strategy, misting station, playground replacement, trail improvement and development plan, etc.)
- support for paddling and kayaking activities and suggestions for an accessible boat launch
- suggestions for improved accessibility of trails and facilities
- maintaining or enhancing service levels in rural communities, including volunteer support
- a desire for improved affordability of programs (e.g., Lions Pool admission fees) and additional funding for seniors programming



West Perth Wetlands

## Section 4.

# Mission, Vision & Goals

A strategic framework is essential to guiding this Master Plan and the development of West Perth’s recreation, parks and trails system. The statements are representative of the community input and background information gathered from this Master Plan process. They recognize that most residents view recreation, parks, and trails as essential services, offering significant individual and community benefits. All parties should work together to ensure that decisions related to recreation, parks, and trails directly support and/or advance the vision statement.

### Our Mission – Municipality of West Perth Community Services Department

To enhance the quality of life by providing parks and recreation opportunities in partnership with our community.

### A Vision for the Future

**A place where everyone participates.** Parks and recreation services connect our community, support healthy living, and engage people in all life stages.

To implement our mission and achieve our long-term vision, the following high-level goals have been established, including several that remain from the previous master plan. Collectively, these goals are complementary and provide a framework that informs and directs the Plan’s recommendations as well as future decision-making.

#### Participation and Social Connections

Foster broad participation and engagement through parks, spaces, activities, and events that reflect community needs.

#### Working Together

Build capacity by supporting volunteers and seeking community partners in the delivery of recreation, parks, and trails services.

#### Accessibility and Inclusion

Commit to supporting accessible recreational experiences for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities, including expanded programming and trail development.

#### Awareness and Communication

Promote local assets and opportunities and facilitate the sharing of information among service providers and the community.

#### Sustainability

Continue to maintain indoor and outdoor spaces to a high standard and renew aging facilities as necessary, with consideration of options to reduce our environmental impact.

#### Government Accountability

Provide good governance through high quality customer service, coordinated service delivery, progressive approaches, and proper fiscal management.



Dublin Lions Park

## Section 5.

# Service Delivery Assessment

The Municipality of West Perth's recreation, parks, and trails services system aims to serve the public by providing and facilitating a range of opportunities for participants of all age groups and abilities. This is achieved through the collective efforts of Municipal staff, community groups and organizations, and West Perth's indispensable volunteers.

This section contains a review of the Municipality's existing recreation, parks, and trails service delivery system, including considerations related to roles and responsibilities, staffing, programming, policy development, communications, volunteers, and partnerships.

### 5.1 Community Services Mandate

The Municipality's Community Services Department is the primary provider of parks and recreation services in West Perth. This Department's mission is to enhance the quality of life by providing parks and recreation opportunities in partnership with our community.

The Department works to facilitate and maximize community participation through the administration of programs and events (often in coordination with others) and operation and maintenance of facilities, parks, and trails. The Municipality regularly examines gaps and delivers services directly where there is no other current provider, being mindful of opportunities in nearby municipalities.

Success is achieved through: (1) the **direct provision** of programs and services by the Municipality; and (2) a **community development approach** that supports service delivery by local providers (including volunteer, non-profit, and private sector organizations). In recent years, the Department has been expanding its direct delivery role by providing new programs that have addressed the emerging needs of a growing community.

To respond to rising community interests and a growing need to ensure the sustainable delivery of services, an updated list of recommended service delivery responsibilities for the Department (initially established in the 2016 Recreation & Leisure Master Plan) is proposed:

- a) Engaging the community in meaningful participation through planning, decision-making, and service delivery;
- b) Assessing and responding to changing demographics, community issues, and emerging trends;
- c) Determining service gaps and needed improvements;
- d) Delivering programs focused on low-cost activities that promote community and individual health and wellness;
- e) Providing parks and facilities where gaps exist or the capacity is not present in the community;
- f) Building and fostering partnerships with key providers and stakeholders in the delivery of services;
- g) Playing an ongoing supportive role to community groups, volunteers, and partners;
- h) Creating awareness of municipal services, community engagement initiatives, and participation opportunities;
- i) Supporting or facilitating social activities and events that promote community interaction, vibrancy, and cohesion;

- j) Working to include all residents and advocating for under-represented individuals and groups, including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income households, etc.;
- k) Educating about and promoting the benefits of parks and recreation services (e.g., healthy living/aging, physical and mental wellness, greening and beautification initiatives, etc.);
- l) Advancing opportunities for arts, culture, and heritage (as directed by broader corporate initiatives);
- m) Developing effective and meaningful policies and procedures that enhance accountability and transparency; and
- n) Providing exceptional customer service.

In order to effectively fulfill its role in service delivery, it is recommended that the Municipality's decision-making be aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of this Master Plan. West Perth can create alignment with this strategic framework in several ways, such as:

- Formally endorsing the mission, vision, and goals at a Council level;
- Referencing them within staff reports;
- Using this strategic framework to evaluate submissions to the partnership and grant programs;
- Informing the annual budget process; and
- Embedding the mission, vision, and goals within staff training, policy development, etc.

### Recommendations – Community Services Mandate

1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the **mission, vision and goals** 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.

## 5.2 Service Level Analysis

Understanding how West Perth compares to other communities in relation to parks and recreation funding is helpful in establishing a broader context. The Province of Ontario, through Financial Information Returns submitted annually by municipalities, tracks and publishes data on municipal spending, revenue, and resources. This data can be used to illustrate the level of financial support provided to parks and recreation services/facilities amongst comparable municipalities.

Prior to examining cost, revenue, and staffing levels, it is important to consider general levels of service. At a high-level, these can be illustrated by the existence of major facilities and capital assets, as venues such as arenas and outdoor pools are substantial cost centres with significant staffing obligations. Compared to benchmark municipalities<sup>20</sup>, the Municipality of West Perth sits above average when it comes to the value of parks and recreation assets on a per capita basis – West Perth has an asset value that is **24% greater** than the comparator group, indicating that its facilities are generally newer and/or in greater supply.

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<sup>20</sup> These comparator municipalities were selected due to their similarities to West Perth, including population size, urban/rural context, and asset mix.

**Table 5: Tangible Parks and Recreation Capital Assets – Comparator Municipalities**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Major Facilities</b>	<b>Net Book Value of Tangible Capital Assets (2022)</b>	<b>Capital Asset Value Per Capita</b>
<b>Bluewater</b>	2 ice pads, 5 diamonds	\$9,476,498	\$1,257
<b>Central Huron</b>	1 ice pad, 4 diamonds, 1 soccer field, 1 outdoor pool	\$12,542,007	\$1,608
<b>Huron East</b>	2 indoor ice pads, 6 diamonds, 2 soccer fields, 3 racquet courts, 1 outdoor pool, 1 indoor pool	\$2,269,295	\$239
<b>Lucan Biddulph</b>	1 ice pad, 5 diamonds, 4 soccer field, 2 mini fields, 4 racquet courts 1 outdoor pool	\$4,403,542	\$775
<b>Mapleton</b>	1 ice pad, 8 diamonds, 13 soccer field, 3 racquet courts	\$5,087,937	\$430
<b>Norwich</b>	1 ice pad, 1 outdoor pool, 7 diamonds, 1 soccer fields, 1 tennis court	\$7,863,779	\$705
<b>Perth East</b>	1 ice pad, 5 diamonds, 2 soccer field, 1 mini field, 1 outdoor pool	\$6,600,612	\$524
<b>Shelburne</b>	1 ice pad, 1 outdoor pool, 6 diamonds, 2 soccer fields, 2 racquet courts	\$7,710,741	\$857
<b>South Huron</b>	2 ice pads, 9 diamonds, 7 soccer fields, 2 racquet courts, 1 outdoor pool	\$5,050,047	\$502
<b>Southwest Middlesex</b>	1 ice pad, 3 diamonds, 5 soccer fields, 3 mini fields, 3 racquet courts, 1 outdoor pool	\$1,930,718	\$328
<b>West Elgin</b>	1 ice pad, 1 diamond, 2 soccer fields, 7 mini fields, 1 outdoor pools, 2 racquet courts	\$6,293,830	\$1,244
<b>Group Average</b>		<b>\$6,293,546</b>	<b>\$770</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>1 ice pad (plus access to 1 ice pad in North Perth), 8 diamonds, 2 soccer fields, 2 racquet courts, 1 outdoor pool</b>	<b>\$9,175,034</b>	<b>\$1,015</b>

Schedule 51, Financial Information Returns (2022)

Major facilities sourced from municipal websites

Per Capita Values calculated using the 2022 municipal population estimates and/or 2021 Census Profile, Statistics Canada contained in the following table

As shown in the following table, the Municipality of West Perth’s average municipal tax amount (for all services) per residential household in 2022 was practically identical to the average of the comparator group (\$1,434 versus \$1,444). The population and household averages from the comparator municipalities are also very similar to that of West Perth, underscoring the comparability of the municipalities selected.

**Table 6: Municipal Population and Tax Comparison – Comparator Municipalities (2022)**

Municipality	Population (2022)	Households (2022)	Average Municipal Taxes per Household (2022)*
Bluewater	7,540	3,300	\$1,375
Central Huron	7,799	3,265	\$1,431
Huron East	9,512	3,705	\$916
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	2,115	\$1,699
Mapleton	10,839	3,245	\$1,648
Norwich	11,151	3,760	\$1,617
Perth East	12,595	4,110	\$1,114
Shelburne	8,994	3,025	\$2,270
South Huron	10,063	4,340	\$735
Southwest Middlesex	5,893	2,410	\$1,817
West Elgin	5,060	2,105	\$1,267
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>8,648</b>	<b>3,216</b>	<b>\$1,444</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,038</b>	<b>3,430</b>	<b>\$1,434</b>

\*lower-tier/residential only

\*\* 2021 Census population

Schedules 22A, Financial Information Returns (2022)

The Municipality of West Perth’s annual per capita spending on parks and recreation was **11% higher** than the average of the comparator group (\$218 versus \$196) in 2022, indicating that the Municipality funds these services at a slightly higher rate than the other municipalities.

**Table 7: Annual Spending on Parks, and Recreation (2022)**

Comparison	Annual Expenses (2022)	Per Household	Per Capita
<b>Group Average</b>	\$1,709,524	\$477	\$196
<b>West Perth</b>	\$1,973,851	\$539	\$218

Schedule 40, Financial Information Returns (2022)

The Municipality of West Perth’s annual per capita revenue associated with parks and recreation was **4% higher** than the comparator group average (\$50 versus \$48) in 2022.

**Table 8: Annual Revenue (User Fees & Service Charges) Associated with Parks and Recreation (2022)**

Comparison	Annual Revenue (2022)	Per Household	Per Capita
<b>Group Average</b>	\$416,959	\$116	\$48
<b>West Perth</b>	\$450,235	\$123	\$50

Schedule 12, Financial Information Returns (2022)

Across all comparator communities, expenses outpaced revenues, underscoring the subsidy that is afforded parks and recreation services. In 2022, the Municipality of West Perth **recovered 23% of its expenses through revenues**, which is in line with the comparator group average (24%).

In terms of staffing levels, the Municipality of West Perth’s annual per capita spending on personnel for parks and recreation was **24% higher** than the comparator group average (\$94 versus \$76) in 2022. The number of employees (full time equivalents, estimated) in West Perth was also higher than the comparator municipalities average (18 FTE versus 14 FTE), which is reflected in the Municipality’s greater asset value/inventory.

**Table 9: Salaries, Wages, and Employee Benefits for Parks, Recreation Facilities/Programs (subset of total expenses) (2022)**

Comparison	Annual Staffing Expenses (2022)	Per Household	Per Capita
Group Average	\$660,539	\$184	\$76
West Perth	\$849,841	\$232	\$94

Schedule 40, Financial Information Returns (2022)

**Table 10: Employees Parks, and Recreation Facilities/Programs (2022)**

Comparison	Full-Time	Part-Time	Seasonal	FTE (estimate)	Population per Employee
Group Average	6	7	13	14	646
West Perth	7	10	19	18	493

\*Divided by 10 municipalities as one Municipality did not report staff numbers  
Schedule 80A, Financial Information Returns (2022)

These findings consistently demonstrate that the Municipality’s parks and recreation staffing, resourcing and spending levels are comparable to, or higher than, similar municipalities. The Municipality of West Perth’s assets are performing in line with comparable cost recovery levels and the Municipality appropriately distributes spending to continue to meet the needs of their residents.

### Recommendations – Service Level Analysis

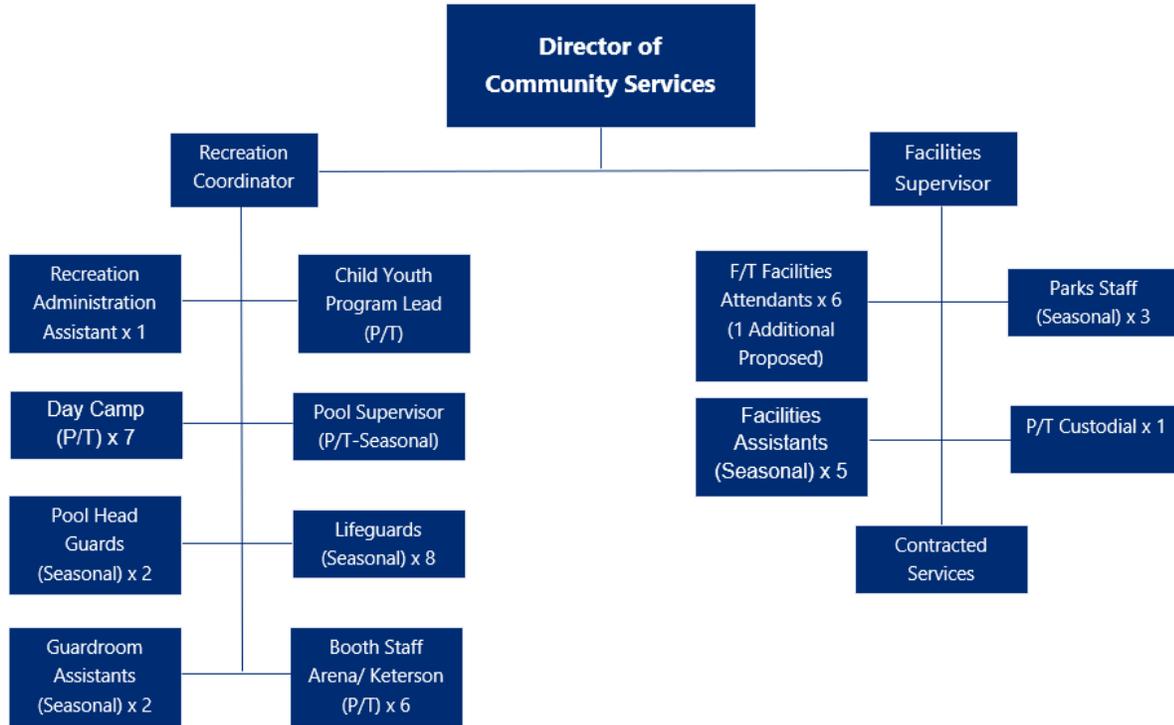
2. Regularly undertake **internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures**, with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.

## 5.3 Staffing

The Municipality’s Community Services Department is committed to providing and enabling programs and services that are responsive to community needs and are delivered effectively. The Department structure facilitates the effective and efficient deployment of resources within a transparent and accountable reporting structure. Front-line staff are a mix of full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff, reporting to their respective supervisors.

In response to a growing role in direct program delivery, organization within West Perth’s Community Services Department has evolved since the 2016 Master Plan was prepared. This includes (but is not limited to) the creation of a Director of Community Services position (which oversees the entire department), a Recreation Coordinator (which helps to animate the Municipality’s facilities through programs and activities), and the Child and Youth Program Lead (which is responsible for the youth centre and other programming that was formerly operated by the YMCA). On top of this, the Department retains responsibility for park and facility maintenance and operations (including the new Keterson Park pavilion), operation of the Lions Pool, and summer camps. Some property maintenance tasks are also addressed through the Public Works Department and contracted services.

**Figure 24: Current Community Services Department Organizational Structure**



Public and stakeholder input suggests strong levels of satisfaction with the Department and their efforts to support community activities. Staff routinely go beyond their typical duties and responsibilities to assist organizations and run programs. Staff are empowered to readily suggest improvements and there is a sense of dedication and belief in the value of their services to strengthening the health of the community.

Another consistent theme heard from the public was that of increasing expectations for the range of services and programs. Like many municipalities, the Department has been faced with challenges in attracting and retaining part-time and seasonal staff for lifeguarding and camps. Additionally, community organizations increasingly need outside assistance to continue to support their services (ranging widely from diamond maintenance to grant writing). In June 2024, the Department added one administrative support position and one facility operator to help keep pace with needs.

Going forward, it is anticipated that the Municipality may require additional program and communications and marketing staff (both part- and full-time). Summer camps are one area where there are waitlists that are at least partially impacted by staffing levels at the present time. If Council supports the provision of new facilities and/or programs in the future, staffing levels will need to increase in step with growth. Additionally, this plan includes recommendations to expand the trail system and formalize maintenance levels, which will require additional resources to inspect and maintain trails on an ongoing basis.

It is recommended that the Department review and document its levels of service and quantify the staff effort required to meet these levels of service today and into the future. One example would be the level of support provided to ball diamond maintenance and support on evenings and weekends. By documenting the desired service levels, staff can then be in a position to identify service impacts should additional rentals be requested or the inventory of ball diamonds be expanded.

## Recommendations – Staffing

3. Document the **levels of service** provided in the Community Services Department and quantify the effort and resources required to meet these levels of service today and into the future.
4. Provide **training and professional development** opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to **equity and inclusion** in the delivery of service. Continue to support the Department's staff training plan through an annual budget allocation.

## 5.4 Programming

Quality programs that are affordable and accessible are essential for fostering a healthy, active community. These activities engage residents, support skill development and active lifestyles, and build important relationships within the community. Maximizing participation is an important goal of this Master Plan and everything the Department does should support resident access to a range of leisure pursuits, encouraging individuals to try new activities while enjoying the added benefits of participation. Activities that are convenient, accessible, affordable, and relevant will be the most successful.

The Municipality – in partnership with the community (public library, minor sports, service clubs, community organizations, non-profit and private sectors, etc.) – offers a wide range of recreation and leisure programs and services to its residents. The Department has shown that it is nimble enough to respond to new trends and interest in each age group where capacity exists.

The following tables present a non-exhaustive list of programs and service providers in West Perth.

**Table 11: Recreation Programs Offered by the Municipality of West Perth (2024)**

Program	Age Group
Active Adult Fitness	Adults
Adult Soccer League*	Adults
Aqua Fit	Adults
Cooking With Class	Youth
Grow With Me	Youth
Line Dancing	All Ages
March Break Day Camp	Youth
Older Adult Dance	Older Adults
Pickleball (Drop-in & Summer League)*	Adult
Public Skating	All Ages
Public Swim	All Ages
Senior Fitness Class	Older Adults
Shuffleboard (Drop-in)	Adults
Summer Camps	Youth
Swimming Lessons	All Ages
West Perth PA Day Camps	Youth

\* Third-party provider  
May not be a complete list

**Table 12: Recreation Programs Offered at the West Perth Youth Centre (2024)**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Age Group</b>
Ask the Expert	Youth
Basketball 3 vs 3 Tournament	Youth
Dungeons & Dragons	Youth
Free Skate	Youth
Let's Get Crafty	Youth
Movie Nights	Youth
National/Themes Day Celebrations	Youth
Outdoor Family Carnival	Youth
Treats & Eats	Youth
Who's Got Game	Youth
Workshops	Youth
Youth Bonfire Night	Youth

May not be a complete list

**Table 13: Recreation Programs Offered by the West Perth Public Library (2024)**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Age Group</b>
Active Adult Fitness	Adults
Baby Time with Early ON	Up to 12 months + caregiver
Blood Pressure Clinic	All Ages
Book Banter	Adults & Teens
Crafters' Circle	Ages 12+
Creativity Cart	All Ages
Dog Man Day	Ages 7-12
Fables and Fun	Ages 0-5 + caregiver
Junior Explorers	Ages 6-10
LEGO Lounge	All Ages
Mahjong Meet up	Adults & Teens
Newcomer Services	All Ages
Noticing Nature	Ages 6-10
Partners in Employment	Adults
Seniors Book Chat	Older Adults
Service Canada in the Library	Adults
STEM Station	Ages 4-10

May not be a complete list

**Table 14: Sports Offered by Sport Organizations in West Perth (2024)**

Activity	Organization
Baseball	Mitchell Minor Baseball
Basketball (Youth)	Live Well 4 Life
Curling (Junior & Adult)	Mitchell Curling Club
Dance	West Perth Dance Club
Fastball	Fullarton Minor Fastball Mitchell Minor Fastball
Golf	Mitchell Golf Club
Gymnastics	Mitchell Gymnastics Club
Hockey	Mitchell Minor Hockey Mitchell Hawks Association
Ringette	Mitchell Ringette
Skating	Mitchell Skating Club
Soccer	Mitchell Minor Soccer St. Columban Soccer Club
Volleyball (Youth)	Live Well 4 Life

May not be a complete list

The number and range of local programs has expanded in recent years (most notably non-sport activities) and is even larger when one considers the additional opportunities that are provided within nearby municipalities (e.g., indoor swimming, fitness, specialized sports, arts and culture, etc.). The online survey found that the number of respondents indicating a lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs has decreased since the 2016 survey, suggesting that today's West Perth residents have better access to a wider variety of programs and activities. Seven out of ten (70%) are satisfied with the recreation programming provided by the Municipality and 78% indicate that the cost of programs is reasonable and affordable to them.

Despite high levels of satisfaction, the consultation program yielded requests for a range of new programs and activities, including:

- activities and events for adults (volleyball, etc.) and older adults (pickleball, bingo, etc.)
- indoor swimming
- fitness programs
- programs for youth (art groups, sports clubs, gaming club, writing and spelling club, cooking classes, etc.)
- expanded camp opportunities (all day swim camp at the outdoor pool)
- outdoor skating and other outdoor programming (walking groups, camps, etc.)

Residents indicated that most programs are accessible and affordable, and expressed an interest in more unstructured activities and events (e.g., drop-in sports, outdoor activities, artistic activities, etc.). With increasingly busy lifestyles, participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured, and self-directed participation options. Participation in adult and older adult recreational activities is also growing while municipalities seek new ways to engage youth in meaningful activities.

The 2016 Perth County Age-Friendly Communities Action Plan is supportive of expanding daytime recreation programs for older adults, as well as intergenerational recreation and social programs. The plan emphasizes designing programs and educational opportunities in cooperation with the older adult community. The current generation of older adults is growing and is expected to remain active longer in life, which may lead to growing interest in drop-in activities and value-added services. Given the growth forecasted for the Municipality's older adult population, additional attention to the social connectedness and activity levels of this age group may be required.

Efforts must also continue to be taken to keep youth engaged within the community and to support their voice and self-governing endeavours. Youth engagement and empowerment requires continued attention to provide friendly and safe environments where youth can decide what leisure opportunities interest them.

Although input received during this Master Plan supports the continued diversity of local recreational activities, opportunities to expand programs are limited by the availability of space, particularly in Mitchell. The Municipality works in partnership with others (including schools) to offer programming beyond its own facilities, but reliable access and access during certain times of the day and year is a challenge.

In making decisions to support existing or new services and programs, the Municipality should prioritize those that align with the principles of this Master Plan and the Framework for Recreation in Canada. This includes programs that:

- a) maintain or enhance the existing level of service;
- b) focus on children/youth and older adults/seniors;
- c) are affordable and accessible;
- d) incorporate physical literacy into child and youth activities;
- e) support healthy living and healthy aging;
- f) strengthen community partnerships;
- g) support unstructured and self-scheduled activities;
- h) promote the appropriate use of parks and facilities for special events;
- i) optimize the use of municipal parks and facilities; and
- j) allow people to connect with nature and be good stewards of their environment.

Some specific opportunities to achieve this mandate through programming include:

- **Focusing on children, youth, and older adults.**  
Interest is strong for activities that engage children/youth and older adults. As we recover from the pandemic, service to these age groups will be more important than ever in order to address growing issues of social isolation, physical inactivity, and mental wellness. Requests were received for greater funding for seniors programming, as well as expanded transportation options. Furthermore, a wider range of programming has been requested for children and youth as this group has more limited transportation options to access activities in larger communities. There may be opportunities to accommodate some of these needs within existing parks and facilities (if supported by partnerships and additional staff resources); however, addressing the more complete range of needs will require additional space in the Mitchell area.
- **Offering convenient, drop-in activities.**  
A lack of time is often a main barrier to participation for all ages. Activities that are convenient, accessible, affordable, and relevant – like registered drop-in activities – have proven to be popular for accommodating busy lifestyles. Across the Province and in West Perth, exercise and fitness

classes, sports such as pickleball, and activities for pre-school children and caregivers have been on the rise. The Municipality is working to expand drop-in activities but lacks the space to offer a robust suite of opportunities.

- **Expanding low-cost outdoor programming within parks.**

Communities are increasingly animating their park spaces through programming and new forms of community engagement. Some examples include (but are not limited to) fitness in the park, food trucks, and cultural events like music, concerts, and plays. Viewing parks as “outdoor living rooms” helps to broaden their scope of use and engages a wider audience, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization. By moving “indoor activities” outdoors, this also helps to address the shortage of indoor space. The new pavilion in Keterson Park offers an excellent opportunity to offer a broader range of activities in an outdoor setting.

The Department is encouraged to track registration and participation data as a way to analyze trends and identify gaps. West Perth should establish performance metrics to set a baseline for continuous improvement and illustrating the value to residents and the local economy. Useful metrics may include level of investment, participation rates, event attendance, grants leveraged, and user satisfaction (through conducting regular user surveys).

## Recommendations – Programming

5. Continue to work with the community to maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities through **recreation programming** for children, youth, and older adults in both urban and rural areas, including low to no cost activity options. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new offerings. Seek grants to help support new or expanded programs.
6. Regularly coordinate with **local service providers** to identify and assess potential recreation and sport program gaps, capacity concerns, pent-up demands, and participation rates. Continue to collaborate with other providers to promote available opportunities.
7. Continue to partner with Mitchell and Area Community Outreach and others to ensure there are **affordable programs geared to seniors** at all activity levels and opportunities for social connections. Continue to advocate for expanded transportation options for seniors.
8. Continue to support community efforts to celebrate **local arts, culture and heritage** 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.
9. Seek to expand **multi-use programming space** through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.
10. Collect **facility utilization and registration data** 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.

## 5.5 Policies & Procedures

A range of policies, procedures, by-laws, and guidelines are necessary to ensure effective, orderly, and transparent delivery of services. As the scope of municipal services grows and new issues arise, the review and enhancement of internal and external policy tools is required. The list can be broad, from customer service to facility allocation, from fees and charges to parkland dedication, from health and safety to special events, and many more. The Municipality must continue to dedicate the time and resources to monitor and respond to the changing operating and legislative environment.

Ice allocation is one specific policy identified through the consultation program as requiring a new approach. Allocation policies are tools that help to ensure fair and transparent access to priority groups. For example, some municipalities prioritize youth access during prime time and base allocation on registration levels, which allows for emerging groups to receive fair access to facilities. The Municipality does not currently have a policy specific to the allocation of ice (rentals are “grandfathered”, meaning that schedules are built off times from the previous year), but a more formal process may be required as community demand increases. As some groups have regional memberships, it will be important to review the allocation policies in surrounding communities to ensure that ice is allocated consistently and according to approved standards. Administrative procedures should also be reviewed for items such as the transfer/subletting of ice, cancellations, ice rental procedures (including last minute ice), general ice management, tournaments, school use, payment procedures, etc.

The Municipality also has a Donation Policy that governs how West Perth provides in-kind or grant supports to community groups and organizations. This program has an annual intake and has been successful at supporting various capital and operating requests over the years. The Municipality should continue to support and encourage this program, including the funding for upgrades and new initiatives. Funding requests for infrastructure renewal (e.g., playground replacement) and other core municipal responsibilities should be funded directly from the Municipality’s budget and undertaken through the normal course of work.

As the Municipality expands its programming over time, additional policies and practices may be required to ensure that customer service and quality standards are in place. There are several quality assurance programs available to recreation providers, such as HIGH FIVE, which ensures that children’s programs are age-appropriate, meet safety and supervisory needs, are enjoyable, and offer some skill mastery. This program has recently been extended to older adult programming and is a suggested requirement for any full or part time staff working with older adults and seniors.

Lastly, digital technology and data are becoming more accessible and are being leveraged by both Municipality staff to create efficiencies and inform decision-making and by residents to access recreation opportunities. From online services, virtual programming, digital screens and wayfinding, people counters, and mobile and wearable technologies, the application of technology in recreation service delivery can assist in enhancing client experiences and engaging a wider user base. Specifically, the Municipality’s recreation software and integrated online tools offer great opportunity for improved access to information and services.

## Recommendations – Policies & Procedures

11. Develop an **ice allocation policy** 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.
12. Review **user fees, policies and procedures** at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.
13. Continue to explore opportunities to leverage **data and technology** 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.).

## 5.6 Communications & Marketing

Currently, the Municipality disseminates information on parks, recreation, and trails opportunities through its website, various social media channels, posters and pamphlets, public displays, and a digital sign in Centennial Park. An events calendar is available online (promoting municipal, public library, and community programs and events), as are links to community groups serving the area. Overall marketing and communications are mostly a Departmental function, with several staff positions contributing.

While these mediums would appear effective, local organizations and sports groups identified a desire to be promoted more and one-quarter (24%) of survey respondents felt that awareness of local opportunities could be improved. Suggestions included the creation of a monthly e-newsletter, more bulletin boards, and installing an electronic sign at the West Perth Arena & Community Centre.

In years past, the Municipality worked with the local newspaper (Mitchell Advocate) to print and distribute an annual community and recreation guide; however, this has been out of print since the pandemic started. Advertising through the Advocate was effective in reaching parts of the community (including older and rural residents) that may not otherwise benefit from other communication vehicles.

To ensure that the Department's communication and marketing tactics are effective in reaching the desired audiences, the Municipality should regularly test awareness and options through surveys and participant feedback forms. Recognizing that West Perth has a sizable population of seniors, there may be value in providing an annual printed guide (for all municipal services, including parks and recreation). However, as publications such as this can quickly become outdated, opportunities to provide more real-time information should be considered (e.g., e-newsletters, digital roadside signs, social media, etc.).

Additionally, profiles of registrants through the Municipality's new recreation management software may provide a lens that can be used for more targeted marketing. The key to effective marketing is to ensure that messaging is consistent, accurate, and in formats that are accessible to as many residents as possible, including continued messaging around the benefits of participation and community involvement.

Open lines of communication with community groups and residents will also help to ensure that issues, ideas, and concerns are addressed. It is recommended that the Department hold annual open forums to discuss initiatives and topics of broad appeal within the parks, recreation, and trails sector.

## Recommendations – Communications & Marketing

14. Continue to utilize and enhance a **variety of communication tools** 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).
15. Host **annual forums** with community organizations to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks, recreation, and trails services.

## 5.7 Volunteers & Partnerships

Volunteers are critical to the delivery of community-based activities and events; however, there is evidence that the number of volunteers and their commitment are declining.<sup>21</sup> In cases where volunteer involvement diminishes – a concern expressed by several groups in West Perth – the community will look to the Municipality to take on many of the responsibilities, ultimately leading to increased costs and the rationalization of service.

West Perth values the contributions of its volunteers and supports their efforts, highlighted through recent volunteer recognition events and community registration days. To build on these successes, the Municipality's previous Strategic Plan recommended that West Perth develop a volunteer strategy that would help encourage and sustain a culture of volunteerism and community participation.

Some additional strategies that the Municipality may consider include implementing an online system to match volunteers with opportunities, expanding inter-generational programs (e.g., youths volunteering with seniors), creating a leader-in-training program for youth. Engaging younger volunteers must continue to be a priority as it not only helps to build skills, but can also lead to future volunteer and employment opportunities within the sector.

West Perth works also works hand in hand with community partners to provide the highest level of service to the public, while maximizing resources. This includes a wide variety of formal and informal arrangements with local community groups, non-profit organizations, and volunteers for the use, operation, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. For example, the Brodhagen Hall is operated by the Brodhagen Chamber of Commerce with limited municipal oversight, while the Dublin Community Centre is booked and maintained by the Municipality (with the Dublin and District Lion's Club serving as the primary user); formal municipal agreements are in place for both of these facilities.

On occasion, the terms and implementation of certain arrangements may become outdated or insufficient to address emerging needs. These scenarios can leave services vulnerable to disruptions caused by changes in personnel or unforeseen circumstances. This is particularly relevant given the number of stakeholder groups that are anticipating changes or retirements within their memberships. For the purpose of continuity over the next decade and beyond, the formalization and updating of arrangements

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<sup>21</sup> CFLRI. [Monitoring & Tracking the Field: Volunteering in Sport](#). 2022.

(including annual reporting requirements) between the Municipality and community groups and stakeholders will be important.

From time to time, the Municipality may consider various arrangements with the private sector, non-profit sector, or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services to achieve the desired community and municipal benefits. The goal is to maximize the community's assets and increase service levels while sharing an appropriate balance of costs and risks. Relationships with outside groups may be considered when:

- the Municipality does not have capacity or budget for direct program delivery or facility management;
- there is an established provider/partner already working with the Municipality;
- the provider fills or augments service gaps that are a priority to the Municipality; and/or
- the provider is the preferred/specialist for an identified gap in program delivery.

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with the Municipality's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships provides a net benefit to both organizations and reduces costs to the municipality. Where possible, West Perth is encouraged to work with community partners and in coordination with other public entities to implement recommendations contained in this Master Plan that would benefit from shared roles, responsibilities, and resources.

### **Partnership Criteria**

To assist the Municipality in evaluating current and future partnerships, including proposals arising from the private sector or involving new levels of service, the following criteria may be considered:

- The outcome of the partnership should be aligned with municipal values, mandate, and priorities.
- There should be an articulated need for the proposed program or service in the community.
- The financial and liability risks to the Municipality should be shared or reduced, with a minimum fundraising requirement from the proponent.
- The partner should be equipped and qualified to co-deliver the service through identified efficiencies, with the ability to reach an identified segment of the population.
- The quality of the program or service provided through the partnership should meet municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation.
- Unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals should be dealt with transparently and through a competitive process as identified in a procurement process.
- Accountabilities and responsibilities should be clearly defined and complied with.
- Annual reporting requirements should capture participation numbers, expenditure reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with departmental objectives.

## Recommendations – Volunteers & Partnerships

16. Continue to actively **support volunteers and volunteer-led community organizations** 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.
17. Continue to **seek and support community partnerships** 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.
18. Complete a **risk/liability review of existing partnerships** 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.
19. Continue to engage **adjacent municipalities** on community service initiatives that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for West Perth residents.
20. Continue efforts to maximize **community access to local school facilities**.



WEST PERTH  
MITCHELL ARENA

COMMUNITY CENTRE  
←

BY PERMIT ONLY

Mitchell Arena

## Section 6.

# Recreation Facilities Assessment

This section evaluates the current supply of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in West Perth using a combination of measurable provision targets, trends, and community input.

As a point of reference, the following table contains a summary of existing indoor facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Municipality of West Perth, sometimes in partnership with others. Facility and park locations are shown on mapping in **Appendix D**. Facilities that are not typically provided by the municipal sector and for which there is currently no business case to provide (e.g., golf courses, campgrounds, conservation lands, etc.) are excluded from this list.

**Table 15: Existing Municipal Recreation Facility Listing**

Park & Facility	Number	Location
<b>Arenas</b>	1	West Perth Arena & Community Centre; Plus partial access to one pad in North Perth
<b>Community Centres and Halls</b>	3	West Perth Arena & Community Centre, Brodhagen Hall & Community Centre, Dublin Community Centre
<b>Youth Centres</b>	1	West Perth Youth Centre
<b>Pavilions</b>	5	Cromarty Ball Park, Keterson Park, Lions Park (2)
<b>Ball Diamonds</b>	8 lit 3 unlit	Lit: Brodhagen Park, Cromarty Ball Park, Dublin Lions Park, Fullarton Centennial Ball Park, Keterson Park (3), Kinsmen Park Unlit: Fullarton Centennial Ball Park, Keterson Park, Kinsmen Park
<b>Soccer Fields</b>	2	Kinsmen Park (2 – unlit)
<b>Playgrounds</b>	8 locations	Brodhagen Park, Cromarty Ball Park, Dublin Lions Park, Fullarton Centennial Ball Park, Keterson Park, Lions Park (2), Rotary Park
<b>Outdoor Pools</b>	1	Lions Park (2 tanks)
<b>Splash Pads</b>	1	Lions Park
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	2	Veteran’s Park (shared with pickleball)
<b>Pickleball Courts</b>	4	Veteran’s Park (shared with tennis)
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	0	None (but can be played under Keterson Park pavilion)
<b>All-wheels Parks</b>	1	Keterson Park
<b>Off-leash Dog Parks</b>	1	Kinsmen Park
<b>Community Gardens</b>	1	Veteran’s Park
<b>Animal Farm</b>	1	Lions Park (operated by service club)

## 6.1 Arenas

West Perth residents value ice sports as they have been very popular currently and historically. Arena needs, participation levels, growth projections, and community input are factored into this analysis.

The West Perth Arena & Community Centre is a primary destination and year-round community hub, with ice sports in the cooler months and dry pad activities in the warmer months (lacrosse, pickleball, etc.). The facility is also used as an emergency centre when needed and accommodates the Mitchell & District Agricultural Society Fall Fair.

### West Perth Arena & Community Centre Amenities

- 1 ice pad (180' x 80')
- Dedicated team room & 7 dressing rooms
- Community hall with kitchen
- Programs rooms
- Office space (municipal)
- Concession

The arena was constructed in 1974 and is 50 years old, although it is in generally good condition as it is diligently cared for by staff. It was expanded in 1993 and 2005 to add dressing rooms. A new front entrance and activity room were also added in 2013. The arena was designed to accommodate a second ice pad to the east, with discussions for decades about the possible demand for a second ice pad in West Perth.

Given the facility's age, there are certain amenities it lacks that are common in newer facilities (e.g., indoor walking track, regulation-size ice surface, dryland training space, storage, sufficient office space, second ice pad, etc.). Most of these items are not easily addressed through further modernization projects, but rather would require substantial expansion.

Additionally, the municipality has two cost-sharing agreements with the Elma-Logan Recreation Complex (North Perth) and the Seaforth Arena (Huron East), although it is understood that West Perth ice groups have not been allocated time at the Seaforth Arena in recent years. The purpose of the agreements is to support the residents living near communities such as Monkton and Dublin. Ice allocation and rentals are not covered by these agreements, they are managed by facility staff and/or boards of management. Maximizing the use of nearby arenas is financially beneficial for both the Municipality and its residents. During consultations, it was recommended to review the cost-sharing agreements with both municipalities to ensure that local access and benefits are commensurate with the Municipality's financial contributions and access requirements.

There is strong interest in ice sports locally. According to the community survey, 69% of households have at least one member that plays ice sports, with 89% of all respondents indicating that arenas are a top priority for additional investment (ranking 5<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types). Some specific suggestions included the installation of automatic doors and other accessibility improvements.

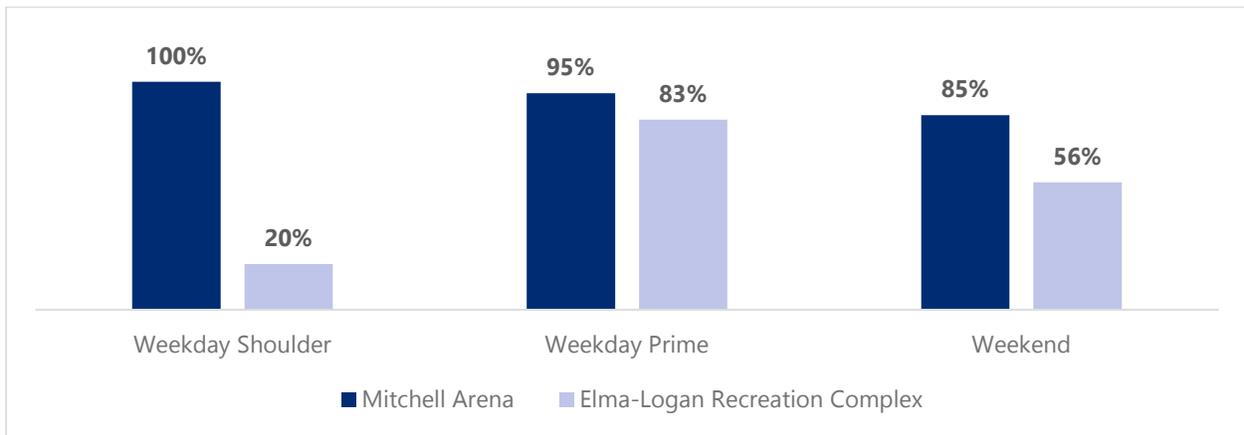
In speaking with ice user groups, most indicated that membership has been increasing since the pandemic. Requests were received for approximately 10 more hours of prime time ice time (equivalent to about 0.2 of 1 ice pad) to support their current members and allow for growth. Ice groups stated that a second ice pad would be nice but they do not believe it would be fully utilized at this time.

The West Perth Arena is very well used, especially during prime-time hours. Ice rentals begin at 6:30am most days and extend to 11pm. Prime time ice is utilized by youth groups such as minor hockey, ringette,

and figure skating. Ice usage is slower during the morning and afternoon of weekdays, which is common in most municipalities. Thursdays from 8:30am to 11pm is dedicated to curling, which is uncommon for a municipality to switch over from the single ice pad to curling ice. Weekday prime time ice is fully utilized, except for an hour and a half on Tuesday (9:30pm – 11pm).

Information provided by the Municipality of North Perth indicates that there is some availability for greater prime time use of the Elma-Logan Arena, which can be accessed through a cost-sharing agreement. In 2023/24, West Perth ice sport organizations accounted for approximately one-third of all rentals at this area, indicating that it is providing an important service level to the municipality.

**Figure 25: West Perth Arena Utilization, 2023/24**



Note: Weekday Shoulder is 4pm-5pm, Weekday Prime is 5pm-11pm, and Weekend is open to close  
Source: Municipality of West Perth, Municipality of North Perth

Trends suggest that ice participation is slowing in Ontario and across Canada, with a membership decline of 14% (national) and 17% (provincial) since 2016.<sup>22</sup> Many of these trends are not as evident in West Perth, where ice participation has increased by 7% since 2015/16, with about one out of three youth participating in ice sports locally.

It is estimated that there are approximately 780 organized ice sport participants that use the West Perth Arena on a regular basis, excluding public skating. The recent uptick in figure skating and learn to skate can partially be attributed to families trying to catch-up on instructional opportunities following the pandemic.

Many of these registrants also use time at the Elma-Logan Arena and within surrounding communities. Further, due to the regional nature of competitive sports, local girls seeking to play travel sports do so through organizations in larger centres, while there has been amalgamation of rep leagues across boys hockey. These changes help to balance demand for ice time locally, allowing the Municipality to accommodate most instructional and house league activities within West Perth and surrounding rinks.

<sup>22</sup> Hockey Canada. Annual General Report, 2016 – 2023

**Table 16: Ice Registration in the Municipality of West Perth, 2015/16 & 2023/24**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Change</b>
Minor Hockey	300	300	-
Ringette	120	120	-
Figure Skating	80	180	+100
Curling	80	70	-10
Junior C	20	20	-
Adult Leagues and Casual Rentals in Prime Time (estimated)	130	90	-40
<b>Total</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>+50</b>

A sampling of similar-sized communities indicates that all provide at least 1 indoor ice pad, for an average provision rate of one ice pad per 6,262 residents. West Perth’s current service level is one ice pad per 6,988 residents (including partial access to the Elma Logan Arena), indicating a slightly lower level of service than the average of nearby municipalities.

Looking ahead, there is little opportunity to add additional youth participants (the primary users of prime time ice) unless through population growth or by drawing from other centres. Current population forecasts are not substantial enough to justify the provision of a second ice pad for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, amalgamations of ice organizations and the growth of competitive leagues are driving demand in many larger centres, leaving areas such as Mitchell to serve more localized programs. Current requests from user groups (10 hours) are well below what is needed to support a second ice pad (there are approximately 53 hours of true prime time ice per pad) and there is capacity at nearby arenas to support these needs. It is recommended that the Municipality undertake a review of its agreements with nearby arenas to ensure appropriate access for its residents. In section 5.5, the development of an ice allocation policy was also recommended to guide the fair and transparent allocation of ice time to local groups.

With a long-term need to maintain one ice pad in Mitchell, the lifespan of the existing facility must be given close consideration. It is understood that the arena pad and piping are original, making them 50 years old (1974). The older the infrastructure, the higher the potential for failure and emergency repairs. While the Municipality has been regularly investing in the facility, aspects of the arena have reached the end of their typical lifespan and will require greater attention moving forward. Replacement of the ice pad, refrigeration system, and boards would be a significant project that would likely result in a facility closure impacting a partial or full season depending on the extent of the work. These and related decisions should be informed by the Municipality’s asset management practices and regular building condition audits.

Additionally, there are other shortcomings noted about the facility, including its under-sized ice pad (20 feet shorter and 5 feet narrower than today’s standards) and lack of contemporary amenities such as active recreational space and an indoor walking track. A need for additional multi-use space (including gymnasium-like spaces) has been noted as a growing need in the community.

One option to be considered further is extending the West Perth Arena & Community Centre to the east, which would allow the Municipality to construct a replacement ice pad (with walking track) and convert

the existing space into a multi-use area for indoor recreation activities throughout the year (e.g., gymnasium sports, fitness activities, youth centre, etc.). A feasibility study should be prepared to consider this and/or related options, including identifying the viability and costs of maintaining the existing arena versus the costs and potential to upgrade and expand the building. Grant funding should be sought at the appropriate time, with consideration of green infrastructure upgrades.

### Recommendations – Arenas

21. Review the **arena cost-sharing agreements** 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.
22. Prepare a **feasibility study** to determine the viability and costs of maintaining the West Perth Arena & 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.



## 6.2 Community Spaces/Halls

The Municipality owns and/or operates five (5) indoor community space/hall locations that are available for community use and rental. The spaces are distributed throughout the municipality and provide residents with a competitively priced facility for a variety of activities, such as gatherings, celebrations, recreation activities (e.g., yoga), and meetings. Some spaces are operated by community groups or service clubs under agreement. In section 5.7, it was recommended that the Municipality regularly review these agreements to ensure they remain reflective of key operating principles and objectives.

The community spaces/halls provided by the municipality include:

- Brodhagen Hall & Community Centre (large hall, small hall) – operated by third-party
- Dublin Community Centre – operated by third-party with municipal oversight
- Fullarton Hall (main hall, meeting room)
- West Perth Arena & Community Centre (Main Hall, Morenz Room, and Activity Room)
- West Perth Municipal Office (community rooms)

In addition to the spaces listed above, there are other opportunities that are available for community rental that are privately owned. For example, the Municipality has increased its use of school gymnasiums for programming (e.g., pickleball, etc.). One challenge for municipal programming in schools is the limited access during and after school. As a result, the Municipality has been using the main hall at the West Perth Community Centre to provide indoor pickleball programming, although the space is not ideal for this activity.

The following below provides an overview of the indoor recreational activities offered by the Municipality in 2023.

**Table 17: Indoor Recreational Activities (hall, school), 2023**

Indoor Recreational Activities	Participation
Adult Volleyball	8 teams
Drop-in Indoor Pickleball	289
Drop-in Shuffleboard	20 people per day
Eucherama	268
Indoor Adult Pickleball	52 teams
Line Dancing	10 registrants
Senior Fitness	109

Through the community survey, 84% supported investing in community halls and multi-purpose rooms (ranking 11<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types). If the Municipality were to examine options to expand and revitalize the West Perth Arena & Community Centre, the opportunity to accommodate indoor recreational activity uses should also be strongly considered.

The West Perth population is expected to increase and can expect growing demand for recreational programming from all ages in a year-round setting. Additional multi-purpose space will be required to allow for these activities. There may be many ways of accommodating these needs and one

recommended option is for the Municipality to examine the feasibility of replacing its ice pad and converting the existing arena into a space for indoor recreation activities. There may also be interest from other sectors to support or provide indoor recreational activities. In such an instance, the Municipality may consider the viability of engaging non-municipal providers through application of the partnership criteria outlined in Section 5.7.

### Recommendations – Community Space/Halls

23. Further explore the need and potential provision of **indoor multi-use space** 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.



## 6.3 Youth Centre

The Municipality operates a dedicated youth centre in downtown Mitchell which focuses on delivering a safe and entertaining space for youth. The Youth Centre was previously operated by the YMCA but was taken over by the Municipality in 2021. The centre offers recreational programming and drop-in activity opportunities after-school from Tuesday to Friday.

This Master Plan engaged youth in its consultation process to gain input on how to make West Perth's recreation facilities more "youth friendly". Highlights include:

- 45% of youth responding to the survey have used the Youth Centre, with 73% of youth expressing satisfaction with it.
- One suggestion to make West Perth more "youth-friendly" was engaging youth by providing more opportunities, such as clubs and programs.
- A top request was for programs and clubs tailored to youth interests (art groups, sports clubs, gaming club, outdoor activity clubs, writing and spelling clubs).

With residents ages 5 to 14 representing 13% of the West Perth population, the Youth Centre is an important community hub for youth in West Perth that provides vital social and recreational activities. However, the existing space is leased, outdated, undersized, and unable to offer active space for many of the activities that teens want to participate in. The potential for a permanent youth centre should be considered at the West Perth Arena and Community Centre in order to:

- facilitate active programming and outdoor opportunities;
- provide a well-designed space that is multi-use;
- enhance accessibility for users; and
- realize operating efficiencies and cost-certainty for the Municipality.

### Recommendations – Youth Centre

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 **permanent youth centre** at this location.

## 6.4 Park Pavilions

There are several outdoor covered pavilions for casual and rental use in the Municipality, including:

- Brodhagen Community Centre – operated by a third-party
- Cromarty Ball Park
- Keterson Park (Mitchell)
- Lions Park (2) (Mitchell)

West Perth's larger pavilions are popular for both structured and unstructured uses. Spaces that offer protection from the elements (rain, sun, wind) offer many benefits, including the ability to use parks across more seasons and in a range of conditions.

The largest of these facilities is the Keterson Park Pavilion, which was recently developed in 2023 at a cost of \$1.8 million. A grant (\$812,500) was provided by the Government of Canada, with the rest contributed by the Municipality (financed), donations, sponsorships, and naming rights. With a covered seating area, kitchen, bar, washroom facilities, basketball nets, storage, removable walls, wash pad, and pickleball court lines (2 courts), the pavilion is multi-use and allows for a variety of recreational activities. Some members of the public suggested using this as a site for a farmer's market. The Municipality has also received a proposal to establish a seasonal skating rink under the pavilion (see Section 6.12).

It is also noted that main pavilion at Lions Park is aging. This park sustains a high volume of use and the Municipality is encouraged to work with the Mitchell Lions Club to advance repairs.

### Recommendations – Pavilions

25. Continue to work with the community to expand programming and activities with the **Keterson Park pavilion**.



## 6.5 Ball Diamonds

The Municipality owns and (with the assistance of local groups) maintains 11 ball diamonds, 8 of which are lit. The ball diamonds are located within the following parks:

- Brodhagen Park (1 lit)
- Cromarty Ball Park (1 lit)
- Dublin Lions Park (1 lit)
- Fullarton Centennial Ball Park (1 lit and 1 unlit)
- Keterson Park (3 lit and 1 unlit)
- Kinsmen Park (1 lit, 1 unlit)

With an average of one ball diamond per 860 residents, West Perth provides a higher service level than nearby communities (average of one diamond per 1,702 residents). Despite this level of service, the Municipality is seeing increased demand for hardball diamonds in Mitchell (a new junior diamond was built in 2023). However, the rural diamonds (Cromarty, Brodhagen, Dublin, Fullarton) have capacity for greater use. The use of these fields by Mitchell-based groups should continue to be promoted; this may require minor upgrades for improved playability.

In consultation with user groups, it was expressed that there is a desire for more coordination in diamond scheduling. User groups also discussed modest improvements to ball diamonds that could help improve functionality; such as dugouts at Keterson Park. Furthermore, upgrades to the Fullarton diamonds (LED lights) have been approved in the municipal budget this year (2024); the group indicated there is a longer-term vision to upgrade from gravel to red clay, add a pavilion with washrooms, and install an outfield fence on the smaller diamond. According to the community survey, 53% of households have at least one member that plays baseball or softball, with 77% of all respondents indicating that ball diamonds are a lower priority for additional investment (ranking 17<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types).

It is also noted that the potential to relocate and add lights to Diamond C was identified as a long-term project through the Keterson Park Master Plan; this decision should be deferred until the Municipality studies the feasibility of expanding the West Perth Arena & Community Centre. If it is required for long-term needs, Diamond C could potentially be moved closer to Arthur Street North at Keterson Park or to a future park.

In evaluating current needs, a provision target of one ball diamond per 100 registered players is recommended (this target has been adjusted from the previous master plan to better reflect general standards of play and field capacities). The following table illustrates baseball and softball participation levels in West Perth in 2023. Historical registration data is not available, however, consultation with municipal staff and diamond users indicates that usage has increased, especially for minor baseball.

**Table 18: Registration Data of Hardball & Softball Teams in West Perth, 2023**

Registration Data	Teams	Estimated Participants
Minor Baseball	14	225
Co-ed Baseball Teams	6	108
Fastball Teams	11	132
Adult Men's Slo-Pitch	14	196
Adult Ladies Slo-Pitch	5	70
Adult Co-ed	6	84
Adult Fastball	2	28
Old-Timers Slo-Pitch	2	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>871</b>

With approximately 871 players, the Municipality has a current service level of one diamond per 79 players, which is within the recommended level of provision, indicating that there is capacity within the network of diamonds for greater should demand increase in the future. However, most of this capacity is

within rural diamonds, which exhibit lighter usage patterns. Usage of these diamonds for practices and occasional games by West Perth associations should be encouraged.

No additional ball diamonds are recommended over the next 10 years of this Master Plan. However, as demand is greatest in the Mitchell area, efforts should be made to ensure that these diamonds are optimized and potential demand for longer-term diamond development (beyond the next ten years) should be monitored.

### Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

26. Work with local user groups to undertake **priority improvements to ball diamonds**, including but not limited to consideration of sand/clay infields, dugout and bleacher enhancements, lighting replacement, and fencing repairs, where required.
27. Promote usage of **rural diamonds** for practices and occasional games by West Perth associations. Monitor demand for longer-term diamond development (beyond the next ten years).

## 6.6 Soccer Fields

The Municipality provides two (2) soccer fields at Kinsmen Park (1 full size, 1 intermediate); the third soccer field at this location was recently converted to a ball diamond. There are also soccer fields available for permitting at the Upper Thames Elementary School (2 full size, 2 intermediate, 6 minis), and the Mitchell District High School (1 field).

There are two soccer organizations that serve West Perth, Mitchell Minor Soccer and St. Columban Soccer Club. Mitchell Minor Soccer uses both fields at Kinsmen Park and the school fields to support a recreational youth league. St. Columban offers both recreational and competitive soccer to residents in Huron East and West Perth and primarily uses the fields at St. Columban Catholic School in Huron East.

The community survey found that 80% of respondents identified additional investment in soccer fields (ranking 14<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types) is a lower priority than other recreational facilities.

The recommended provision target for soccer fields is one field per 80 registered players. Currently, there are an estimated 80 players and 8 teams for Mitchell Minor Soccer. West Perth is within the recommended range for soccer fields at one field per 40 registered players. The current participation level from Minor Soccer supports the existing two fields (which are of different dimensions for different levels of play) and offer room for future growth during the ten-year timeframe of this plan. Additional capacity exists at area schools.

No new soccer fields are required during the ten-year timeframe of this plan. Spaces for informal play may be considered as part of future park development, as appropriate.

## 6.7 Playgrounds

Playgrounds are vital to early child development and can be accommodated in most park types. They are able to sustain high levels of use, stimulate outdoor play, promote inclusivity, and support social interactions. The Municipality supplies residents with eight (8) public playgrounds in seven (7) of its parks. Most of the playgrounds consist of a mixture of traditional play equipment (e.g., swings, slides, etc.). Service clubs have helped to fund several installations; for example, the Mitchell Optimist Club has sponsored and created an accessible playground in Lions Park.

Playground structures are available for residents at the following parks:

- Brodhagen Park
- Cromarty Ball Park
- Dublin Lions Park
- Fullarton Centennial Ball Park
- Keterson Park – Mitchell
- Lions Park (2) – Mitchell
- Rotary Park – Mitchell

Several schools also provide playground equipment that can occasionally be accessed by residents.

The community survey found that 88% of respondents identified additional investment in playgrounds as a top priority. Input found interest in more playgrounds in the west end of Mitchell.

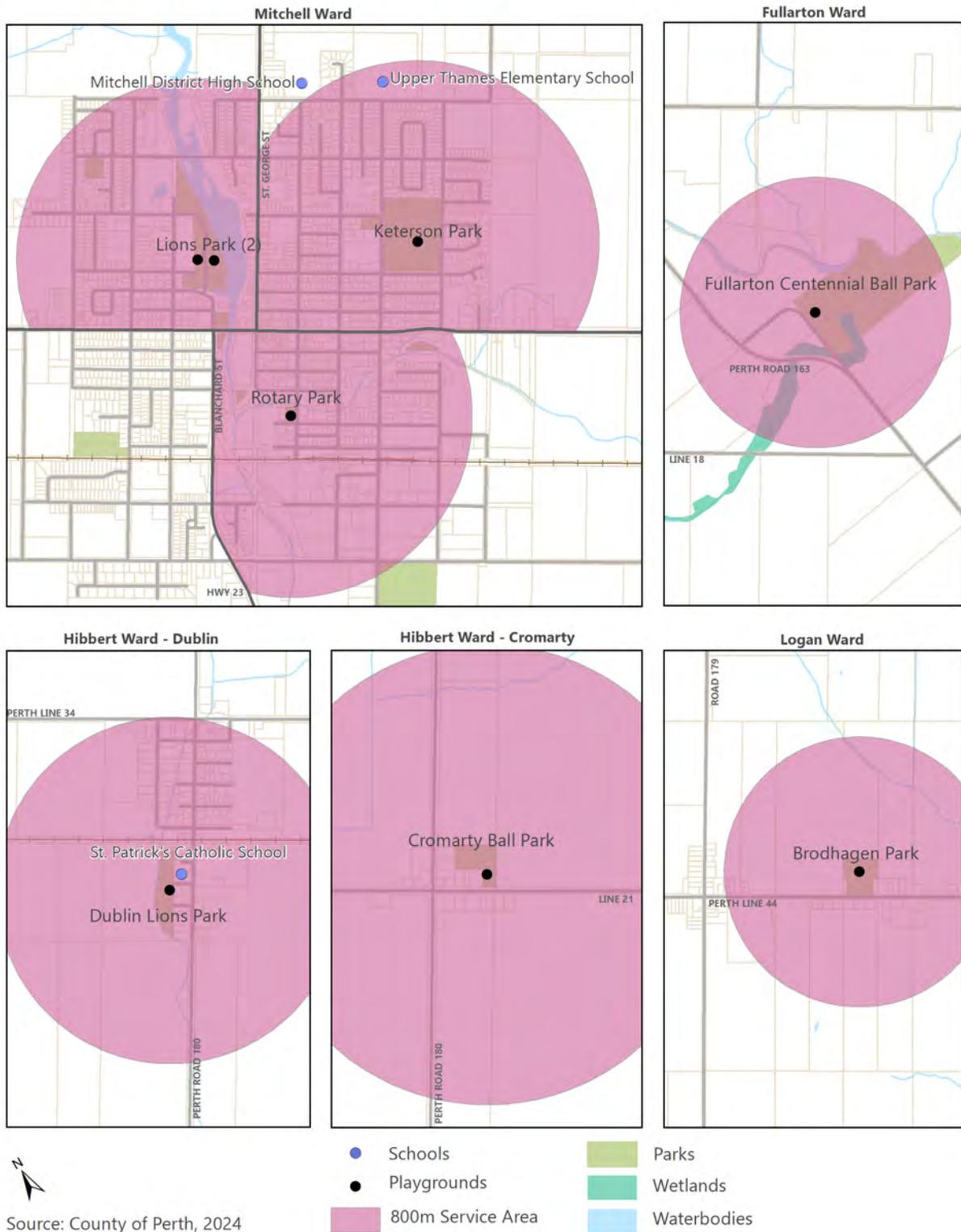
Best practices suggest that, within settlement areas, playgrounds should be within 500 to 800 metres of residential areas to promote access by pedestrians. As shown on the following map, applying an 800-metre service area to the Municipality confirms that there is a gap in playground provision in southwest Mitchell that was originally identified in the 2016 Master Plan. The Municipality should place a priority on new park development in this area to address this and other local needs.

Looking ahead, additional playgrounds may also be provided through subdivision development in other parts of the community, as required. The Mitchell Optimist Club has indicated they would like to work with the Municipality to develop and fund another playground within Mitchell, specifically within a future residential neighbourhood.

It will also be important for West Perth to establish sustainable funding to replace aging playgrounds, as in the past the Municipality has partnered with service clubs to help with their initial installation. Many of the Municipality's playgrounds were installed between 2004 and 2010 (except for Lions Accessible Playground which was installed in 2021). The playgrounds in West Perth are aging and will need to be replaced in the near future. Best practices are to renew or replace playgrounds every 20 years, with unique or naturalized playgrounds encouraged to offer a variety in experiences and play value. Approximately 7 playgrounds will reach the end of their 20-year lifespan over the next ten years and the Municipality is encouraged to allocate funding to replace one playground every one to two years, on average.

Figure 26: Playground Distribution in West Perth (800 metres)

### Municipal Playground Distribution



When developing or reconstructing new playgrounds and supporting infrastructure (e.g., paths, seating), consideration must be given to AODA regulations. Playground accessibility should reflect the park type and expected users. For example, rubberized surfaces may be considered for the busiest Community Parks, while engineered wood fibre could be used at all other locations. Other accessible amenities to consider are pathways connected to sidewalks and/or parking lots, curb cuts, ramps, contrasting colours, textured surfaces, musical instruments, and more.

### Recommendations – Playgrounds

28. Establish an annual budget line to support **playground replacement** 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.
29. Ensure that all playgrounds with accessible components are connected to the sidewalk and/or parking lot by an **accessible pathway** (e.g., Keterson Park, etc.).
30. Identify a location for a **playground in southwest Mitchell** to provide equitable access to this neighbourhood.
31. Consider the **future development of playgrounds** 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.

## 6.8 Swimming Pools

### Outdoor Pools

The Municipality owns and maintains an outdoor swimming pool at Lions Park, which serves as the primary venue for residents to receive swimming lessons and participate in public swimming. The Lions Pool was built in 1978, with the current bathhouse constructed in 2000. The Lions Pool has recently undergone over \$300,000 in capital repairs; due to the facility's age, additional investment can be anticipated in the future.

The pool consists of two tanks, the largest being 25-metres long with 8 lanes and a depth of 1.1 metre to 3.7 metres, and a 1 metre springboard. The smaller tank is an instructional pool, measuring 5 by 15 metres with a depth of 0.75 to 0.95 metres. Both pools are heated (84 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit). The bathhouse has changerooms and washrooms that are gender-specific, as well as a small control desk and staff space. The larger pool has an EZ Stair to allow for better access and a chair lift is also available.

In 2023, the pool serviced around 1,461 individuals and accommodated approximately 9,540 visits. These are average to strong utilization levels for an outdoor pool in a community of West Perth's size, underscoring the value of this amenity to area residents. The pool is especially well used for swimming lessons, which teach critical skill that help to prevent drowning. Additionally, the pool supports activities

for all ages and stages, including aquafit for older adults and family swims for those looking to cool down and play on a warm day.

**Table 19: Lions Pool Swim Data, 2023**

Swimming Lessons	Participants	Estimated Visits
Swimming Lessons	546	5,460
Swim Team	67	2,010
AquaFit Memberships	25	375
Public Swims (visits)	655	655
Individual Swim Passes	20	300
Family Swim Passes (people)	148	740
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,461</b>	<b>9,540</b>

89% of the community survey respondents have identified outdoor swimming pools as one of the top priorities for additional spending (ranking 4<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types); youth placed a similar priority on the pool. Additionally, there is an average level of provision of one public outdoor pool per 7,166 residents in the region. Outdoor pools are commonly provided in municipalities of West Perth’s size, although many are decades old. Increasingly, several smaller communities (e.g., Mount Forest, Clinton, Woodstock, etc.) are facing difficult and costly decisions to replace their aging outdoor pools once they reach end of life.

The West Perth Lions Pool is well maintained and in good condition. It is located within a scenic park and is complemented by a splash pad, pavilions, mature trees, and open space. As the only aquatic facility in the area, utilization data and the public consultation program indicate that the pool is well liked and very important to the community. A suggestion was received from the public for consideration of reduced fees for lower income families; regular reviews of all fees should be undertaken to ensure they remain appropriate. Despite the short season of the outdoor pool, the Municipality should continue to support its operation through proactive asset management practices and sustainable investment levels.



## Indoor Pools

The Municipality does not have any public indoor aquatic facilities. The nearest indoor aquatic facilities are located in Stratford (YMCA, Spruce Lodge Nursing Home, etc.), St. Marys (Pyramid Recreation Centre), and Vanastra (Vanastra Recreation Centre). Each nearest indoor pool is between a 10 to 30-minute drive for West Perth residents.

Indoor aquatic facilities are one of the most sought-after public amenities due to their ability to support a range of activities, ages, interests, and abilities in a year-round setting. Around 40% of West Perth households who responded to the community survey have participated in swimming (either recreational or lessons) within the last year. The top facility that residents would like to see offered in the municipality is an indoor pool, but indoor pools were identified as a lower priority today compared to the survey undertaken as part of the 2016 Master Plan.

Indoor aquatic centres are one of the most expensive recreational facilities to operate for municipalities, especially communities with smaller tax bases that cannot absorb the required operational subsidy. To be successful, indoor pools require a large market to draw from and a design that is co-located with other municipal facilities (e.g., library, community centre, etc.) to serve as a destination and benefit from economies of scale. Access to qualified lifeguards year-round has also been identified as a challenge for many small market pools.

Although West Perth's population is forecasted to grow by 13% over the next ten years, past growth trends would suggest that the population is still aging and that the number of children and youth (who represent the primary users of swimming pools) will not increase in step with the overall population. On this basis, demand for indoor swimming opportunities is unlikely to grow. Given that older adults swim less frequently than children, the primary market size suggests that an indoor pool would need to rely on secondary markets (nearby municipalities) to sustain its operation.

A common provision target for an indoor pool is one per 30,000 to 40,000 residents. With a current population of 9,435, West Perth is well below this figure and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Residents have indicated a "want" for an indoor pool, but with construction costs being around \$20-30 million (plus an annual operating subsidy in the hundreds of thousands of dollars), West Perth does not have the tax base to support an indoor aquatic facility. Although an indoor aquatic facility is not recommended for West Perth, should a mutually beneficial partnership opportunity arise, the Municipality may consider low-risk participation in a non-profit/private sector aquatic facility in order to serve the recreational swimming needs of local residents.

### Recommendations – Swimming Pools

32. Maintain the **Lions Pool** 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.
33. Should opportunities arise, consider mutually beneficial partnerships with other providers to enhance **access to indoor aquatic activities** for West Perth residents.

## 6.9 Splash Pads

There is one splash pad in West Perth, located at Lions Park. This splash pad was made possible through contributions from the local Lions Club, as well as donations from other service clubs and individuals.

Splash pads are unstructured, leisurely outdoor aquatic facilities that have interactive water play (spouts, jets, water walls, fountains, water buckets, etc.). They draw in many residents and visitors from children to families. The Lions Park splash pad uses treated/recirculated water and has access to washrooms, on-street parking, seating, and shade due to its proximity to the Lions Pool. Given its age, the Municipality may need to start planning for the replacement of the current splash pad in about ten years' time.

Splash pads are a cost-friendly alternative for residents compared to an outdoor pool as there is no admission for use. West Perth is providing splash pads at the same per capita rate as nearby municipalities (about one per 9,435 residents).

**Figure 27: Misting Feature in River Estates Park, Pelham ON**



Residents indicated that additional investment in splash pads is one of their top priorities (88%, ranking 7<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility options); this increased from 72% at the time of the 2016 Master Plan. Use of splash pads was within the top ten activities that residents participate in (49%).

With the trend toward warmer summers, the Municipality may consider adding a "misting station" to a different park, either at Keterson Park or a future park in southwest Mitchell in order to improve geographic access to water features. Misting stations are user-activated and use lower volumes of water than splash pads with no need for complex mechanical systems, water treatment, or drains. Often designed as a single post or arch (sometimes with shade above), these features provide a cost-effective opportunity for people of all ages a way to cool down on a warm day. The Municipality is encouraged to consult with Huron Perth Public Health when considering these and similar amenities.

### Recommendations – Splash Pads

34. Consider installing a **misting station** at Keterson Park or a future park in southwest Mitchell in order to improve geographic access to water/cooling features.

## 6.10 Tennis & Pickleball Courts

The Municipality offers two (2) unlit and fenced public tennis courts that are lined with four (4) pickleball courts for shared use. The courts are located at Veterans Park, across the road from the West Perth Arena & Community Centre. Portable nets are required for pickleball.

Interest in both tennis and pickleball across Canada has been growing, with pickleball being one of the fastest growing sports in North America. The consultation process revealed that there is a desire predominantly for more indoor pickleball courts and opportunities to play. Community survey respondents indicated that investing in outdoor pickleball courts (ranking 18<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types) and tennis courts (ranking 20<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility types) is a lower priority than other recreational facilities, with 20% of households playing pickleball and 9% playing tennis within the last 12 months.

The recommended provision target for tennis courts is one court per 5,000 residents, and the Municipality's current service level is one court per 4,718 residents. With two courts, the current supply is anticipated to be sufficient for at least the next ten years. As funding allows, the Municipality may consider adding lights (user-activated, with no functionality beyond a set time) to the court complex to allow for evening play, while being mindful of lighting and noise impacts on adjacent properties (more on this below).

Given the recent surge in pickleball interest, municipalities are adopting a range of strategies and monitoring as needs arise. Experience in West Perth and elsewhere suggests that interest is greatest for indoor courts (gymnasiums) as they provide year-round opportunities for play that are not affected by the elements (rain, snow, wind, etc.). Demand is typically greatest in the mornings as older adults are the primary user group; however, the sport is increasingly being played by families and younger adults (though not as frequently), leading to requests for access during evenings and weekends.

In terms of outdoor pickleball, dedicated courts are generally preferred as they do not unduly impact other uses (e.g., tennis) and their reliability can support regular and organized use. Municipalities large and small are building pickleball complexes of 4 to 16 courts to serve this growing demand, and the private sector is also becoming involved. As the consultation program did not yield this level of interest in pickleball in West Perth, a shared-court model may be best at this time (if accompanied by indoor pickleball programming), but ongoing monitoring is recommended. At one pickleball court per 2,360 residents, West Perth is providing a higher level of service than nearby municipalities.

Notably, municipalities have increasingly cited concerns with pickleball courts being located too close to residential areas due to both the racquet noise and the social nature of the game, so proper siting and/or buffering is an important consideration. The Municipality is encouraged to consider these impacts when managing existing sites.

### Recommendations – Tennis & Pickleball Courts

35. Evaluate further the value and impact of **lighting** on the tennis/pickleball courts at Veterans Park to allow for evening play.

## 6.11 Basketball Courts

There are no public basketball courts in Municipal parks, but the sport has been played under the Keterson Park pavilion through the use of portable nets. There are also opportunities to play basketball at schools (outside of school hours).

Basketball popularity is on the rise due to its affordability and growing appeal. Courts are becoming a standard of park design in many municipalities in the province. Outdoor basketball courts can be designed with one or two hoops, and if designed as multi-use they may provide extended activity opportunities (e.g., skating, ball hockey, etc.). Public outdoor courts are mostly used by younger generations and with that, the placement of these courts should be within areas that can reach a range of younger users.

Fourth-fifths (81%) of community survey respondents support additional spending of public funds to build outdoor basketball courts (ranking 13<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility options); this percentage is higher than was identified at the time of the 2016 Master Plan. Basketball courts ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 20 facility options (59%) in terms of importance with this population.

Basketball courts are commonly provided in the region – the average provision ratio within nearby municipalities is one outdoor court per 3,540 residents. A half basketball court (one hoop, hard surface court) would be a reasonable addition to the West Perth parks system, particularly within a park that is heavily frequented by youth and families (e.g., Keterson Park, proposed park in southwest Mitchell, etc.). Courts can serve the surrounding walkable community and also become a community destination. By developing new attractions, local recreational activities will be expanded and the Municipality will be better able to support existing and future needs.

### Recommendations – Basketball Courts

36. Develop an **outdoor basketball court** (half or full) within a future park, such as the one proposed for southwest Mitchell.

## 6.12 Skating Rinks

From time to time, different community groups have operated outdoor natural skating rinks in West Perth (e.g., Dublin Lions, etc.). Seasonal outdoor ice rinks provide local opportunities for residents to skate, but are subject to the weather, volunteer commitments, and site conditions (e.g., lighting, slopes, support spaces, etc.).

Outdoor skating is a popular Canadian pastime, although it ranked as a lower priority on the community survey (19<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility options for additional investment). However, natural outdoor ice rinks have a narrow window of availability and are increasingly being impacted by climate change, with usage ranging from a few days to a few weeks per year. These realities are causing many municipalities to rethink future plans for their provision.

As an alternative, some municipalities have developed covered rinks that offer a more stable environment for use (e.g., North Perth, South Bruce, etc.). Covered outdoor rinks help extend seasons by prevent melting and reducing snow/ice impacts; they also offer more potential for use during warmer months

(e.g., basketball, ball hockey, pickleball, farmers markets, camps, events, programming, etc.). Additionally, artificial ice rinks offer a longer operating season, but are much more expensive to construct and operate and tend to be found in much larger communities than West Perth. Both options require significant volunteer support.

The Municipality has been approached by a local donor to establish an outdoor ice rink under the Keterson Park pavilion, with Council endorsing the natural ice rink proposal in principle. Due to concerns over its short season and operational/staffing requirements, we recommend caution in proceeding with this initiative. If this project moves ahead, it is essential that an agreement with the proponent be prepared to identify roles, responsibilities, costs, and a realistic and sustainable volunteer program to support the rink.

### Recommendations – Skating Rinks

37. Reconsider plans to establish an **ice skating rink under the Keterson Park** 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.

## 6.13 All-Wheels Parks

The Municipality maintains one all-wheels park located within Keterson Park in Mitchell. These installations consist of modular ramps and moveable features; these amenities are moved to accommodate the activities of the Mitchell Fall Fair.

All-wheels parks provide youth and younger adults with a positive place to participate in skateboarding, rollerblading, scootering, biking, and other wheeled sports. All-wheels parks are typically co-located with other recreational facilities (basketball courts, playgrounds, fields, community centres) to benefit from shared infrastructure and site supervision. The majority of nearby municipalities provide all-wheels parks and the average provision rate of one per 10,252 residents is very similar to that in West Perth (one per 9,435 residents).

Public support for the all-wheels park was quite low; however, this is common in surveys of this nature due to the negative undertone associated with this activity. Two-thirds (66%) of community survey respondents indicated that they support additional spending on all-wheels parks (ranking 24<sup>th</sup> out of 25 facility options). Respondents to the youth survey indicated that skateboard and bike parks are of lower importance to them (ranking 18<sup>th</sup> out of 20) compared to other recreational facilities.

This input does not fully align with research that shows how important these features can be to offering unstructured, low-cost activities and supporting physical activity for youth and young adults. Skateboarding and wheeled sports have a stigma among certain populations, which is likely dampening levels of public support. Additionally, the current state of the park may also be limiting its appeal to potential users.

The Municipality will have a decision to make on the matter in the short-term. The ramps and features at West Perth's all-wheels park were purchased used from Stratford as a temporary amenity and have reached the end of their functional life. Its replacement has been supported in the 2016 Master Plan and

the Keterson Park Master Plan. The latter report identified an optimal size of 7,500 square feet in a fenced enclosure within Keterson Park. If not replaced, the existing ramps should be retired before they present safety hazards.

The continued provision of an all-wheels park is recommended on the basis of its service to local youth. An appropriate size and design are necessary to engage potential users and also to fit within the Municipality's financial resources and local fundraising capacities. Further, a location that maximizes accessibility and minimizes site impacts (e.g., noise, inappropriate behaviours, etc.) should be supported. The existing location within Keterson Park is highly visible, has access to nearby washrooms, and is located in a destination park near area schools. For these reasons, this remains the preferred site for the all wheels park, and should be accompanied by improvements to the streetscape, parking, and internal circulation.



In locating and designing the all wheels park, consideration should be given to the following:

- Space is very important in that the park should be sufficiently sized to provide a buffer area from neighbouring properties as well as having enough space to construct the facility without displacing or crowding other users. Because all wheels parks tend to attract older children and teens, they should not be placed directly adjacent to playgrounds or splash pads.
- Skate elements should be provided for beginners to more advanced skaters so that there are opportunities to grow and develop skills, as well as the potential for social interaction and mentoring.
- Visibility is critical to protect the users while they are participating, as well as allowing neighbours and police to monitor activity at the facilities at all hours. Security lighting is also critical to support visibility, but full lighting of the facility is not recommended so as not to encourage after-hours usage.
- Concrete designs accommodate the widest range of users and have the greatest longevity, but also the highest cost to construct. Modular equipment (as is currently in place) does not provide the same type of experience and deteriorates quicker, but can be moved as needed and stored for the winter. Most new all wheels parks being built today use concrete in-ground features.
- Access to networks (roads, sidewalks, etc.) allows users to travel to a location and will maximize the use of the facility. Parking must also be in place to support users who would travel by car to this facility.

- Access to washrooms and shade is important. It is also important that there is emergency access.
- Lighting, seating, observation areas, and consultation with users (both in the design and ongoing operation) are requirements for a successful all wheels park. The more input users have in a park's creation and management, the better they take care of it.

### Recommendations – All-Wheels Parks

38. Replace the existing skateboard park with a **permanent all-wheels park** in its current location within Keterson Park. Through this project, consider improvements to the adjacent streetscape, parking areas, and internal circulation to ensure a safe and welcoming environment. Initiate a fundraising campaign to help offset costs.

## 6.14 Off-Leash Dog Parks

The Municipality offers one off-leash dog park, located at Kinsmen Park. The park provides pet owners an opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs in a controlled area and also offers a venue for interaction amongst residents. Urban areas benefit the most from off-leash dog parks, opposed to rural areas where there is more private open space for dogs.

There is no formal standard guideline for the provision of off-leash dog parks, although it is common for small municipalities to provide one service location. Respondents to the community survey indicated that off-leash dog parks are their lowest priority for additional investment (64%), suggesting that needs are largely being met.

Although no new off-leash dog parks are recommended, it was noted that the current location at Kinsmen Park offers very little shade, which can limit the use of the dog park during the summer months. The Municipality should continue to add shade offerings, either trees or a small shelter/shade sail as resources allow.

### Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Parks

39. Continue to add **shade** (additional trees or small shelter/shade sail) and agility equipment to the **Kinsmen Park off-leash dog park**.



## 6.15 Community Gardens

West Perth maintains four community garden plots, all of which are within Veterans Park. These plots are used for municipal programming and donations; they are not available for general public use or rent. In the past, informal garden plots by the Public Works building were available for public use, but were underused.

Community gardens are becoming more prominent within parks systems as they foster social interaction and allow residents who do not have access to personal gardening space to grow their own food. They are most popular in urban/settlement areas where backyard space is less common. Community gardens support community improvement, improve physical and mental wellbeing, enhance food security, and encourage social interaction among gardeners and visitors.

Demand for community gardens is rising in many communities due to aging populations, higher density developments (with less private open space), increased grocery costs, and a growing emphasis on food security. Locally, the community survey found lower support for additional spending on community garden plots (72%, ranking 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 25 facility options). Nevertheless, the Municipality is encouraged to incorporate community use garden plots within existing or new parks (or other lands) that have unallocated space, access to water, and access to nearby parking. Preliminary candidates may include Rotary Park or the former Municipal Office lands. These sites may be overseen and managed by local community groups under agreement.

### Recommendations – Community Gardens

40. Encourage the integration of volunteer-managed **community vegetable gardens** within the Municipality's park network, focusing on under-utilized lands that have adequate access to a water source and parking.



## 6.16 Paddling & Water-Based Facilities

The Mitchell Dam is considered a recreational dam and is managed by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority with assistance from the Municipality. The dam is underutilized recreationally but can be costly to maintain. The Municipality provides a kayak launch in Lions Park, providing public access to the North Thames River.

Leisure water sports, such as paddleboarding, kayaking, and canoeing, have surged in popularity over the past few years. The Mitchell Dam allows the community to enjoy these activities between mid-spring and mid-fall in the area north of the dam (the water is too shallow on the south side of the dam to consistently support paddling activities).

Through the consultation process, residents have expressed the importance of accessible water-based activities and a desire for additional facilities, parking, and informative signage to support them. The Municipality is encouraged to work with local service clubs to achieve these objectives.

### Recommendations – Paddling & Water-Based Facilities

41. Work with local service clubs and partners to support **paddling activities in the North Thames River, such as the** installation of an accessible kayak/canoe launch in Lions Park, along with appropriate parking, signage, and promotion.

## 6.17 Other Facilities

This section has assessed and identified those indoor and outdoor amenities that are most commonly provided with municipal recreation and parks systems.

It is noted that the 2019 Keterson Park Master Plan identified the development of **beach volleyball courts** and **camping sites** as medium-term priorities (5-8 years). While not fully evaluated as part of this Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan, these projects are viewed as lower priorities compared to other recommendations advanced in this plan. Additional evaluation (needs, costs, logistics, etc.) would be recommended if the Municipality continues to advance these two projects.

Additionally, with an ever-growing array of interests and activities, there may be requests for new and emerging facility types moving forward. The criteria identified in Section 5.7 may be used as a basis for evaluation, particularly in cases where the Municipality is asked to partner with a community provider.



Kinsmen Park

## Section 7.

# Parkland & Park Policy Assessment

Parks and open spaces enhance the vibrancy of our communities and keep individuals connected and engaged. Their impact on personal wellness is significant, including the many mental health and healing benefits associated with connections to nature.

This section examines a variety of planning policies and needs related to the Municipality's parks and open spaces. These spaces are integral for maintaining a high quality of life for local residents and help to not only support a wide variety of recreational activities, but also to achieve various public and environmental objectives. Continued maintenance, provision, and enhancement of parks and public spaces will be required to achieve the recommendations contained in this Master Plan.

### 7.1 Parkland Policies & Guidelines

#### Parkland Classification

Parkland can take many different forms, ranging from small manicured parkettes to community parks filled with sports fields to naturalized tracts of ecologically significant areas. Primary considerations for the parks system as a whole include (but are not limited to):

- Planning the appropriate function and use for each park
- Achieving a satisfactory distribution of parkland to ensure that they are easily accessible and maintain the integrity of natural heritage systems
- Maintaining a high degree of walkability and connectivity among parks through active transportation infrastructure, key linkages, etc.
- Setting policy to achieve the desired objectives and to encourage effective and responsive provision and management practices

Land use planning in the Municipality is guided by the County of Perth Official Plan, which contains policies regarding the provision, design, and development of parkland and trails. However, the Official Plan (2024) does not contain a parkland classification system, leaving this to the local Municipality to define. Such a system defines the functional hierarchy of a municipal parks and open space system and directs many aspects of park usage as defined through size, form, function, and/or level of amenity. The Municipality's 2016 Recreation & Leisure Services Master Plan identified the following parkland classification system that should continue to be used to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces.

**Table 20: Parkland Classification Hierarchy (2016 Recreation & Leisure Master Plan)**

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Amenities</b>	<b>Service Level</b>	<b>Size (ha)</b>
<b>Community Park</b>	Support a range of recreation activities that serve the Municipality and surrounding areas such as major sports fields, open spaces, water features, and playgrounds. Select portions may also be naturalized.	Located along main arterial roads, bicycle and pedestrian networks, and contains sufficient off-street parking.	4.0+
<b>Neighbourhood Park</b>	Designed for small scale recreation activities and may include hard surface courts and a single sports field. Select portions may also be naturalized.	Accessible by walking or cycling and centrally located to optimize visibility and safety of users.	0.6 – 3.0
<b>Parkette</b>	Sub-neighbourhood park lands located in residential areas that provide limited opportunities for passive recreation with supporting rest areas and/or playgrounds.	Centrally located within residential areas.	<0.5
<b>Natural Park</b>	Municipally owned lands that are predominantly naturalized or protected due to significant features. May also be used for passive recreation such as hiking.	Located in areas with naturally significant features, wooded areas, and may consist of topographical variations.	Varies

Note: Two options that are being increasingly considered by larger, urbanized communities as partial responses to parkland provision in infill and intensification areas include Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and Strata Parks. Due to the relatively low residential densities and rural/urban structure in the Municipality, these tools are not likely to be applied locally and are not recommended as part of the future policy landscape at this time.

Parks should be designed according to their intended function. For various reasons – including intensity of use, space demands, noise/disruption, etc. – some uses are more appropriate in certain types of parks. Playgrounds (considered to be a basic unit of most park construction) are appropriate in all park types, but higher order facilities may not be appropriate for Neighbourhood Parks due to their significant size and impacts (e.g., parking, lighting, hours of use, etc.). The following table identifies suitable amenities according to park type.

**Table 21: Suitability of Potential Amenities by Park Type**

Facility/Amenity	Community Park	Neighbourhood Park	Parkette	Natural Park
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>				
All Wheels (Skateboard) Park	●	◐		
Ball Diamond	●	◐		
Basketball / Multi-use Court	●	●	◐	
Community Gardens	●	●	◐	◐
Off-Leash Dog Park	●			◐
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	●	◐	◐	
Outdoor Rink	●	◐		
Pavilion / Shelter	●	◐	◐	●
Playground	●	●	●	◐
Recreational Trail	●	●	●	●
Soccer Field	●	◐		
Splash Pad	●	◐		
Tennis / Pickleball Court	●	◐		
<b>Park Amenities</b>				
Bike Rack	●	●	●	◐
Casual Play Area / Open Space	●	●	◐	◐
Naturalized Areas	◐	◐	◐	●
Parking Lot	●	◐		◐
Seating (fixed or portable)	●	●	●	●
Washrooms	●	◐		◐

● = Permitted; ◐ = Conditional/Limited

Note: This table identifies potentially suitable uses by park type and is to be used as a guideline only. Site-specific analysis is required to inform park planning and design.

### Parkland Dedication

There are several tools and options available to municipalities related to the acquisition and improvement of lands for parks purposes. Amongst these, the practice of requiring parkland dedication as a condition of subdivision or development has long been the primary tool for the Municipality of West Perth. Use of cash-in-lieu to purchase and/or improve parkland, along with other acquisition tools, are projected to become more prominent in the future.

As noted in its Official Plan (October 2024), the Municipality will aim to secure the maximum parkland benefit permitted under the Planning Act. The Planning Act – which has been amended several times in the past few years, most notably through Bill 23 – allows municipalities to require the conveyance of lands for park or other recreational purposes at a rate of 5% of land being developed for residential use (2% for commercial and/or industrial) or 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units proposed (with 10% and 15% caps). At its discretion, Council may require cash-in-lieu of parkland, to be used towards future acquisition or development of parkland within the Municipality.

These 5%/2% ratios are referred to as the “standard rate”, while the 1 hectare per 600 units (1 hectare per 1,000 units if taking cash) is referred to as the “alternative rate”. There are certain provisions that must be met to apply this alternative rate, but it is not advantageous to the Municipality unless development exceeds 30 units per hectare. The densities being planned for new developments in West Perth are around 12 to 20 units per hectare at the present time. At this density, the 5% parkland conveyance amount would continue to be most advantageous for the Municipality. The alternative rate may be considered in cases of infill in the event that densities exceed 30 units per hectare (for land) or 50 units per hectare (for cash-in-lieu), noting that a parkland dedication by-law would be required to use the alternative rate – the Municipality is encouraged to prepare such a by-law.

**Figure 28: Parkland Dedication Rates in the Ontario Planning Act**



\* no conveyance may exceed 10% of the land for sites under 5 hectares or 15% of the land for sites 5 hectares or larger.

Note: Recent Planning Act changes have enacted parkland dedication exemptions for affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments. These exemptions should be reflected in a Parkland Dedication By-law.

It has been many years since the Municipality has secured parkland through the development approvals process. The scale of development is often an impediment to land conveyance as a subdivision needs to be sufficiently large to support a new park parcel. A minimum park size of 0.5 ha is recommended for traditional subdivision development, suggesting that the development site would need to be a minimum of 10 hectares (assuming use of the standard 5% rate). Smaller development sites means that the Municipality has typically taken cash-in-lieu of parkland, and used a portion of these proceeds to fund parkland improvements. As discussed in subsequent sections, there is a need to ensure that this cash-in-lieu rate properly reflects current market rates and that all new development areas are adequately served by locally-accessible park properties.

### **Parkland Acquisition**

West Perth residents place considerable value on their parks system and want to see this network grow in tandem with population increases. However, given recent reductions to parkland allowances in the Planning Act, it is unlikely that the Municipality will be able to secure the entirety of its future parkland needs through land development approvals. To meet the recommended parkland target (discussed in the next section), it is recommended that the Municipality adopt a “parkland-first” approach that prioritizes the dedication of land in appropriate locations (rather than cash-in-lieu of parkland) during the

development review process. Additionally, the Municipality may need to utilize alternative financial tools and other parkland acquisition approaches beyond traditional parkland conveyance mechanisms.

Some supplemental park acquisition strategies that the Municipality may pursue, include (but are not limited to):

- a) Municipal land purchase or lease (ideally in priority parkland locations or expansion of existing park sites), funded from cash-in-lieu reserves, Community Benefit Charges, general tax funding, grants, donors, etc.;
- b) Land exchanges or swaps;
- c) Off-site conveyance of parkland (ideally in priority parkland locations);
- d) Donations, gifts, and bequests;
- e) Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use;
- f) Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners under agreement; and/or
- g) If applicable, the sale or proposed sale of existing parkland (through a surplus lands policy); funds to be used for purchase and / or enhancement of parkland.

In acquiring parkland, high quality sites are strongly encouraged so that they can serve as central focal points for many years to come. The 2024 County Official Plan contains policies regarding parkland acceptability and notes that certain lands (e.g., hazard lands, wetlands, significant woodlands, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related undevelopable lands) will not necessarily be acceptable as part of the land dedication under the Planning Act<sup>23</sup>. The County Official Plan includes additional park standards and urban design policies that may also be considered.

In addition to the principles established in the Official Plan for determining the location of parkland, the following criteria may be used to assess the suitability of potential park sites on a case-by-case basis.

**Table 22: Potential Park Site Evaluation Criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Site Conditions</b>	Consider topography (tableland is strongly preferred), parcel configuration (square or rectangular), drainage, and soil conditions (e.g., free of environmental contaminants).
<b>Size</b>	Should meet or exceed minimum standards established for park classification.
<b>Centrality</b>	Proximity to the population to be served, in keeping with the service radius and population targets of the park type.
<b>Land Use Impacts</b>	Compatibility of adjacent land uses; conformity with Official Plan or Secondary Plan (if applicable).

<sup>23</sup> Note: Land required to be conveyed to the Municipality for parkland shall be free of encumbrances and be fully accessible to the public. Despite the foregoing, Bill 23 has proposed to allow developers to identify the land they intend to convey to the Municipality for parkland. In some cases, these lands may include encumbered lands and privately-owned public spaces. If agreement cannot be reached, the municipality or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. As of writing, this provision is still awaiting regulations and enactment.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Connectivity</b>	Integration of trail and open space linkages or corridors.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Site has a minimum of 50% frontage on a public road (two roads), reasonable access to trails or sidewalks (in urban areas), etc.
<b>Partnerships</b>	Potential joint use with school sites or other municipal assets.
<b>Visibility</b>	Ability to create a local focus.
<b>Natural Features</b>	Mature trees are an asset, but the park site should not be unduly encumbered by wooded areas or features of cultural or natural significance.
<b>Added Value</b>	Access to watercourses, viewpoints or vistas.
<b>Constructability</b>	Parks should not be built in floodplains, stormwater overflow areas, valley lands, hydro corridors, easements, environmental lands, etc.
<b>Services</b>	Site has appropriate municipal services (e.g., water, storm sewers, and electrical services) to the property line; this may not apply in all local communities.
<b>Availability</b>	Timing of parcel availability should coincide with preferred timing of park development.
<b>Cost</b>	Reasonable land valuation (if applicable); lands already in public ownership offer the greatest potential.

### Deciding when to take Cash-in-lieu

Policies in the Official Plan provide the Municipality with the discretion to take parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland (or a blend of the two). Section 4.4.1 of the Official Plan (October 2024) states that the Municipality will consider cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication under the following circumstances:

- i. The lands meet the park and open space classification and hierarchy standards and provision requirements of the Municipal Parks and Recreation Master Plan, where applicable;
- ii. The land is generally flat, open, and are of a sufficient size and shape to support space for passive and active recreation purposes.
- iii. The lands effectively support the development of park and open space-based facilities and amenities in accordance the policies of this Plan; and
- iv. The lands are not identified as hazard lands, wetlands, significant woodlands, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related undevelopable lands.

The Municipality maintains a parkland dedication reserve fund (approximately \$240,000 as of 2024), although this amount is projected to fluctuate year-to-year subject to how the funds are planned to be allocated and future levies collected by the Municipality<sup>24</sup>. Given the anticipated need to secure additional

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<sup>24</sup> Note: Bill 23 has instituted a new requirement for municipalities to spend or allocate at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year.

parkland to meet the targets established in this plan, the Municipality is strongly advised to use cash-in-lieu of parkland for acquisition, rather than capital improvements in parks.

The Municipality of West Perth currently charges a flat rate of \$500 per residential lot/unit for payment-in-lieu of parkland, applied to both consents and plans of subdivision. These funds are directed into a dedicated parkland reserve and can be used to fund parkland purchases, improvements, or equipment/machinery. The Municipality's fixed cash-in-lieu of parkland rate has been in place for many years without adjustment.

For development that occurs by way of plan of subdivision or condominium – in cases where the Municipality has chosen not to take land – it is recommended that the Municipality require an independent appraisal to determine the payment-in-lieu charge. This appraisal report is the responsibility of the applicant. These and other stipulations should be identified within a parkland dedication by-law. This is a fair and transparent way of ensuring that the appropriate value for parkland dedication is arrived at for multi-lot subdivisions.

For single lot severances, a different approach is commonly taken since consent applications are generally simple processes. In these cases, a flat fee (indexed annually for inflation) is recommended, which should be collected as a condition of the consent application. With the recent increase in land values and developments costs, including changes to how municipalities secure parkland, many municipalities are currently reviewing these fees.

With a current parkland dedication fee at \$500 per residential lot in West Perth, the assumed value of the land would be \$10,000 per lot. This is well below actual market values. Based on recent sales of vacant lands in Mitchell that are in the range of \$220,000 per lot, the Municipality could justify a charge of up to \$11,000 per lot utilizing the 5% rate for serviced lands where the fee is collected at the time of issuing a permit. Maximizing recovery of parkland dedication will reduce the impact on taxpayers as these fees are used for the rehabilitation of existing parks as well as purchasing new parkland to serve growth. Applying a more conservative approach, if the Municipality were to discount the maximum rate that could be charged by 50%, the resultant charge (\$5,500 per lot) would be in line with some municipalities that have recently reviewed their charges (e.g., Thames Centre, Wellington North, etc.).

Consideration may be given to phasing in increases over time. This fee should be subject to indexing and included in a parkland dedication by-law (the Municipality does not currently have such a by-law). For all other residential development, the 5% or alternative rate would apply, subject to an appraisal. A decision would need to be made regarding how best to address non-residential development. If the municipality chooses to establish a charge for non-residential consents, it should be set at a rate of 40% of the residential charge to align<sup>1</sup> with the 2% of land value rate.

## Recommendations – Parkland Policies & Guidelines

42. Use the Master Plan’s **parkland classification system** to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.
43. Institute a program to **actively monitor parkland acquisitions** and **track annual spending** and allocation of parkland cash-in-lieu funds.
44. Adopt a **“Parkland First” approach** 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.
45. Utilize **alternative parkland acquisition approaches** beyond traditional land conveyance mechanisms as necessary to meet the Municipality’s long-term parkland target.
46. Work with the County to ensure that the Municipality’s Director of Community Services is **circulated on land development applications** in order to provide comment on parkland requirements.
47. Over a one to three-year period, phase in an increase to the residential **parkland cash-in-lieu amount** 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.
48. Develop a **Parkland Dedication By-law** to formalize the policies and procedures associated with parkland conveyance in the Municipality.

## 7.2 Parkland Supply & Demand

The Municipality currently owns and maintains approximately 30.4 hectares of “parkland” (15 park sites: parkettes, neighbourhood parks, community parks, and undeveloped lands). In addition, there are three (3) municipal open space properties totalling 47.7 hectares. Park locations are shown on mapping in **Appendix D**. No new or expanded parks have been added since prior to the 2016 Master Plan.

### Defining Parkland and Open Space:

**“Parkland”** typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, gardens, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features.

**“Open Spaces”** generally have no to low development potential and are highly regulated and primarily designated for purposes such as environmental conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. While it is important to recognize the benefits of open space lands, they are excluded from policies relating to parkland as they typically have limited opportunities for active recreation and are not generally accepted as parkland through the development process.

While it is noted that residents also benefit from parks and open spaces provided at local schools, conservation areas, and private lands, this assessment focuses on the supply of Municipally-owned parkland as these are the only lands under direct control where the provision of access, safety, and appropriate amenities can be guaranteed. Notwithstanding this assessment, it is essential that the Municipality continue to collaborate with its community partners to maximize the benefits of providing accessible parks and open spaces.

**Table 23: Municipal Supply of Active Parkland**

Active Parkland	Park Type	Ward	Area (Ha)
Brodhagen Park	Neighbourhood	Logan	3.8
Centennial Park	Parkette	Mitchell	0.3
Cromarty Ball Park	Neighbourhood	Hibbert	1.4
Dublin Lions Park	Neighbourhood	Hibbert	2.5
Fullarton Centennial Ball Park*	Neighbourhood	Fullarton	1.6
Howie Morenz Memorial Gardens	Parkette	Mitchell	0.2
Keterson Park	Community	Mitchell	7.4
Kinsmen Park	Community	Fullarton	7.0
Lions Park	Community	Mitchell	4.0
Mitchell Jaycees Park	Parkette	Mitchell	0.4
Rotary Park	Parkette	Mitchell	0.2
Russeldale Park Block (undeveloped)	Parkette	Fullarton	0.4
Stacey Park	Parkette	Mitchell	0.1
Sunset Park (undeveloped)	Neighbourhood	Mitchell	0.7
Veterans Park	Parkette	Mitchell	0.4
<b>Total (Active Parkland)</b>	--	--	<b>30.4 ha</b>

Parcel sizes are approximate.

\* Land area excludes the conservation area portion

**Table 24: Municipal Supply of Open Space**

Passive Parkland	Park Type	Ward	Area (Ha)
Demonstration Forest	Natural	Mitchell	0.7
Memorial Forest	Natural	Mitchell	0.9
West Perth Wetlands	Natural	Fullarton	46.1
<b>Total (Passive Parkland)</b>	--	--	<b>47.7 ha</b>

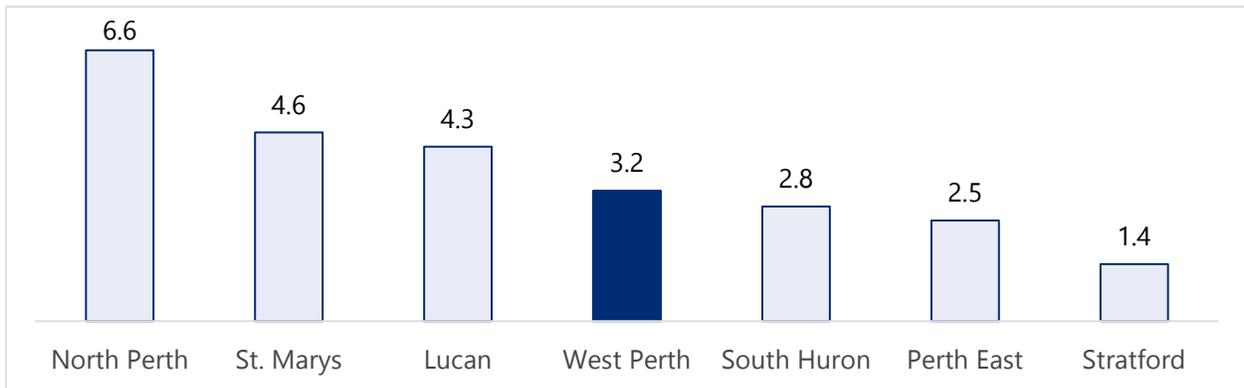
Parcel sizes are approximate.

Most municipalities use population-based targets to calculate and plan parkland supply. A parkland target is particularly important as it is becoming more complex and costly to secure quality parcels for parkland within new development areas. With recent changes to the Planning Act and greater residential intensification, developments are generating less parkland per capita and smaller park blocks than in the

past, making it difficult to accommodate the desired recreational activities that residents have come to expect from the Municipality’s parks system.

Parkland to population ratios are in common use throughout Ontario and beyond. The Municipality’s current supply of active parkland equates to **approximately 3.2 hectares per 1,000 residents** (based on an estimate of 9,434 residents), excluding open space areas. From our experience, this ratio is in the middle of the range generally provides by small urban/rural municipalities (which tends to vary from 2.0 to 4.0+ hectares per 1,000 persons).

**Figure 29: Parkland Provision Rates in Nearby Municipalities (hectares per 1,000 residents)**



Source: Compiled by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants from various sources  
Data not available for the Municipality of Huron East.

An appropriate supply and equitable distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high quality of life and maximizing accessibility to services and amenities that achieve community objectives. As the Municipality grows, there will also be a growing need for more parkland to serve the increasing number of residents.

To guide decision-making, the 2016 Master Plan established a municipal-wide provision target of 3.0 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents. Public input, research, and observations have generally found that the current parks system is adequate for serving the population that is in place (there is one geographic gap – discussed below), but that additional parkland will be required to serve the needs of growth. Additionally, there is a desire for future trail development that may occur within corridors or open space lands.

In order to continue to support a broad range of outdoor uses, it is recommended that West Perth continue to target a municipality-wide parkland provision target of **3.0 hectares per 1,000 residents**. This level of provision should be seen as a benchmark to guide long-term planning and to against which to measure progress. Although not included in the ratio, it is also important to recognize that this target is supplemented by other public lands that are not defined as parkland, but that can provide valuable contributions to community life, such as conservation lands, schools, and other open space properties.

The following table illustrates future parkland amounts required to achieve the recommended target. Application of the Municipality-wide provision target calculates a need for 0.9 additional hectares of parkland by 2036 (to address population growth of 10,500 residents). A 2051 population forecast of 11,400 has been set for the Municipality, which would require an additional 3.8 hectares over current

supplies. Moving forward, needs are likely to be focused on neighbourhood and community parks in Mitchell, which is the Municipality’s primary growth area.

**Table 25: Approximate Parkland Dedication / Acquisition Targets to 2036 and 2051**

Current Parkland Supply, excluding open spaces	30.4 ha
Population (2024 – estimate)	9,435 persons
Parkland per 1,000 persons (2021)	3.2 ha/1000
Projected Population (2036)	10,500 persons
Total Parkland Needs (2036), based on 3.0 ha/1000	31.5 ha
<b>Additional Parkland Requirements (2036)</b>	<b>0.9 ha</b>
Projected Population (2051)	11,400 persons
Total Parkland Needs (2051), based on 3.0 ha/1000	34.2 ha
<b>Additional Parkland Requirements (2051)</b>	<b>3.8 ha</b>

Future parkland requirements may be achieved through the thoughtful use of existing lands and future development opportunities. As of time of writing, the Municipality does not anticipate receiving any new parkland through active development applications, although active transportation connections and trail systems are a possibility (e.g., former industrial landfill, etc.). Additional parkland may be dedicated to the Municipality in the future as new development applications are received and evaluated. Furthermore, the former Municipal Office lands may have the potential for temporary or permanent park uses depending on Council direction.

It should also be pointed out that parkland requirements have been lessened under the current Planning Act. Based on assumed unit and population densities, it is anticipated that the Municipality can achieve between 1.0 and 1.5 ha/1000 residents through new residential development applications. At best, this is half of the Municipality’s parkland target, indicating a need for alternative parkland securement strategies (e.g., acquisition, leasing, use of surplus lands, etc.) to meet long-term (2051) needs.

Additionally, parkland needs are not only a function of the total supply, but also of the distribution and functionality of the sites. For example, community parks that are capable of accommodating a broad range of activities are generally in demand, as are neighbourhood-level parks that provide close-to-home opportunities for young children. Passive parkland (e.g., woodlots, open space, etc.) is also desired, but should be thoughtfully provided and managed. The majority of the Municipality’s parks are generally functioning well for their intended use and there are a wide variety of park types and amenities.

In rural/urban communities, a typical metric used to determine local accessibility is a 5- to 10-minute walk, or a distance of approximately 500 to 800 metres. A distributional analysis was undertaken by applying this service area to West Perth’s parks to understand the degree to which residents can access parks within walking distance. This analysis confirmed a gap in distribution and supply in southwest Mitchell that was initially identified in the 2016 Master Plan. The Municipality owns a vacant parcel of land (approximately 1.8 hectares) in this area on **Nelson Street** that has been used informally by the community for wiffle ball in recent years. This site is well suited to provide enhanced parkland access to this neighbourhood if it were formalized as a park. Its location and dimensions are well suited to

amenities such as a playground, basketball court, open space, community gardens, pathways, seating, etc. There may even be room for a junior ball diamond if one were required in the future. It is recommended that the Municipality further investigate the potential to create a park in this area within the next five to ten years, with an initial step being the creation of a conceptual plan.

The Municipality owns and maintains a smaller (0.4 hectares) vacant park property in **Russelldale**. There are no amenities at this location and there is little evidence of community use. It largely serves as an extension to the residential properties that back onto it, yet the Municipality continues to cut grass at this location. Being that Russelldale is a mature rural settlement area with larger residential lots, there is little need for a small park in this location. It is recommended that the Municipality begin the process to dispose of this property, with proceeds allocated back into the municipal parks and recreational system.

When declaring any park parcels as surplus (in whole or in part), the Municipality should follow a prescribed process that includes an evaluation using a set list of criteria, which may include:

- an assessment of the recreational value/need for the site and its requirement to meet parkland accessibility targets;
- the potential to relocate amenities/activities to other Municipally-owned lands, as well as the operational benefits to be achieved through consolidation;
- past investment in the site and the condition of existing amenities, vegetation and landforms;
- development potential, adjacent uses and applicable land use policies; and
- community input.

If the Municipality develops the Nelson Street property as parkland and disposes of the Russelldale park block, the net gain in parkland would be 1.4 hectares. This is sufficient to address anticipated needs over the ten year period of this plan. Additional parkland may be required to serve future growth beyond this period and development applications should be reviewed with this in mind, in addition to consideration of the former Municipal Office lands.

## Recommendations – Parkland Supplies, Distribution and Needs

49. Continue to target a municipal-wide **parkland provision of 3.0 hectares per 1,000 residents**. Additional parkland will be required to improve access and to serve future growth in urban areas.
50. Address the need for active parkland in **southwest Mitchell** 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.
51. Declare the undeveloped **Russelldale park block** as surplus and initiate the process for disposition. Redirect any proceeds back into the municipal parks and recreational system.

## 7.3 Park Design & Renewal

Since the pandemic, parks and outdoor facilities have experienced a surge in popularity. These community assets have taught us the importance of social connections and have become vital to our wellbeing. Along with greater use has come an increase in requests for improvements that serve both broad needs and specialized uses, such as accommodating special events, athletics, passive recreation, open space buffers, green space and habitat conservation, beautification, and more.

In recent years, the Municipality has been investing in its parks system by upgrading amenities within several sites. A keen focus must continue to be placed on making the best use of existing park sites, keeping parks relevant considering changing demographics, and maintaining existing assets to appropriate standards.

From our observations, the Municipality's parks system is well maintained, but some older parks contain aging assets and lack barrier-free features, contemporary park amenities, and shade. Strategic improvements and enhancements will help the Municipality continue to respond to emerging pressures, changing demographics, asset management, community priorities, and more. The possibilities for parkland renewal are limitless, but may include enhanced landscaping, provision of shade and comfort amenities, facility upgrades, accessibility improvements, and more.

Designing parks requires a strong understanding of community needs, contemporary design practices, operational requirements, and programmatic considerations. The following are best practices that the Municipality may adopt in designing new or redeveloped parks. Many of these practices are already in place, but are undocumented.

- a) Promote **universal accessibility** in all parks, such as wheelchair access, pathways, and ramps to play structures, etc. This includes reducing physical barriers when accessing outdoor recreation experiences, following *The Design of Public Spaces Standard* guidebook.
- b) Provide both junior and senior play opportunities in parks with **playgrounds**, where possible. Use engineered wood fibre for surfacing, at minimum. Ensure appropriate sight lines to play areas.
- c) Parks should be designed to allow for **flexibility and seasonality** with a diversity of activities that cater to all ages and abilities. Consider activities and programming for the growing **older adult population**, including increased daytime use.
- d) **Unstructured open space** within parks that allows for a wide variety of active and passive uses throughout all seasons is considered an asset.
- e) Consider new and creative ideas and encourage **partnerships** that help the Municipality achieve its vision.
- f) Locate **shade structures and trees** central to amenities. Consideration may be given to shade pavilions, shade sails over or near playground equipment, and tree planting to protect users from the harmful effects of the sun.
- g) Provide informal **seating** opportunities. Locate seating in shaded areas, along accessible routes, and in proximity to active amenities.
- h) Maintained **pathways** should be a minimum of 3.0m wide, unless otherwise required, with clearance along pathways (waste bins, benches, trees, bike racks, etc.) for maintenance vehicles.

- i) Locate **garbage receptacles** close to park entrances and pavilions to facilitate maintenance and convenience.
- j) Select **materials and equipment** (e.g., park furniture) that are not easily vandalized and can be easily sourced for repair and/or replacement.
- k) Provide **consistent branded signage** at all public parks identifying the park name, address, and current municipal branding. Additional signage should include emergency contact information and regulatory requirements (e.g., non-permitted uses, park hours, etc.). Consideration may also be given to wayfinding signage and parks system mapping to assist users in finding and accessing other nearby parks.
- l) Encourage **public art and historical commemoration plaques** at appropriate locations, in keeping with relevant guidelines. Consider opportunities to support Indigenous themes and education within the parks system.
- m) Use non-invasive native species in all **plantings**.
- n) Design and manage parks to **minimize tick and animal host habitats**.
- o) Follow **CPTED** (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles to enhance community security and safety features.
- p) Include **buffer space** between pathways and adjacent lot lines (minimum of five metres when abutting a residential property and two metres when abutting other land uses), as well as high-activity zones and residential lot lines.
- q) Provide **naturalized buffers** adjacent to natural features. Where appropriate, consider the piloting of naturalization initiatives in under-utilized portions of parks to support habitat creation and other environmental objectives.

Park renewal and redevelopment projects should be accompanied by public consultation (including input from the County of Perth's Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee or individuals with lived experience), park-specific master plans, and facility fit diagrams to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital works. The timing of capital works will be influenced by needs determined through consultation, demand indicators, coordination of works, and the availability of funding.

Recommended in the 2016 Master Plan, greening initiatives should also be considered to solidify West Perth's commitment to environmental stewardship, which is an important community objective. Examples include the naturalization of open spaces, forestry plans, beautification programs, nature interpretation, education to reduce encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas, and waste diversion in parks. Tree planting and naturalization initiatives may be considered for passive/open space areas within selected park sites, such as Sunset Park in northwest Mitchell.

## Recommendations – Park Design & Renewal

- 52. Maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort** 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.

## Recommendations – Park Design & Renewal

53. Create a **consistent standard of supporting amenities** in parks, including seating, garbage receptacles, shade, emergency location signage, etc. in order to ensure minimum levels of service and support sustainability.
54. Establish consistent and **high quality signage** at all parks, trails, and municipal facilities to enhance branding and wayfinding.
55. Initiate a site-specific planning exercise to guide the **long-term improvement and renewal of Lions Park**. 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.
56. Prepare a **Greening Strategy** 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.

## 7.4 Park Animation & Outdoor Programming

The Municipality's parks are well positioned to address most traditional park uses such as organized activities (sports and events) and unorganized pursuits (such as walking, picnicking and informal play). Many of these activities are organized and run by the community, with the Municipality being responsible for park maintenance and bookings as well as a growing array of activities (e.g., pole walking, etc.). An online event calendar exists to promote area initiatives and a listing of parks is available on the website.

Increasingly, communities are animating their park spaces through programming and new forms of community engagement. For West Perth, the mission, vision, and goals for this plan encourage a broadening of park activities that include:

- all ages and abilities, including older adults
- year-round use of parks, including more off-season (e.g., winter) activities
- community engagement, including more events and programs within parks
- partnerships to support broader uses

Expanding the scope of park usage engages a broader range of residents and visitors, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization. Some examples are included below for future reference (not a complete list).

**Table 26: Examples of Potential Park Programming and Activities**

Types of Park Activities	Sample Activities (not a complete list)
<p><b>Events (one time)</b></p> <p>Purpose: Meet, Gather, Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special event, festival or fair (Canada Day, etc.)</li> <li>• Photography contest (in parks)</li> <li>• Snowman building contest</li> <li>• Easter egg hunt</li> <li>• Fireworks</li> <li>• Food trucks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programs (recurring)</b></p> <p>Purpose: Learn, Play, Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day camps</li> <li>• Music in the park / concerts</li> <li>• Movie nights</li> <li>• Farmers market / art show</li> <li>• Sensory walks</li> <li>• Storytime trails (in cooperation with public library)</li> <li>• Trail / path walking group</li> <li>• Biking group</li> <li>• Yoga, Tai Chi, etc. in the park</li> <li>• Outdoor boot camp, stretching classes</li> <li>• Group education program – native plants, cultural history, wildlife</li> <li>• Teen leadership programs, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, etc.</li> <li>• Camp out in the park</li> <li>• Unstructured free play group</li> <li>• Activity of the week – playground game</li> <li>• Bird house painting &amp; install in parks</li> <li>• Reading / book club</li> <li>• Outdoor arts &amp; crafts (rock painting)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sports and Recreation</b></p> <p>Purpose: Learn, Participate, Compete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soccer</li> <li>• Baseball</li> <li>• Basketball</li> <li>• Football (tackle, flag)</li> <li>• Cricket</li> <li>• Pickleball</li> <li>• Tennis</li> <li>• Beach volleyball</li> <li>• Ball hockey</li> <li>• Bocce</li> <li>• Lawn bowling</li> <li>• Table tennis</li> <li>• Archery</li> <li>• Disc golf</li> <li>• Chess, checkers</li> <li>• Obstacle, ninja courses</li> <li>• Skateboarding, scootering</li> <li>• BMX biking</li> <li>• Ice skating</li> <li>• Running (individual or group)</li> <li>• Biking</li> <li>• Playground use</li> <li>• Outdoor fitness</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Rock climbing</li> <li>• Tobogganing</li> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Urban poling</li> <li>• Snowshoeing</li> <li>• Cross-country skiing</li> <li>• Tobogganing</li> <li>• RC/Drone flying</li> <li>• Informal play (frisbee, kickball, tag, skipping rope, hide and seek, kite flying, manhunt, cornhole, etc.)</li> </ul>

Types of Park Activities	Sample Activities (not a complete list)	
<p><b>Community and Environmental</b></p> <p>Purpose: Explore, Educate, Relax</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnicking, BBQ</li> <li>• Socializing (e.g., discussion circles)</li> <li>• Weddings, family reunions</li> <li>• Gardening</li> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Bird watching</li> <li>• Forest bathing, reflection and respite</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife observation &amp; sketching</li> <li>• Dog walking</li> <li>• Indigenous placemaking and experiences</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• Park clean-up / restoration group (e.g., trail / path maintenance, invasive species removal, etc.)</li> </ul>

The Community Services Department has resources to offer selected activities; however, additional staff positions, volunteers, or partnered delivery may be required to expand beyond current resources.

*“People need a reason to come to the park and stay there in order to benefit from its social environment. Park quality, amenities like playgrounds, and, critically, events and activities help create the conditions that draw people out to meet each other... Community-led initiatives that improve the physical and social environments of parks are crucial. ”*

- Park People. Sparking Change. 2017.

### Recommendations – Park Animation & Outdoor Programming

57. Support **year-round park use and outdoor education and programming** through community development activities, special event coordination, and partnerships.



West Perth Thames Nature Trail

## Section 8.

# Trail Network Assessment

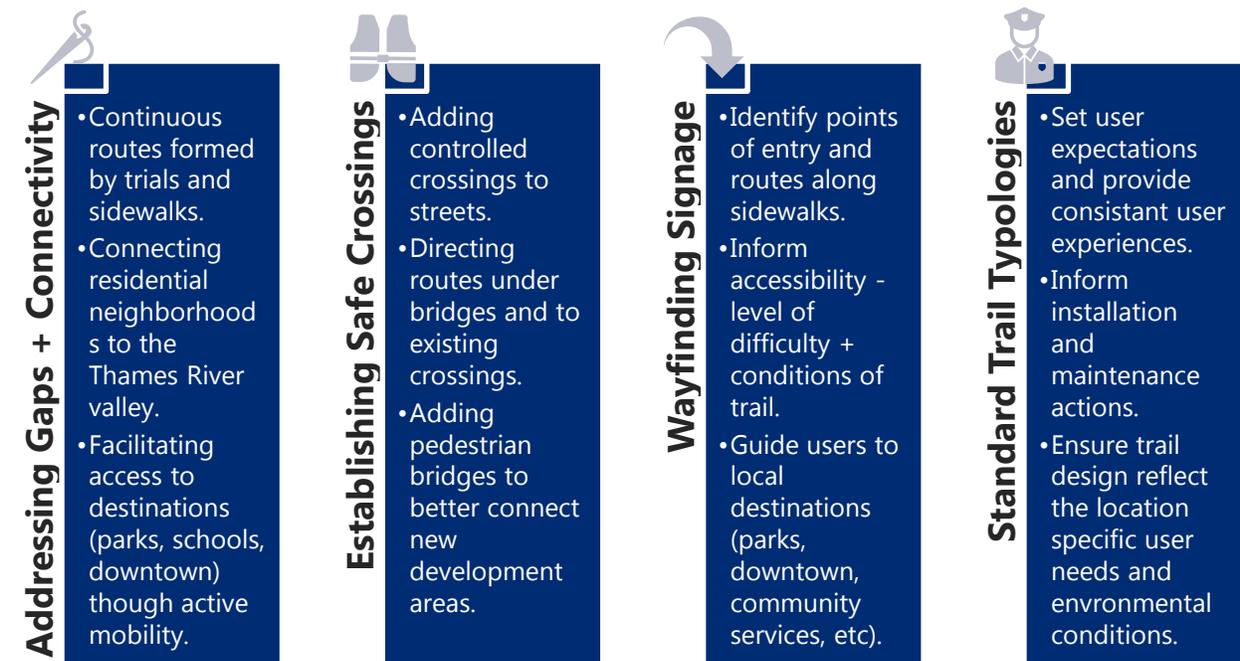
### 8.1 Applying the Master Plan Vision to the Trail Network

Like other recreation assets, the approach to future trail planning strives to align with the overall vision of fostering collaboration, inclusivity, and unique identity – working together to deliver accessible and safe recreational spaces and activities.

The long-term goal is to achieve a universally accessible, convenient, and connected network of walking and cycling trails that not only encourage active transportation but also create a beautiful experience navigating West Perth by foot, bicycle, and /or mobility device.

Through the engagement process and analysis of community trials, an approach to achieving the ‘Vision’ was identified. The following figure summarizes the approach to approach and methodology to improving West Perth’s trail system and establishing a foundation for future trail expansion.

**Figure 30: A Foundation for Trail Improvements in West Perth**



## 8.2 Review of Existing Trails

The existing trail network in Mitchell includes four main trails, totaling approximately 15 km of trail. Approximately 11 km of these trails are designated accessible with a combination of asphalt and granular surfacing. There are approximately 4 km are nature trails with compacted earth surface and/or mown lawn treatment.

**Table 27: Municipal Trails Listing**

Trail	Notes	Ward	Length (km)
<b>Lion's Loop Trail</b>	Overlaps with the West Perth Thames Nature Trail (North) and passes through Lions Park, providing a loop trail network around Mill Pond. Trails are fairly accessible, comprised of asphalt and stone dust.	Mitchell Ward	0.8
<b>West Perth Thames Nature Trail (North)</b>	Consists primarily of a large trailhead with parking and connects with Lion's Loop Trail at Centennial Park.	Mitchell Ward	-
<b>West Perth Thames Nature Trail (South)</b>	Connects Stacey Park and Kinsmen Park through the Thames River valley. Trails have a moderate to low level of accessibility, comprised of compacted earth and stone dust.	Mitchell Ward	<10
<b>Woodlot Trail</b>	Connects to the Thames Nature Trail, Wetland Trail and Kinsmen Park. Trails have a moderate to low level of accessibility, comprised of compacted earthen surface and mown lawn.	Mitchell Ward	<1
<b>West Perth Wetland Trail</b>	Connects to the Thames Nature Trail and Kinsmen Park. The trails have a moderate to low level of accessibility, comprised of mown turf lawn.	Mitchell Ward	<2
<b>Demonstration Forest Trail</b>	Area formerly known as Whirl Creek River Flats. This is not a formalized trail, however, a popular walking route and area. Route is primarily mown turf lawn with sections of compacted granular and compacted earthen surface.	Mitchell Ward	<1
<b>Keterson Park Walking Loop</b>	Recently completed stone dust walking loop within Keterson Park.	Mitchell Ward	<1
<b>Fullarton Conservation Area Trail</b>	Connects with Fullarton Ball Park. Trails have a moderate to low level of accessibility, comprised of compacted earthen surface.	Fullarton Ward	<2

A privately-owned property (Sawyer Preservation Woodlot Association) also offers a network of trails for area residents. In addition to formal trails, there are several long-distance cycling routes that link West Perth with the surrounding counties. These are informal routes that do not include designated cycling lanes.

While these trails provide residents access to some of the beautiful natural areas and parks that West Perth has to offer, West Perth residents are still finding the barriers in the system and see opportunities for improvement.

Meetings and trail walks were conducted with key stakeholders including municipal staff, West Perth BIA, and the Environment, Forestry & Trails Committee to inform the review of existing trails. Participants discussed what is working and what isn't working within the existing trail system. Key themes include:

- A need for better connectivity to address the abrupt termination of trails, informal trails, and road crossings.
- Desire for better visibility and promotion of trails and leverage routes to bring people to community amenities and business areas.
- How to unlock and improve the opportunities around the landfill, woodlot, and wetland site as this is a destination with many desirable attributes.

The table below summaries key observations identified during stakeholder sessions and field review of West Perth's trail system:

**Table 28: Key Observations Relating to the existing Trail Network**

	<b>Barriers and Observations</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Overall Trail System</b>	<p>Hard to navigate for new community members and visitors.</p> <p>Artistic trailhead branding elements with heron; however, is only applied to major trailheads/gateways.</p> <p>Missing sidewalk connections to and along key access routes to community amenities such as parks, schools, and services.</p> <p>Quality of surface material due to construction design i.e. inadequate granular base composition.</p>	<p>Provide clear wayfinding signage delineating walking/cycling routes.</p> <p>Establish a trail hierarchy that outlines standard construction and maintenance details, accessibility features and level, and application within the community context.</p> <p>Establish standards to facilitate consistent trail amenities such as wayfinding, trailheads, seating, strategic lighting, and shade.</p> <p>Identify key routes and fill the gaps in sidewalk infrastructure to facilitate safe pedestrian access.</p>

	<b>Barriers and Observations</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Trail System (Mitchel)</b>	<p>Disconnected walking trails lacking connectivity and points of access across the community.</p> <p>Lack of adequate and safe pedestrian crossings for trail access and continuity.</p> <p>Trail routes disappear when they merge with granular parking areas.</p> <p>Surfacing treatments change within a 'trip' route and there are key connections to destinations such as the West Perth Wetlands/Park that do not meet accessibility standards.</p> <p>The dormant landfill and woodlot area do not have formalized trails and access to the woodlot has a steep slope.</p> <p>Motorized vehicle use in woodlots is compromising trail surfaces and sensitive ecosystems.</p> <p>Grass trail around wetland ponds is well maintained and even, however, may limit users with mobility issues. As a birding destination, this may warrant an upgrade.</p>	<p>Close gaps in the trail system through extension of trails and highly visible roadway connections.</p> <p>Establish safe trail crossings through trail route changes and formalized controlled crossings.</p> <p>Solidify trail loop routes and provide consistent surfacing along routes.</p> <p>Establish an accessible trail route from Thames River Place, through, Lion's Park and to Wetlands/Park to form a core 'spine' of north/south connectivity.</p> <p>Develop new trails/routes to create east/west connections to the main trail 'spine'.</p> <p>Work to unlock issues with landfill designation to unlock trail's potential for birding tourism.</p> <p>Establish an accessible sloped ramp from the lawn pathway down the slope with a switchback to provide a safe path of travel into the woodlot.</p> <p>Formalize woodlot trails and address problem areas through LID design measures.</p>
<b>Rural Settlement Areas and Connections</b>	<p>Safe and convenient pedestrian routes across busy roads,</p> <p>Limited provision for rural active transportation travel between settlement areas.</p> <p>Lack of dedicated cycling facilities, amenities and designated routes.</p> <p>ATV use is growing in popularity, however there are limited facilities.</p>	<p>Establish sidewalk/trail connections between residential homes, businesses and recreation facilities.</p> <p>Establish walking loops within rural park/recreation lands.</p> <p>Look for opportunities to form ATV routes and leverage ATV tourism. Discourage activity in unwanted areas by providing designated facilities.</p>

### Recommendations – Review of Existing Trails

58. Complete infill of **trail gaps** to complete connections.

### 8.3 Removing Barriers to Participation

Barriers are not only physical, and future trail design and programming need to consider mechanisms for mitigating barriers to use. Barriers can be derived from differing cognitive abilities and mental processes experienced by potential trail users. Barriers can be socially based and stem from issues related to income, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, health, and gender. If a user feels that a trail, or a portion of a trail, is unsafe, uncomfortable, challenging, disconnected, or inconvenient, they will be less likely to participate.

**Table 29: Common and West Perth Specific Barriers to Using Trails**

Common barriers to use related to trails:	Barriers identified for West Perth trail users:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern or fear of a new trail experience for accessibility reasons and/or other anxieties.</li> <li>• Fear for safety after sundown and/or in secluded areas.</li> <li>• Unavailability or unknown locations of rest areas and distances when selecting a route.</li> <li>• Inability to read English for navigation and trail information purposes.</li> <li>• Access in areas where people live and work, particularly low-income areas and factory/industrial employment areas.</li> <li>• Worry over judgment and/or suspicion when using the trail.</li> <li>• Concern over access to amenities such as washrooms and drinking water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear trail routes and access points.</li> <li>• Lack of safe and convenient road crossings.</li> <li>• Limit visibility due to inadequate clear zones.</li> <li>• Uneven earthen trail surfacing that restricts jogging and cycling.</li> <li>• Narrow trails that impede passing users.</li> <li>• Limited accessibility for lawn and earthen surfaced trails.</li> <li>• Lack of access to Thames River corridor trails due to lacking pedestrian infrastructure within road system.</li> <li>• Mitchell Downtown is not very walking and cycling-friendly.</li> <li>• Lack of safe/desirable on-road cycling routes.</li> <li>• Lack of connection to G2G Rail Trail in Monkton.</li> </ul>

The following documents will help to guide the design of trails to be universally accessible, safe and welcoming to all users.

#### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

1st, 2nd and 3rd generation CPTED principles provide guidance on orienting the built environment to create safe, inclusive and welcoming community spaces. Strategies that improve a sense of safety and increase pedestrian use of trails include improved lighting along primary routes, maintaining sightlines, wayfinding that clearly marks entrances and exits, and consistent upkeep of trail amenities. Green City Partnerships has produced a document called Best Management Practices for CPTED in Natural Landscapes that outlines strategies for maintaining safety specifically along nature trails. 2nd generation CPTED principles also include the need to program or encourage users to be in a space to provide natural

surveillance. Likewise, the very nature of bringing people together to build social relationships and community ownership in a public space improves the sense of safety and wellbeing.

Understanding how these principles translate to municipal planning and design is important to help inform future next steps. Some specific design considerations that have been employed by municipalities include:

- Providing good visibility by others by having routes pass through well-used public spaces.
- Provide the ability to find and obtain help: Signage that tells users where they are along the trail system.
- Provide “escape” routes from isolated areas at regular intervals.
- Maintain sight lines and sight distances that are appropriately open to allow good visibility by users.
- Provide trailhead parking in highly visible areas.
- Minimize routing close to features that create hiding places such as breaks in building facades, stairwells, dense shrubs and fences.
- Design underpasses and bridges so that users can see the end of the feature as well as the area beyond.
- Signs near entrances to isolated areas can be used to inform users that the area is isolated and suggest alternative routes.
- Adequate lighting or lighting ‘refuge locations’ where users can reach a safe place.

### **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification**

A certification program designed to identify specific measures for improving accessibility of a building, site or public space, including front country primary use trails and pedestrian routes.

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

Through the legislation, a specific target has been set to make the entire province accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. To achieve this goal, the Government of Ontario has adopted Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment. This document prescribes specific guidelines and standards needed to ensure universal barrier-free access. These standards apply to the new construction or redevelopment of both on-road and off-road active transportation infrastructure such as multi-use pathways and multi-use trails.

At a minimum, the Municipality needs to apply the standards outlined in the Built Environment Standards to all new and redeveloped primary trails and pedestrian routes. Ideally, designated existing trails would be upgraded to meet the standards.

For multi-use trails, the AODA provides guidance on various design considerations. West Perth should apply guidelines outlined for ‘Recreational Trails’, which differ from more rigorous standards for the built environment. Following these guidelines is not only a legislative requirement, but the standards should be considered minimum unless the trail’s location, surrounding environment, or desired user experience warrants their exceedance. Sections 80.8 and 80.10 of the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment provide the technical requirements for off-road multi-use trails, which include the following:

- Minimum clear width 1.0m;
- Minimum headroom clearance of 2.1m above trail;

- Surfaces are to be firm, stable with minimal glare;
- Preferred maximum running / longitudinal slope of 5%; with up to 10% acceptable over short distances;
- Maximum cross slope of 2%;
- High tonal or textural changes to distinguish the edge; and
- Standards also address changes in level, openings in the surface, edge protection (e.g., near water).

In addition to adhering to the AODA, all active transportation network signage and wayfinding should be easily understood and detectable by users of all abilities. This includes using simplified text, visual icons, and clear and contrasting colors, which help create signage mapping, and messaging that is informative, legible, and visible. Wayfinding and signage systems should also clearly communicate which trails are accessible so that users can make an informed personal decision about which pathways they will use.

Include **accessibility parameters** as part of trail classification and market standards to trail users, enabling participants to understand the level of challenge and make informed choices regarding their experience.

Trail routes to limit the use of stairs and provide alternative access options or ways to participate when stairs are deemed necessary to facilitate access. Note that all routes identified in the plan can be achieved with no stairs and longitudinal slopes under 5%.

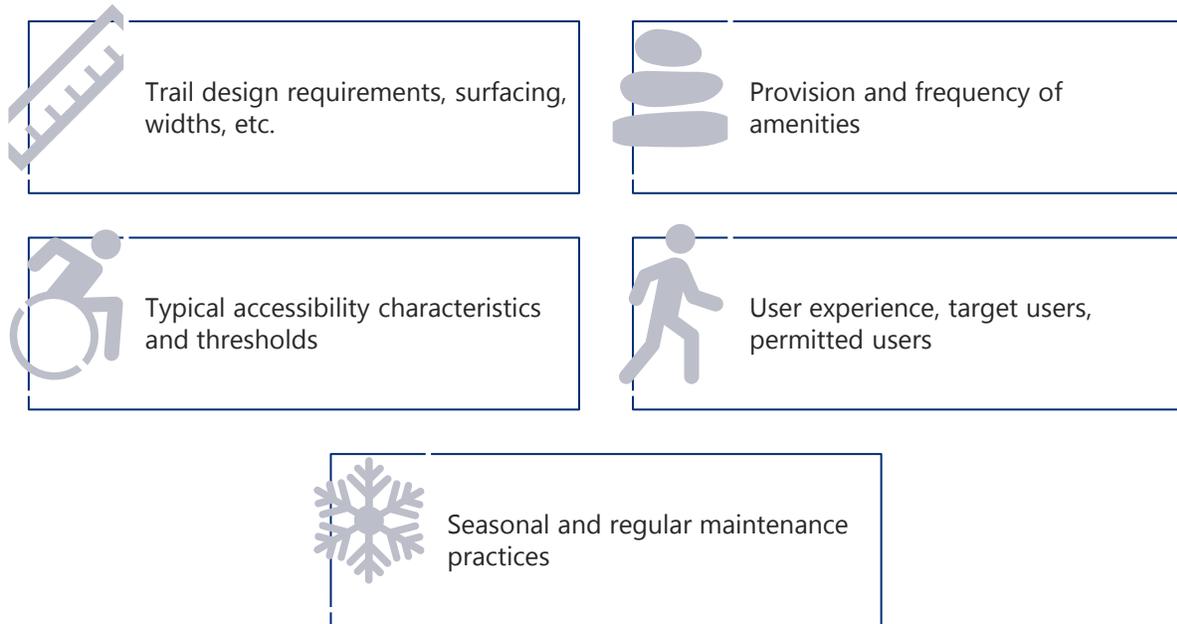
## 8.4 Trail Classification

A key component to developing a successful trail system is the creation of a trail classification system to help enhance, connect, and provide accessibility to the various types of trails within West Perth.

This classification serves as a valuable reference for both those maintaining and designing the trails and for users interested in them. Labeling trails with a consistent and easy-to-understand classification helps set expectations about accessibility, safety, and overall experience.

Additionally, trail classification informs the required level of maintenance for each trail, ensuring that upkeep is aligned with the specific demands and conditions of each trail type. Ultimately, this approach creates a more predictable and inclusive experience for a diverse range of users across the entire network.

**Figure 31: Key components of the Trail Classification**



The classification should be treated as a living document and updated to reflect the changing needs of the network and reflect lessons learned. Refer to the Appendix for Trail Classification parameters.

**Existing trails** have a mix of intermittent surface treatments comprised of asphalt, stone dust, lawn, and compacted earth surfacing. Surface widths and clear zones vary and do not meet industry standards for safety and facilitating the full spectrum of potential users.

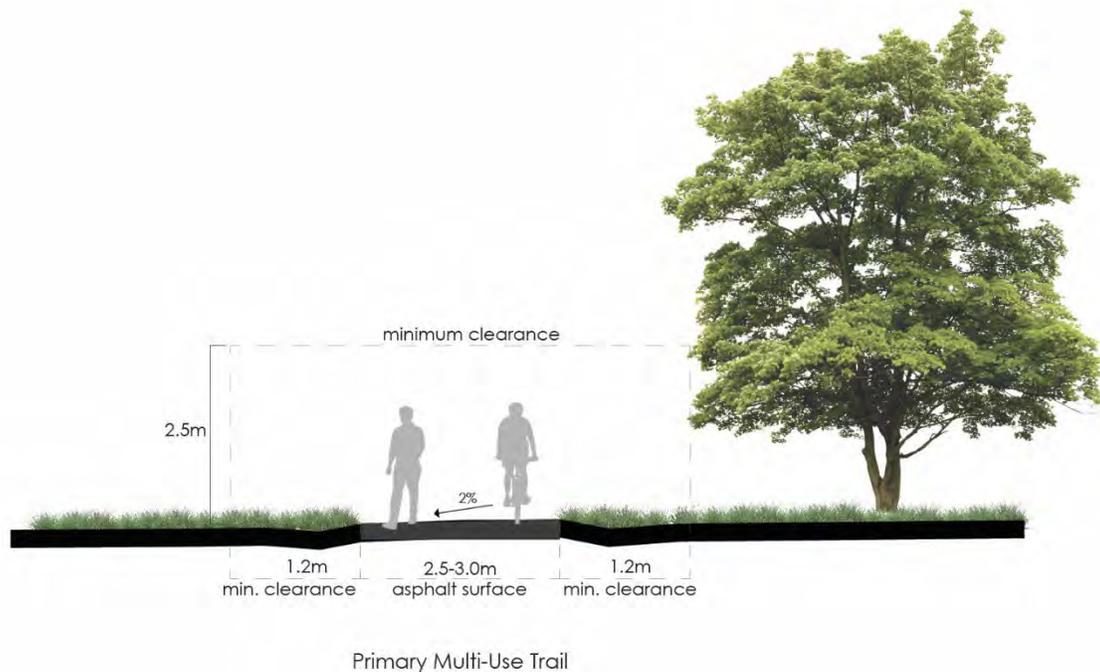
**All existing trails will require upgrades under the new trail classification.** However, this may be accomplished over time as trails require lifecycle upgrades. The Master Plan aims to provide quantities and costs for the ultimate future conditions of all existing and proposed trails. As existing trails are functioning infrastructure, there is **no immediate need to address upgrades.**

**Table 30: Recommended Trail Classification Hierarchy**

<b>Trail Type</b>	<b>Amenities</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Surface</b>
<p><b>TYPE 1</b> <b>Primary Multi-Use Trail</b></p>	<p>Primary Trails include asphalt paved facilities that offer routes through high-traffic park areas and commuter connections (work, school). These trails should offer the highest level of comfort and accessibility. Therefore, these trail types are best suited along routes with greater usage, signature trail routes (such as routes through Lions Park), or areas with high amounts of trip activity.</p>	<p>High-use areas. High likelihood of low mobility users. Routes that provide access to amenities/ services. Option for winter Maintenance.</p>	<p>Asphalt 2.5 - 3.0m width Note: 3.0m is optimal. 5% Max. running slope</p>
<p><b>TYPE 2</b> <b>Secondary Multi-Use Trail</b></p>	<p>Secondary Pathways include well-maintained compacted stone dust facilities that offer routes through medium-traffic park areas and high-traffic naturalized areas. While they maintain a high level of accessibility, they may experience lower traffic, be unpaved, and lack maintenance during the winter months.</p>	<p>medium-use park areas, and high-use naturalized areas. Lower cost alternative to asphalt trails. No winter Maintenance.</p>	<p>Compacted Stone Dust 2.5 - 3.0m width 5% Max. running slope</p>
<p><b>TYPE 3</b> <b>Nature Trails</b></p>	<p>Nature trails are maintained, sanctioned trails through natural areas. Given their immersion with sensitive natural features, these facilities are often constructed using woodchips and/or other evenly graded compacted earth. Frequently, these trails are located within flood zones or prone to ponding and may require a more engineered solution in problem areas.</p>	<p>Low-volume trails. Sensitive and flood-prone landscapes. Creating a 'connect with nature' experience. Trails where it is beneficial to deter cyclist traffic.</p>	<p>Wood chips and/or compacted earth 1.0 - 2.5m Width</p>
<p><b>TYPE 4</b> <b>Urban Greenway</b></p>	<p>Urban Greenways exist in road corridors by enhancing road networks and walkability/accessibility. This can occur in multiple ways: providing wayfinding signage to destinations and/or offroad trail lines, sidewalk widening, asphalt multi-use paths instead of sidewalks on one side of the road, cycling lanes, and sharing the road provisions. The purpose of this trail type is to improve municipal infrastructure and connection to community destinations such as parks, off-road trails, schools, etc.</p>	<p>When a route is facilitated through a street corridor. Directing users along a street when a trail is not feasible. Enhancing the non-vehicular user experience to make it distinct from other streets.</p>	<p>Asphalt or Concrete On-road and Off-road treatment options. 2.5 – 3.0 width (off-road treatment)</p>

**Figure 32: Type 1 – Primary Multi-use Trail**

**Primary Trails** include asphalt paved facilities that offer routes through high-traffic park areas and commuter connections (work, school). These trails should offer the highest level of comfort and accessibility.



**Width:** 2.5-3.0m wide

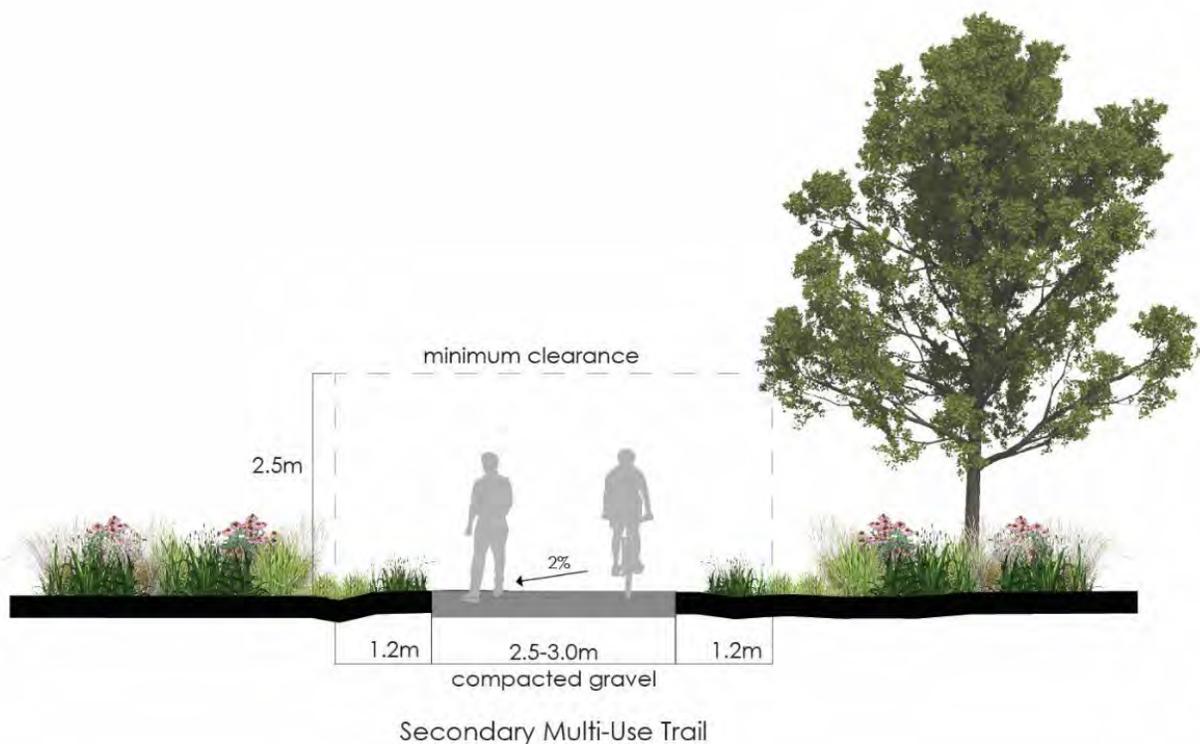
**Key elements:** Asphalt surfacing, lighting, shade trees, highly accessible max. 5% running slope, smooth and even surfacing wayfinding signage.

**Users:** Pedestrians, cyclists, mobility aids including electric mobility scooters, electric bikes and scooters, equestrians

**Why:** Create safe, universally accessible, high-use off-road pedestrian/cyclist-oriented connections between neighbourhoods and services to expand day/night and seasonal access to trails.

**Figure 33: Type 2 – Secondary Multi-use Trail**

**Secondary Pathways** include well-maintained compacted stone dust facilities that offer routes through medium-traffic park areas and high-traffic naturalized areas. While they maintain a high level of accessibility, they may experience lower traffic, be unpaved, and lack maintenance during the winter months.



**Width: 2.5-3.0m wide**

**Key elements:** Compacted granular surfacing, lighting at key locations, shade trees, highly accessible max. 5% running slope, smooth and even surfacing, and ample wayfinding signage.

**Users:** Pedestrians, cyclists, mobility aids including electric mobility scooters, electric bikes and scooters, equestrians

**Why:** Create safe, universally accessible, medium-use off-road pedestrian/cyclist-oriented connections between neighbourhoods and services.

**Figure 34: Type 3 – Nature Trail**

**Nature Trails** are maintained, sanctioned trails through natural areas. Given their immersion with sensitive natural features, these facilities are often constructed using woodchips and/or other evenly graded compacted earth. Frequently, these trails are located within flood zones or prone to ponding and may require a more engineered solution in problem areas.



**Width: 1.0 – 2.5m wide**

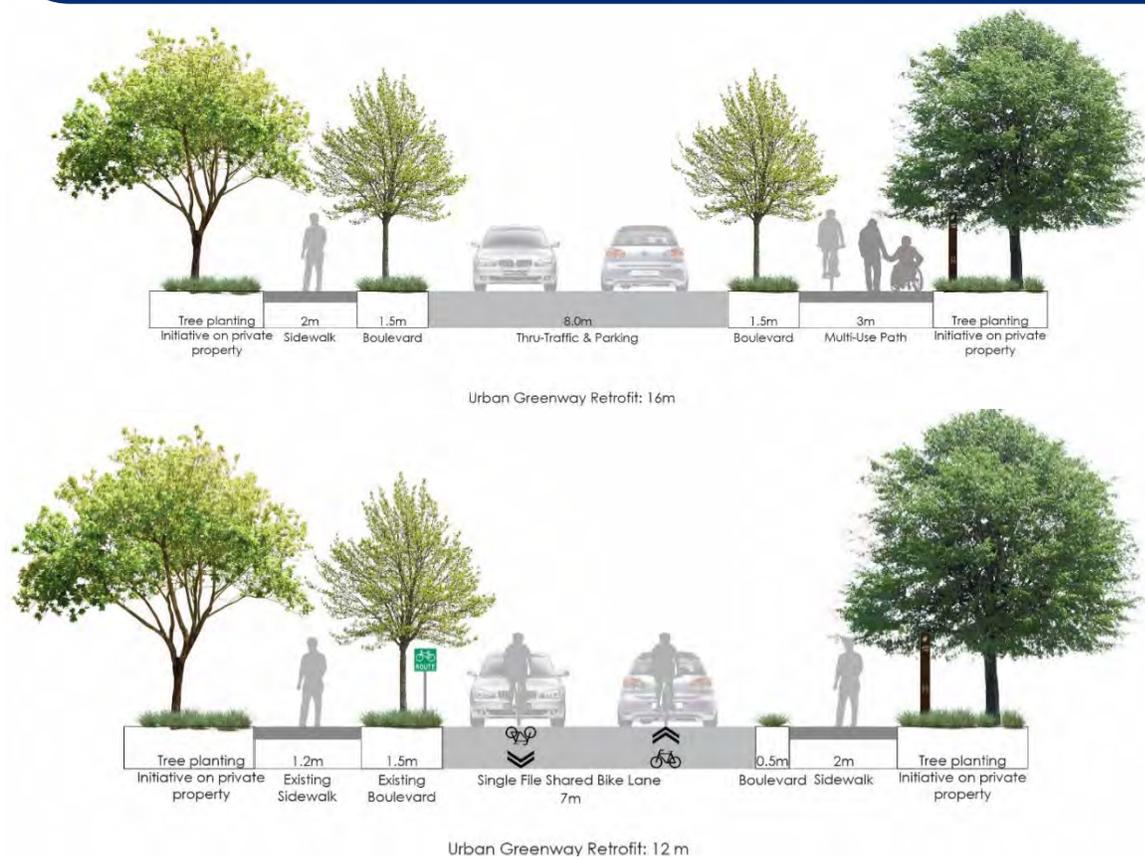
**Key elements:** mulch or compacted earth surfacing, longitudinal slope less than 8%, wayfinding signage noting the level of challenge, clear sightlines.

**Users:** Pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians

**Why:** Improve access to natural areas and reduce the impact of unsanctioned trails in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Figure 35: Type 4 – Urban Greenway**

**Urban Greenways** exist in road corridors by enhancing road networks and walkability/accessibility. This can occur in multiple ways: providing wayfinding signage to destinations and/or offroad trail lines, sidewalk widening, asphalt multi-use paths instead of sidewalks on one side of the road, cycling lanes, and sharing the road provisions. The purpose of this trail type is to improve municipal infrastructure and connection to community destinations such as parks, off-road trails, schools, etc. The design of Urban Greenways through downtown cores, such as recommended in Mitchell, require a more detailed and site specific design approach to address redesign of vehicular lanes, parking, street trees, pedestrian realm, and to accommodate cyclists. Refer to examples provided in section ‘Trail Tourism and Downtown Hubs’.



**Width:** 12-16m

**Key elements:** Widened sidewalks with a buffer from traffic, shade trees, traffic calming measures, separated or shared bike lanes, speed reductions, seating

**Users:** Pedestrians, cyclists, mobility aids, vehicles

**Why:** Create a pleasant pedestrian-oriented route to encourage active mobility within the urban streets to connect access to community destinations and off-road trails.

## Recommendations – Trail Classification

59. Complete **trail upgrades** to the new trail classification standards in **high-volume areas** (Lions Park, main route through Thames River valley).
60. Complete **trail upgrades** to the new trail classification standards for **remaining trails** with lifecycle renewal.

## 8.5 Trail Network

Most of the trails in the proposed network map are existing paths that could be upgraded, connected to nearby trails, slightly expanded to link with wider transportation routes, or simply require consistent maintenance. More major projects, like greenways, offer a chance to significantly improve residents' quality of life, particularly for those with mobility challenges. Linking the downtown core to safe, pedestrian-friendly, and enjoyable routes will benefit local businesses and foster a stronger sense of community.

The proposed upgrades are intended to be implemented as lifecycle renewals occur and/or through phased budgeting to work towards consistent surfacing along main spine trails.

**Table 31: Type and Length of Proposed Trails**

Trail Type	Total Trail Type	Approx. Existing	Approx. New
<b>TYPE 1</b> Primary Multi-Use Trail	102m	50m	52m
<b>TYPE 2</b> Secondary Multi-Use Trail	191m	87m	104m
<b>TYPE 3</b> Nature Trails	27m	120m	(Reduction, upgrade amenity access routes to TYPE 2)
<b>TYPE 4</b> Urban Greenway	351m	0	351m
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>671m</b>	<b>257m</b>	<b>507m</b>

Note: Several 'new' trails are formalizing existing unsanctioned trails. New trails are primarily focused on closing gaps and proposed trails within new development areas.

## High Level Costing for Trail Development

The following table outlines estimated costs for implementing the trail recommendations. The costs address the full replacement of both existing and proposed trail routes, including infrastructure. There are additional costs related to studies and design that will be required, and the outcomes of these exercises may result in increased costs. The costing provided should be used as a high-level framework to assess budgets as projects are planned.

**Table 32: High-Level Trail Costing by Trail Classification Type**

Trail Classification Type	Total Trail Length	Trail Infrastructure Cost	Crossing Infrastructure Cost	Other Amenity Cost	Subtotal	Contingency 30%	Grand Total
<b>TYPE 1</b> Primary Multi-Use Trail	102m	\$30,000	\$450,000	\$50,000	\$530,000	\$159,000	\$689,000
<b>TYPE 2</b> Secondary Multi-Use Trail	191m	\$50,000	\$400,000	\$30,000	\$480,000	\$144,000	\$624,000
<b>TYPE 3</b> Nature Trails	27 m	\$5,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$4,500	\$19,500
<b>TYPE 4</b> Urban Greenway	351 m	(Dependent on Design Needs)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Total</b>	<b>743m</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>	<b>\$850,000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$1,025,000</b>	<b>\$307,500</b>	<b>\$1,332,500</b>

Refer to the **Proposed Trail Network Mapping** (Figure 36) for more details regarding alignment and trail classification designations.

## Addressing the Transition from Existing to New Standards

New trails and trail upgrades will feature increased widths and surface treatments that will contribute to a more inclusive and safe trail experience. Existing trails that do not conform to the new recommended standards are still valuable assets to the overall trail system in their current state and do not require immediate upgrades. A phased approach will result in short-term irregularities in trail conditions, which can be managed through public information postings and strategic start/stop points of upgrades to minimize awkward transitions.

## **Closing the Gap in the North and South Sections of the West Perth Thames Nature Trail**

Highways 8 and 23 present significant barriers to users accessing and traversing the trails within the Thames River corridor. The existing West Perth Thames Nature Trail consists of a North and South route with a significant gap between them, which this Master Plan aims to connect. The North trail terminates at the Lion's Park public washroom (intersection of Blanchard St. and Hwy 8), and the South trail terminates at Stacey Park (intersection of St. George St. and Adelaide St.)

There are three options presented in the plan that are to be further explored. Implementing one or more of the options will significantly benefit access to this premier route. The river, topography, and existing infrastructure create unique barriers and varying cost implications. Coordination with infrastructure projects and cost-sharing partnerships with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Perth County and/or MTO will be required. The route options include:

1. Route the trail from Lion's Parks along Hwy 8 to the existing St. George signalized intersection and down St. George St. to Stacey Park. St. George St. will require Green Street improvements to foster a safer and more appealing environment. Recommendations to consider parallel parking along the side of the Main Street facing buildings and parking in the boulevard replaced with vegetated barriers to separate trail users from the parking lot. This route is the lower-cost option and can be implemented in phases. Implementation of this option would benefit the system, even if other options are executed.
2. A signalized intersection at Hwy 8 and 23 would provide good connectivity for trail users and facilitate access to those living on the west side of Mitchell. The trail route would continue through Howie Morenz Memorial Gardens along the river corridor to a new pedestrian bridge crossing to connect to Stacey Park. A pedestrian bridge and a controlled crossing of Hwy 23 at Cobourg Street or Eleanor Street would provide a high-quality nature-based trail experience and more equitable access to West Mitchell residents.
3. Alternatively, a bridge underpass trail would allow users to travel from Lions Park into the river valley without interacting with Hwy 8. The current span of the vehicular bridge is not wide enough to accommodate a trail. However, the Municipality should identify and coordinate an underpass trail when the bridge reaches its lifespan and is reconstructed.

## **Improving Safety and Accessibility**

Steep slopes are a particular issue with trails through river valleys and nature areas. Though installing stairs may appear as the easiest solution, stairs require a higher degree of design and maintenance to reduce the risk of injury. The development of ramps is always a better approach and can often be achieved through grading measures and minor retaining walls. The West Perth Wetlands is an example of a need to facilitate access from the wetlands to the woodlot, which has a steep slope. The plan identifies a location where a trail switchback can be installed to provide a gradual transition. The route is not the most direct; however, it is much safer and will allow all users access to the woodlot. Desire line routes that are unsafe need to be heavily planted or fenced to deter use. Another example is the route to pass under the Frank St. bridge. This route has steep slopes to the underpass, and the existing trail is very narrow, with no barrier to protect users from falling into the river. Sloped ramps, retaining walls, and railings are required at this location to create a safe and accessible passage (a project which is currently under development). Overall, when steep slopes are an issue, West Perth should look to realignments and grading to reduce the slope and support safe and equitable access.

## Opportunities for Rural and Small Settlement Areas

Rural and small settlement areas lack close access to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure due to the lack of public lands to facilitate trail development. It is recommended that West Perth look to partnerships with the County and MTO to develop on-road active transportation infrastructure through road reconstruction projects, to address amenities such as sidewalks, multi-use pathways, paved shoulders, etc.

## Trail Tourism and Downtown Hubs

Downtown hubs are the heart of a community and should be an important partner in a trail system. With the rise of trail and active transportation tourism, there are many opportunities for shared promotion and infrastructure. Trail signage and routes should encourage connections with downtown businesses to enhance the user experience and build a greater draw to the community. Businesses can offer trail users opportunities for washrooms, rest, and refuge while supporting the local economy. It is important to ensure that downtown hubs have amenities to support trail users, such as bike racks, safe zones to ride bikes, and increased wayfinding.

The plan recommends integration of the trail network into downtown Mitchell through use of the 'Urban Greenway' trail classification. Within a downtown, an Urban Greenway can be implemented in many ways, including bike lanes and integrated multi-use trails (see example photos below). Implementation of any form of active transportation infrastructural through a downtown will require a full streetscape design approach.

**Figure 36: Examples of a multi-use path integrated into a downtown streetscape**

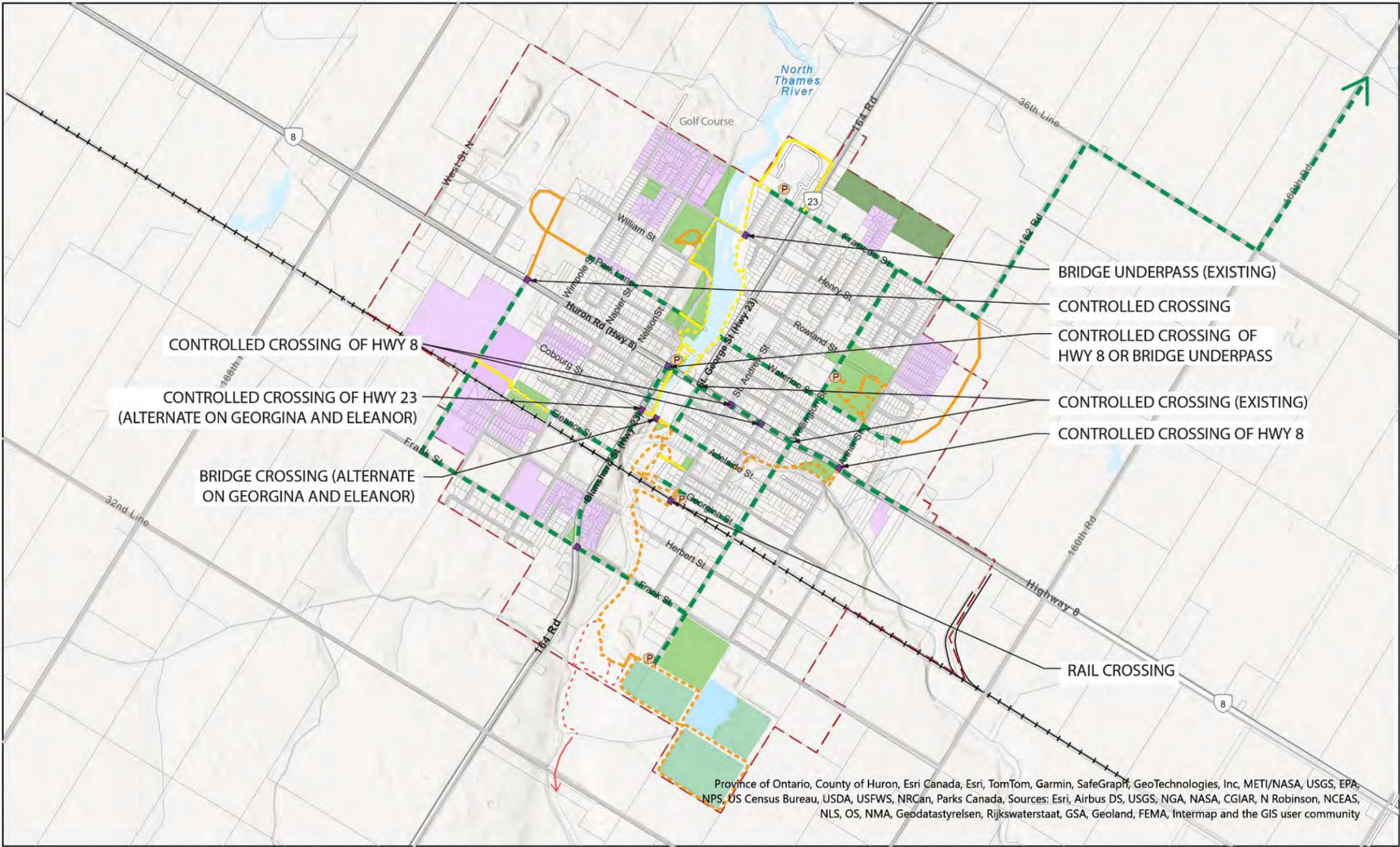


Region of Waterloo

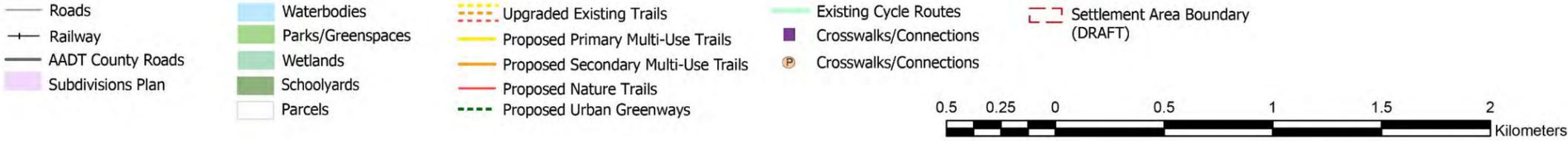
## Recommendations – Trail Network

61. Establish and maintain sanctioned trails through the **woodlot and landfill property**. 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.
62. Trail routes will need to be secured in **future land development areas**. 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. Route alignments should be sought in partnership with drainage corridors, perimeter loops, and include connections the established trail system. 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.
63. Complete a **scoped active transportation plan** to further explore cycling and pedestrian infrastructure over the West Perth road network to create connections with other West Perth rural settlement areas, Monkton's G2G trail, and neighbouring urban centres. Planning should be done ahead of willingness to invest in infrastructure to allow for Grant applications and coordination with neighboring municipal and County projects.
64. Actively seek opportunities to develop **off-road rural routes** along natural features, such as the Thames River, to increase access to recreation opportunities in rural areas of West Perth. 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.
65. Develop a **dedicated ATV priority trail network** 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.

Figure 37: Proposed Trail Network Map



Legend



**Table 33: West Perth Typical Trail Design Standards**

Trail Type	Tread Width	Clear Width	Surfacing	Accessibility	Grading/Drainage	Lighting/Security	Signage	Seating & Amenities	Maintenance	Experience
<b>Primary Multi-Use Trail</b>	2.5-3.0m	5.4-5.9m	Asphalt	Fully Accessible; Max. 5% slopes	Max. 5% slopes	Pedestrian level lighting for early morning & evening use	Trailhead signage w/ map; regular trail markers	Moderate frequency of amenities: trash receptacles at key trail entrances; seating along trail at max. 200m intervals.	4 season maintenance to remove garbage and trip hazards, snow plowing. Annual surface repair.	Consider provision of shade along trail with max 100m intervals of full sun exposure.
<b>Secondary Multi-Use Trail</b>	2.5-3.0m	4.9-5.4m	Compacted screenings	Fully Accessible; Max. 5% slopes	Max 8% slopes	If desired/ appropriate	Trailhead signage, trail markers	Basic amenities: trash receptacles; seating at 200m intervals along trail.	Regular maintenance to remove garbage and trip hazards, trail edge maintenance. Biannual surface repair.	Consider provision of shade along trail with max 100m intervals of full sun exposure. Consider provision of seating at 50m intervals to encourage users with reduced mobility.
<b>Nature Trail</b>	0.5-1.5m	1.5-2.5m	Native soil; wood chip mulch or compacted gravel fill where necessary to smooth trail	Accessible where possible; clearly marked on trail signage	Max. 14% slopes	No lighting	Trailhead signage that clearly marks length of trail, elevation changes, frequency of seating and level of challenge; regular trail markers.	Basic amenities: trash receptacles at trail entrances; formal/informal seating at min. 500m intervals along trail.	Annual/reactive maintenance: tree hazard removal, surface repair and trail edge maintenance. No snow removal.	Consider seating at 200m intervals along trail.
<b>Urban Greenway</b>	1.2m min	n/a	Enhanced sidewalk/street network	Fully Accessible	Max. 5% slopes	Street lighting	Greenway trail markers at intersections/private property.	Trash receptacles at regular intervals; Ensure provision of shade along trail; with max 30m intervals of full sun exposure.	4 season maintenance to remove garbage and trip hazards, snow plowing. Annual surface repair.	Consider reduced traffic speed, wider sidewalks and increased frequency of trees and seating.

## 8.6 Access and Connectivity through Crossings

**Road Crossings** in locations where a trail intersects with a roadway, the flow of pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular traffic will need to be managed. The crossing treatment selected generally depends on the type of road being crossed (e.g., low-volume local street vs. urban arterial), the number of lanes being crossed, traffic volume and vehicle operating speeds, sight lines, and the anticipated volume of trail users. More significant improvements are recommended for crossings with multiple lanes, higher traffic volumes, and higher operating speeds. The plan recommends the use of existing road crossings (which may require upgrades) and new controlled grade crossings at roadways, underpasses, and pedestrian bridges. West Perth will need to complete a traffic study and design exercise for all existing and proposed at-grade road crossings. This will inform infrastructure requirements for new installation and upgrades.

**Underpass Crossings** can mitigate the need to disrupt traffic; however, safety and environmental impact are key factors informing design parameters. Where possible, these should be open-sided conveyances that allow site lines from the river valley. They can be constructed with retaining walls, railings, and concrete surfacing. When a full tunnel approach is identified, such as was completed at Henry St, lighting and other provisions to improve safety are needed.

**Rail Crossings** where the trail network crosses active railway lines. Crossing design treatment must follow Transport Canada Grade Crossing Standards. The requirements for trail crossings at railway lines will vary depending on the speed and frequency of rail service on the line in question. Crossings can range from simple signage to signalized lights to barrier arms. Depending on how the trail interfaces with the crossing, users may need to be controlled with forced mechanisms to slow speed and create awareness, such as single and double barrier gates, signage, line paint, etc., beyond the standard rail crossing infrastructure. Surfacing controls are important to improve accessibility and overall user experience. Surface treatment between/abutting a track is highly regulated; however, several options are available that vary in cost and performance, including concrete, rubberized matting, metal grating, etc. A rail safety audit, completed by a qualified engineer, is required to inform the rail crossing design.

**Pedestrian Bridges** are a long-lasting solution to river crossings and other areas with high erosion. A 'pony truss' or 'H-section' bridge style can span up to 55m and is the most economical design choice. For larger spans, a full 'box truss' is required and can span up to 80m. Alternately, custom bridges can

Figure 38



Top: photo of West Perth's need for a rail crossing at St. George St.

Bottom: Example of a rail crossing of trail on a segment of the Trans Canada Trail in Guelph.

offer more flexibility for architectural design features and are less limiting in maximum free span; however, they tend to cost exponentially more in design and installation costs.

When spanning greater distances, assess both the material costs and design/approval costs for structures. This can help determine whether it is best to add an in-water pier or design a more extensive structure for a single span. Typically, the use of piers and prefabricated structure is a more cost-effective solution over a large spanning structure, however there are several variables such as environmental sensitives and aesthetic considerations that should be taken into account when making the decision.

**Figure 39**



Left: Example of a large pedestrian bridge in Cambridge.  
Right: Example of West Perth pedestrian bridge in Mitchell.

### Recommendations – Access and Connectivity through Crossings

66. Install **controlled street crossings and underpass connections** and upgrade existing street crossings, including (a) Controlled crossings of Hwy 8 at new street west of Wimpole St, St. Andrew St, St. David St, and Arthur St, (b) Controlled crossings of Hwy 23 at Cobourg St, and (c) 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 due to cost and in coordination with other road projects. The frequency of crossings and the risk to users should inform prioritization. All new and upgraded road crossings require a traffic study and engineered design.
67. Install a **railway crossing** 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.
68. Install **pedestrian bridges** connecting Cobourg Street to Adelaide Street (will require several engineering and environmental studies). Demand will increase in the future when development areas are built out.

## 8.7 Solutions to Problem Areas

This section includes proven strategies for solving common challenges in trail design and maintenance.

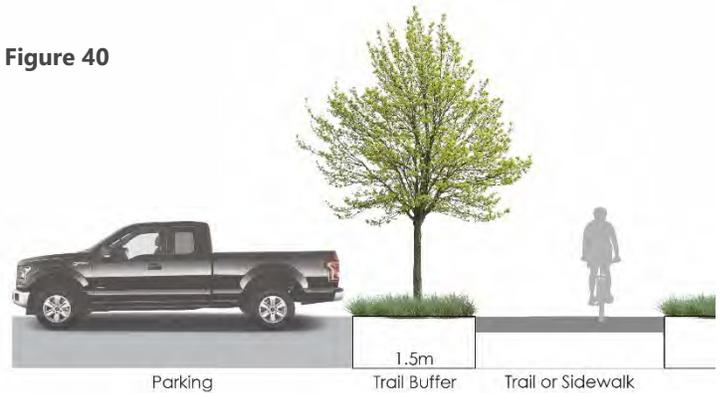
A **planted buffer** between parking and trails is a beautiful way to keep people safe and help to define the trail for wayfinding, while also creating a sense of place and enhancing the experience of trail users. This approach can be implemented for all municipal sidewalks, minimizing the interactions between cars and pedestrians to specific access points only.

**Managing unwanted graffiti:** Municipalities spend much time and money removing unwanted graffiti. Along with a graffiti management plan, some municipalities have found the most effective way of discouraging graffiti vandalism is by developing street art programs. The street art creates community pride and, incidentally, encourages visitors to the area. Specifically, involving youth and graffiti artists in municipal programs can create a sense of pride and ownership amongst often marginalized community members. Street art might cover garbage receptacles, concrete barriers, and bollards and could provide a platform for trail signage. Street art can also increase the sense of safety in spaces like alleys and underpasses.

**Programming:** Programming parks, trails and public space provides a reason for people to want to go to and stay in the space. It helps to build social relationships, cultural and environmental learning, and reduces social isolation. Increasing the presence of people in a space increases the perception of safety, and the desire for others to use the space. Programming could include community gardens, dog parks, trail clean-up events, mural festivals, cultural events, bird and bat watching events and historical walking tours.

**Eco-raster is a permeable paving solution that structures an area with a plastic grid. It can be a good solution for heavy-use trails where soil compaction is creating poor trail conditions and preventing adjacent vegetation from flourishing.**

Figure 40



Landscape options to safely separate and define trails from parking.

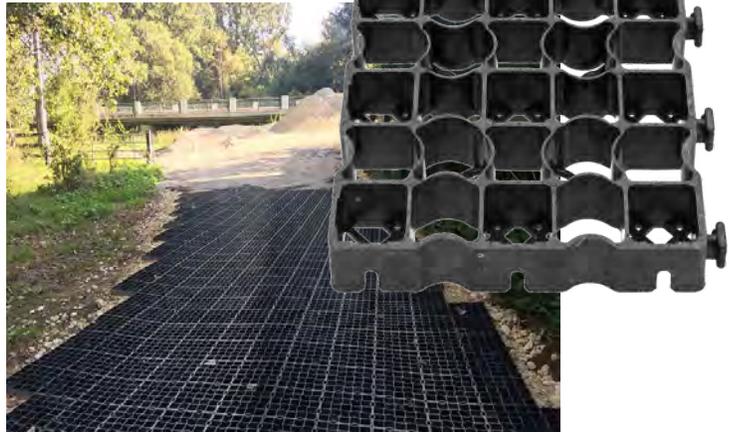
Figure 41



Example of Graffiti wall project in Guelph

For trails that are frequently eroded or unusable due to seasonal flooding and/or motorized vehicle use, geogrid systems will provide a more sustainable solution – reducing repair maintenance, increasing safety, and extending seasonal use of a trail. These systems lock together and can be filled with soil, granular screenings or seeded for turf growth. Typically, these systems are installed with a granular base, however, they can be laid on existing compacted earthen surfaces. Reinforcing trail sections of the Seguin Trail (Figure 16) would stabilize areas that struggle with flooding, erosion, rutting conditions, and hard-to-traverse slopes. Geogrids could also be selectively applied to rustic wilderness trails such as located at the woodlot adjacent to the land fill.

**Figure 42**



Photos of Ecoraster (a product manufactured in southern Ontario). Grid structure can be filled with earth, granular or turf and can support maintenance vehicles.

**Wood chips** can help reduce soil compaction and the resulting wet spots along trails. They will need to be topped up periodically. However, wood chips can be limiting to cyclists, particularly young users. This can be a strategy to reduce cyclist damage in sensitive areas. Avoid mulch on main routes that connect users to amenities such as parks, such as the route from downtown Mitchell Cooper Standard Field.

**Boardwalks** through environmentally sensitive, eroding or frequently wet areas are a good solution for improving accessibility and reducing the impact of trail users, especially bikes.

Where trails pass through sensitive environments such as marshes, swamps, or woodlands with many exposed roots, an elevated trail bed or boardwalk is sometimes required to minimize impacts on the natural feature. If these areas are left untreated, trail users tend to walk around obstacles such as wet spots, gradually creating wider or multiple meandering footpaths through the surrounding vegetation, resulting in vegetation trampling and damage.

On trails built in sensitive natural areas, sections with challenging surfaces (rocks and roots), or erosion/flooding issues, a low-profile boardwalk may be appropriate and requires modest engineering to develop an appropriate design. For trails with more frequent usage, cyclist traffic, and maintenance vehicle access, a more sophisticated design and installation is necessary. This is likely to include engineered footings, abutments, structural elements and railings.

Helical piles are an alternative foundation methodology that is cost effective, and a low impact installation compared to concrete footings. Piles are drilled into the ground with a small skid steer or mini excavator then left in place to serve as the foundation.

**Figure 43**



Left: Example of a large boardwalk in Pinery Provincial Park.  
Right: Example of simple woodland boardwalk in Guelph.

## 8.8 Amenities – Supporting Use, Removing Barriers

### Rest And Refuge

It is important to incorporate places for people to rest and take refuge. It is recommended that trails strive for some form of informal or formal seating every 200m, ideally located at points of entry and vistas. This metric is based on accommodating the average user. In areas where there is a higher potential for users with mobility impairments, such as near seniors' homes or amenities, along transit routes, or trails within tourism destination locations, rest seating is recommended every 50m. Formal bench seating with armrests and backrests is recommended for areas where accessibility is of greater need. However, the provision of seating outweighs the priority for quality. Substitution or augmentation with natural materials such as flat-topped stones is always welcomed.

**Figure 44**



Left: Seating node at a lookout near West Perth Village. Right: Photo of informal rock seating wall in Simcoe County. Stones can be singular free-standing or small clusters.

## Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding helps people know where they are, where they want to go and how to get there. Effective wayfinding design improves the use and experience of spaces and reduces confusion for trail users. Design elements such as signs, maps, road markings, and sight lines provide wayfinding and directional support for trail users. Wayfinding features can also attract people to use new trails and trail networks by illustrating the length, slope, and surfacing characteristics of the trail, as well as exit points and destinations along the way. Trails that provide wayfinding features to show how individual routes connect to larger trail networks can encourage more people to use active forms of transportation. Wayfinding should be an integral part of the trail design to improve safety, navigability, and educational opportunities.

Wayfinding and trailhead signage is a marketing opportunity to promote:

- Trail tourism
- Direct traffic to local businesses
- Share information about local events and services.

All trail points of entry should have a trailhead marker. West Perth is recommended to complete a dedicated wayfinding project. This should include developing signage design and locations. Trailheads typically include a hierarchy of larger main trailhead signs, smaller trailhead signs where mapping is desired, and smaller point-of-entry signs that include simple wayfinding.

**Trailheads** should be universally accessible and welcome trail users with clear wayfinding signage and good lighting. They may require a physical buffer from vehicular access and adjacent parking while also providing clear sightlines to the surround area. Trailheads can also provide opportunities for shady seating, interpretive signage, and garbage and recycling receptacles.

Trailhead signage should note the following:

- Trail length
- Trail width
- Location of amenities
- Slope steepness
- Surface types
- Hazards
- Trail difficulty
- Accessibility rating (i.e. accessible by wheelchair, walker, scooter, etc.)
- Trail rules such as dog or cycling restrictions

**Figure 45**



Example of trailhead signage and amenities

**Figure 46: Cross-section of Trailhead**



**Directional signs** should be used throughout the trail at regular intervals of uninterrupted segments and at pathway intersections. Directional signs provide users with reassurance that they are following the designated trail network. Coupled with directional signs, distance markers placed incrementally along a trail can enhance the user's experience if they are using the trail for exercise. Frequent and accurate markers can also help in the case of an emergency, especially if they are recorded with a GPS device and incorporated into a digital mapping format.

Interpretive signs should be featured throughout the trail system to 'tell the story' of what West Perth has to offer. This should include educational content that highlights local cultural and natural heritage, promotional content that identifies local destinations and events, and recognition of merit achievements by local citizens and groups. Signs can be permanent or temporary installations. Temporary signs may include seasonal or event based themes or activities such as children's stories along trail routes.

**Figure 47**



Simple trail route markers and directional signage

**Figure 48: Image of a reading trail program, [storytimetrail.ca](http://storytimetrail.ca)**



## Lighting

Lighting in trail systems must balance environmental and financial concerns. Costs and impacts can be managed with diffused lighting, energy-efficient bulbs, and motion sensors. Adequate lighting encourages use by women and families, especially through dark winter nights, and can facilitate both recreational and commuter access. Consider lighting on trails that facilitate connections to the schools through downtown or centrally located walking loops. If full lighting isn't possible, use 'refuge' lighting at intervals for safety. Solar lighting, which is becoming more cost-effective and versatile, is ideal for remote trailheads and short, vulnerable sections. Effective lighting enhances safety by improving visibility, helping people avoid hazards, and deterring crime. Lighting within trail systems must be carefully considered to ensure environmental and financial factors are well managed.

While illuminating entire trails is not standard practice in trail development, trail lighting is often recommended in key locations such as:

- All underpasses or similar enclosed areas with reduced sightlines.
- Lions Park area and a route to the Dog Park/Wetland area.
- Trails that serve important commuter and school routes, where lighting may be needed to provide guidance during periods of low light (e.g., fall and winter when days are shorter)
- As refuge nodes/urban trailheads where intermittent lighting is more feasible.

Figure 49



Image: Solar lighting at trail node in North Perth



Creative underpass lighting in Cumbernauld, UK

### Recommendations – Trail Amenities

69. Complete a **dedicated wayfinding project**. 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.

## 8.9 Maintenance

Guiding next steps in the management and maintenance of trails, West Perth should consider adopting a trail maintenance log to document maintenance activities. The log should be updated when features are repaired, modified, replaced, removed, or when new features are added.

Accurate trail logs also become useful resources for determining maintenance budgets for individual items and tasks and total maintenance costs for the entire trail. In addition, they are a useful source of information during the preparation of tender documents for trail contracts and show the location of structures and other features that require maintenance.

Reducing maintenance through strategic infrastructure investments, including trail realignment, surface treatment and use of structures should be considered for areas of reoccurring maintenance issues.

Using the maintenance strategies outlined within the trail plan, as well as any existing trail infrastructure maintenance practices, should be a starting point from which a trail-specific maintenance plan and budget be developed. In addition, annual maintenance budgets should be refined to accommodate the maintenance of trail facilities. As the proposed trail network is implemented the trail budget should increase to address the increasing number/length of trail facilities that have been implemented.

The table below provides an overview of maintenance tasks and frequencies that should be executed as part of standard trail facility care.

**Table 34: Trail Maintenance Tasks and Frequencies**

Frequency	Maintenance Task
<p><b>IMMEDIATE (within 24 hours of becoming aware of the situation through a “hotline”, email or other notification or observation)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a minimum, mark, barricade and sign the subject area to warn trail users or close the trail completely until the problem can be corrected.</li> <li>• Remove vegetation and/or windfalls, downed branches etc., where traffic flow on the trail is being impaired or the obstruction is resulting in a sight line issue. Remove hazard trees that have been identified.</li> <li>• Repair or replace items that have been vandalized or stolen/removed. This is especially important for regulatory signs that provide important information about trail hazards such as road crossings, steep grades, and sharp curves.</li> <li>• Removal of trash in overflowing containers or material that has been illegally dumped.</li> <li>• Repair of obstructed drainage systems causing flooding that poses a hazard to trail users or that is resulting in deterioration that poses an immediate safety hazard.</li> <li>• Monitor trail areas and structures that are prone to erosion after severe summer storms and repair as required.</li> <li>• Repairs to structural elements on bridges such as beams, railings, access barriers and signs.</li> </ul>

Frequency	Maintenance Task
<p><b>REGULARLY</b> <b>(weekly / biweekly / monthly)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trail patrols/inspections should review the trail conditions (as often as weekly in high-use areas), to assess conditions and prioritize maintenance tasks and monitor known problem areas.</li> <li>Mow grass along edges of trails (in parks and open meadow settings only). Depending on the trail location, this may be done weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly and the width can vary according to the location (typically 0.5 to 1.0m). This helps to keep the clear zone open and can slow the invasion of weeds into granular trail surfaces. Not all trails will have mown edges. In woodland and wetland areas, pruning and brushing is typically the only vegetation maintenance to be undertaken.</li> <li>Regular garbage pickup (10-day cycle or more frequent for heavily used areas).</li> <li>Repair within 30 days or less, partially obstructed drainage systems causing intermittent water backups that do not pose an immediate safety hazard, but that if left unchecked over time will adversely affect the integrity of the trail and/or any other trail infrastructure or the surrounding area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ANNUALLY</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct an annual safety audit. This task can be efficiently included with general annual safety audits for parks and other recreation facilities.</li> <li>Evaluate support facilities/trailside amenities to determine repair and/or replacement needs.</li> <li>Examine trail surface to determine the need for patching and grading.</li> <li>Grading/grooming the surface of granular trails and topping up of wood chip trails.</li> <li>Pruning/vegetation management for straight sections of trail and areas where branches may be encroaching into the clear zone. This task is more of a preventative maintenance procedure. Cuttings may be chipped on site and placed appropriately or used as mulch for new plantings. Remove branches from the site unless they can be used for habitat (i.e., brush piles in a woodlot setting) or used as part of the rehabilitation of closed trails. Where invasive species are being pruned and/or removed, branches and cuttings should be disposed of in an appropriate manner.</li> <li>Inspect and secure all loose side rails, bridge supports, decking (ensure any structural repairs meet the original structural design criteria).</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVERY 3 TO 5 YEARS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning and refurbishment of signs, benches and other trailside amenities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVERY 10 TO 20 YEARS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resurface asphalt trails (assume approximately every 15 years).</li> <li>Major renovation or replacement of large items such as bridges, kiosks, gates, parking lots, benches etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COST EFFECTIVE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patching/minor regarding of trail surfaces and removal of loose rocks from the trail bed.</li> <li>Culvert cleanout where required.</li> <li>Top up granular trail surfaces at approaches to bridges.</li> <li>Planting, landscape rehabilitation, pruning/beautification.</li> <li>Installation/removal of seasonal signage.</li> </ul>

## Recommendations – Trail Maintenance

70. Reduce **mowing** 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.
71. Address **Urban Greenways** through scheduled road improvements or special projects where deemed a critical connection. Requires coordination with road reconstruction programs.
72. Identify and dedicate **staffing resources** to regular trail maintenance, monitoring, and emergency repair. This may include additional staff, contract staff, and/or volunteer partnerships. It is important to track the level of effort executed, evaluate performance, and make adjustments to the approach to trail management in order to achieve a successful trail system.





Mitchell Dam

## Section 9.

# Implementation Strategy

Active implementation of this plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders, and the public.

This section identifies key funding and implementation considerations, a framework for reviewing and updating the Plan, and a summary of all recommendations, along with their suggested priority and timing.

### 9.1 Funding & Implementation Considerations

Recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or topic area throughout the body of this Master Plan. This is not intended to be a definitive list, as additional capital repairs, operating expenditures, and other initiatives outside the scope of this Master Plan may be identified and prioritized on a case-specific basis. By approving this Plan, the Municipality is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount, or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined. It is expected that West Perth will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the capital budget process.

This implementation strategy provides guidance for ensuring that the most critical recommendations are dealt with in a timely fashion, while the less urgent (but still important) ones are implemented over time. In Section 9.3, recommendations with potential cost implications have been identified. It is expected that more detailed capital cost budgeting and an analysis of operating budget implications and funding options would be undertaken prior to approving any capital project.

The timing of the projects proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation as some recommendations may not align with the Municipality's funding capabilities at particular points in time. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan should be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Municipal recreation and leisure have traditionally been a subsidized service within West Perth and this is expected to continue.

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Municipality's capital and operating budget development exercise. Readjusting resource allocations is critical in a climate where base funding is not increasing substantially and resources need to be maximized in order to garner the greatest gain to the community.

Full implementation of the Master Plan will require the use of numerous funding sources, including (but not limited to):

- development charges (if applicable);
- parkland cash-in-lieu for land purchases;
- municipal taxation and reserves;
- fundraising, donations and sponsorships;

- user fees and surcharges;
- debenture financing;
- ongoing government programs;
- one-time grants; and
- partnerships.

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

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

The Municipality has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the primary reasons for undertaking a Master Plan in the first place. Despite limited financial means, it is in the Municipality's best interest to make every reasonable effort to implement these strategies through a variety of appropriate and acceptable means. The full implementation of this Plan will require the use of development charges, grants, fundraising, and the establishment of various partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, schools, agencies, and other partners. Possible location of trail costing information or place within section 8.5.

### Recommendations – Funding & Implementation Considerations

73. Use the Recreation, Parks and Trails Master Plan as a resource in developing West Perth's **long-term capital forecast**, development charge studies, and related reports.
74. Ensure that Municipal Council is informed of **operating cost implications** prior to approving major capital projects.
75. Continue to seek **alternative funding and cost-sharing options** (e.g., fundraising, sponsorships, grants, etc.) to supplement traditional funding sources and to enable full implementation of the Master Plan.
76. Contribute annually to a **reserve fund for major recreation infrastructure projects** (e.g., arena and indoor recreation facility) with consistent contributions through the Municipal budget process.
77. Conduct **feasibility studies and business plans** (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.

## 9.2 Monitoring & Updating the Plan

The Municipality should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of this Master Plan to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to community needs. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, tracking user satisfaction levels, dialogue with community organizations, annual reporting on implementation and short-term work plans, and undertaking a detailed ten-year update to the Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this plan may be required.

Reviewing the plan requires a commitment from staff, Council, and the public. An appropriate time for this is prior to the annual budgeting process. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan:

- a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, etc.);
- b) review of the plan to identify short term projects and priorities based on staff review and considerations (e.g., financial limitations, public input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- c) identification of issues or constraints anticipated for the coming year;
- d) communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and upcoming projects; and
- e) budget requests/revisions as necessary.

### Recommendations – Monitoring & Updating the Plan

78. Implement a system for the **regular implementation, monitoring, and review** 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.
79. Undertake a complete **review and update of the Master Plan** no later than 2034. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

## 9.3 Summary of Recommendations

For ease of reference, all Master Plan recommendations are summarized in this section. 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 35: Summary of Recommendations – Service Delivery**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
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.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
2. Regularly undertake <b>internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures</b> , with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
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.	Medium	Short-term	Staff-led

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
4. Provide <b>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.	High	Ongoing	Maintain current funding levels, at minimum
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.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
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>affordable programs geared to seniors</b> at all activity levels and opportunities for social connections. Continue to advocate for expanded transportation options for seniors.	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

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
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.	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
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>user fees, 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 36: Summary of Recommendations – Recreation Facilities**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Costs/Comments</b>
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.	High	Short-term	Staff-led
22. Prepare a <b>feasibility study</b> to determine the viability and costs of maintaining the West Perth Arena & 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.	High	Medium-term	Study: Minor (\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)
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.	High	Medium-term	See recommendation 22
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.	High	Medium-term	See recommendation 22
25. Continue to work with the community to expand programming and activities with the <b>Keterson Park pavilion</b> .	Medium	Ongoing	Staff-led
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 (\$)

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
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 (\$\$)
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

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
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. Evaluate further the value and impact of <b>lighting</b> on the tennis/pickleball courts at Veterans Park to allow for evening play.	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
38. Replace the existing skateboard park with a <b>permanent all-wheels park</b> in its current location within Keterson Park. Through this project, consider improvements to the adjacent streetscape, parking areas, and internal circulation to ensure a safe and welcoming environment. 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) and agility equipment to the <b>Kinsmen Park off-leash dog park</b> .	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 (\$)

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
41. Work with local service clubs and partners to support <b>paddling activities in the North Thames River, such as the</b> installation of an accessible kayak/canoe launch in Lions Park, along with appropriate parking, signage, and promotion	Medium	Short-term	Minor (\$)

**Table 37: 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
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

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
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
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.	High	Short-term	Design: Minor (\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)
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.	Lower	Short-term	Any revenues should be used to offset park improvements
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.	High	Ongoing	May require project-specific funding
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.	High	Ongoing	May require project-specific funding
54. Establish consistent and <b>high quality signage</b> at all parks, trails, and municipal facilities to enhance branding and wayfinding.	High	Ongoing	Minor (\$)

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 38: 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	<p>Design: Minor (\$) Development: Minor (\$)</p>
<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. Route alignments should be sought in partnership with drainage corridors, perimeter loops, and include connections the established trail system. 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 to create connections with other West Perth rural settlement areas, Monkton’s G2G trail, and neighbouring urban centres. 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	<p>Design: Moderate (\$\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
<p>64. Actively seek opportunities to develop <b>off-road rural routes</b> along natural features, such as the Thames River, to increase access to recreation opportunities in rural areas of West Perth. 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 (\$\$) 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 (\$\$) Development: Moderate (\$\$)</p>
<p>66. Install <b>controlled street crossings and underpass connections</b> and upgrade existing street crossings, including (a) Controlled crossings of Hwy 8 at new street west of Wimpole St, St. Andrew St, St. David St, and Arthur St, (b) Controlled crossings of Hwy 23 at Cobourg St, and (c) 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 due to cost and in coordination with other road projects. The frequency of crossings and the risk to users should inform prioritization. All new and upgraded road crossings require a traffic study and engineered design.</p>	High	Medium-Term	<p>Design: Major (\$\$\$) Development: Major (\$\$\$)</p>
<p>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.</p>	Medium	Short - Term	<p>Design: Minor (\$) Development: Minor (\$)</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs/Comments
68. Install <b>pedestrian bridges</b> connecting Cobourg 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 trailhead 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>Urban 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 (\$\$\$)
72. Identify and dedicate <b>staffing resources</b> to regular trail maintenance, monitoring, and emergency repair. This may include additional staff, contract staff, and/or volunteer partnerships. It is important to track the level of effort executed, evaluate performance, and make adjustments to the approach to trail management in order to achieve a successful trail system.	Medium	Short-term	Cost to be determined through future study

**Table 39 Summary of Recommendations – Implementation**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Costs/Comments</b>
73. 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
74. Ensure that Municipal Council is informed of <b>operating cost implications</b> prior to approving major capital projects.	High	Ongoing	Staff-led
75. 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
76. 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
77. 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
78. 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
79. 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 (\$)

# KETERSON PARK



Keterson Park Pavilion

## Appendix A.

# Report Card – 2016 Master Plan

	Recommendation – Service Delivery	Status (2024)
1	Adopt a <b>municipal service delivery role</b> that reflects the strategic directions of this Master Plan, with a primary focus on maintaining assets and supporting community-led activities through a community development approach.	Complete
2	Create a full-time <b>Recreation &amp; Leisure Coordinator</b> position to work with community providers and volunteers to increase access to leisure services, promote existing assets, and enhance communication and marketing of recreation, leisure, and culture opportunities.	Complete
3	Re-evaluate <b>staffing requirements</b> over time as changes occur in the scope of municipal responsibilities, customer demand, or asset inventories. For example, consideration should be given to addressing a corporate gap in property and facility management.	Complete
4	Continue to offer relevant <b>staff training and development</b> that builds and maintains the skills and competencies needed to deliver on key recreation and leisure objectives.	Ongoing
5	Facilitate an annual <b>Volunteer Fair</b> to raise awareness, promote opportunities, and recruit volunteers for West Perth’s recreation, leisure, and culture services.	Complete
6	Maintain an <b>up-to-date inventory</b> of recreation, leisure, and culture opportunities within the community (including a database of community groups and their contact information) to ensure that a full range of activities are available for all ages and abilities. This database should be publicly accessible and serve to enhance awareness of local activities, programs, leagues, and events.	Complete
7	Engage community partners in periodic <b>program planning</b> , with an emphasis on accessible and affordable introductory activities that promote physical activity and social inclusion, including those designed for older adults and seniors.	Complete
8	Encourage community efforts to form a Municipality-wide <b>older adult / seniors’ club</b> .	Ongoing
9	Investigate opportunities to <b>support the volunteer sector</b> through working with partners such as the United Way of Perth Huron.	Complete
10	Develop a municipal-wide <b>volunteer recognition program</b> to celebrate the achievements of local residents and encourage sustained volunteerism.	Complete
11	To establish consistency across the Municipality (including employees, volunteers, and contractors), develop <b>maintenance standards</b> for all public parks and facilities, with a focus on delivering a high level of safety, cleanliness, and legislative compliance.	Ongoing
12	Ensure that <b>policies and procedures</b> are in place to support and direct fundraising and partnerships, user fees and rental rates, advertising and sponsorships, parks maintenance, customer service, cancellations and refunds, etc. Review all policies every five years, at minimum.	Complete
13	Collect <b>registration data</b> from all organizations that use Municipal parks and facilities and monitor facility utilization to assist in tracking trends, changing demands, and allocation.	Ongoing

	<b>Recommendation – Service Delivery</b>	<b>Status (2024)</b>
<b>14</b>	Maintain and update information pertaining to recreation, leisure, and culture activities and events on the West Perth <b>website</b> to enhance awareness of available opportunities.	Complete
<b>15</b>	Create a <b>regular newsletter or community guide</b> (monthly or quarterly, hard copy and online) to advertise and promote West Perth's recreation, leisure, trails, and culture opportunities and events; seek opportunities to coordinate with West Perth Public Library.	Complete
<b>16</b>	Host an <b>annual forum</b> with service clubs, community organizations, and the public to collectively discuss issues and opportunities related to service delivery, community needs, marketing and promotion, and overall communication.	Complete
<b>17</b>	Provide <b>public input opportunities</b> prior to undertaking large community projects.	Ongoing
<b>18</b>	Establish a <b>consistent signage</b> design template and install at all parks, open spaces, trails, and community facilities.	Ongoing
<b>19</b>	Seek <b>fundraising, partnership, and sponsorship opportunities</b> that are consistent with the Municipality's vision in order to reduce reliance on tax dollars in providing quality recreation, leisure, and culture opportunities in West Perth.	Complete
<b>20</b>	Document, formalize, and update the Municipality's <b>existing arrangements with community groups and service providers</b> in the delivery of recreation, leisure, and culture services.	Ongoing
<b>21</b>	Evaluate <b>partnership proposals</b> based on the criteria outlined in Section <b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>	Ongoing
<b>22</b>	Develop an <b>Arts and Culture Strategy</b> that identifies the Municipality's role in supporting the local arts and cultural sector. Work with community and regional partners to create a sustainable direction for arts and culture in the Municipality.	Timeframe not reached
<b>23</b>	Utilize the Master Plan's <b>parkland classification hierarchy</b> to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and amenities provided.	Ongoing
<b>24</b>	Continue to pursue the <b>dedication of parkland and cash-in-lieu</b> through the provisions of the local Official Plans and Planning Act.	Ongoing
<b>25</b>	Avoid developing or accepting <b>under-sized active parkland parcels</b> of less than 0.5 hectare in size unless the Municipality has determined that there is a need to fill a gap in parkland and other options are inadequate.	Ongoing
<b>26</b>	Accepting <b>undevelopable Open Space lands</b> (e.g., storm water management ponds, woodlots, valley lands, floodplains, hazard lands, etc.) as part of the parkland dedication requirement is strongly discouraged. The Municipality may assume these lands through voluntary dedication or easement if appropriate.	Ongoing
<b>27</b>	Where necessary, employ <b>alternative acquisition tools</b> to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.	Ongoing
<b>28</b>	Adopt a <b>parkland service target</b> of 3.0 hectares per 1,000 residents, which would require an additional 1.6 hectares (4 acres) of parkland by 2039 to serve growing settlement areas.	Ongoing

	<b>Recommendation – Service Delivery</b>	<b>Status (2024)</b>
29	Begin planning for the <b>relocation of Kinsmen Park</b> (up to 7 hectares, depending on overall sports field needs) which is located within an expanding industrial area.	Timeframe not reached
30	Maintain a commitment to <b>accessibility, safety, and comfort within the Municipality’s parks system</b> through compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. In recognition of the Municipality’s aging population, attention should continue to be paid to the development of amenities such as washrooms, shade, and benches/ seating areas in parks and along trails.	Ongoing
31	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.	Ongoing
32	Use the guiding principles and Conceptual Trails Network within this Master Plan as a guide to inform <b>future trail and walking route projects</b> . All future trails and walking routes should be properly signed to clearly delineate the network and enhance wayfinding for users. Additional extensions to the network should consider unopened road allowances and river corridors (with the latter being achieved through coordination with the Conservation Authority).	Ongoing
33	Consider adding a policy within the Official Plan to allow the Municipality to require the <b>dedication of land for the development of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure</b> as a condition of plan of subdivision approval as permitted by Section 51(25) of the Planning Act.	Ongoing
34	Continue to emphasize the proper design, construction, and <b>maintenance of the West Perth trails network</b> . For example, motorized all-terrain vehicles should be prohibited from all designated walking and hiking trails and Municipal By-laws to this effect should be enforced to the greatest degree possible. In some cases, physical interventions and repairs may be required.	Ongoing
35	Establish a <b>walking tour route, education program, and improved signage</b> to promote the West Perth trails and open space system.	Ongoing
36	Prepare an updated <b>Needs Assessment / Feasibility Study for West Perth Arena &amp; Community Centre</b> in five to ten years’ time in order to assess the demand for a second ice pad, other community spaces, and renewal or redevelopment options.	Incomplete
37	Continue to invest in the <b>West Perth Arena &amp; Community Centre</b> through ongoing capital maintenance, with a short-term focus on addressing barrier-free accessibility projects.	Complete
38	Undertake a topic-specific study and public engagement process to explore options for the creation and management of a <b>hub for older adults and seniors</b> through the re-purposing or expansion of an existing space/facility to help meet the recreational and social needs of this population.	Complete
39	Evaluate options (e.g., leasing, divestiture, etc.) for declaring Mitchell Friendship Centre and Fullarton Hall as <b>surplus municipal facilities</b> .	Complete
40	Upgrade the infield at the <b>Cromarty Ball Park</b> in cooperation with the South Hibbert Athletic Association.	Complete

	<b>Recommendation – Service Delivery</b>	<b>Status (2024)</b>
41	Remove the <b>Brodhagen and Dublin diamonds</b> from the active inventory. Continue to maintain these diamonds to a standard that is consistent with casual play, but remove the lighting, fencing, and/or bleachers when they become unsafe. A commitment to usage and substantial fundraising would be required to improve these diamonds.	Incomplete
42	Install a <b>playground</b> at a future park site in <b>southwest Mitchell</b> .	Timeframe not reached
43	Consider the installation of a playground and/or tree plantings within <b>Sunset Park</b> in northwest Mitchell, should there be sufficient local interest.	Ongoing
44	Develop and implement a program for regular <b>playground replacement, upgrades, and installation</b> , with continued consideration of accessible features (such as ramps, swings, pathways, etc.).	Ongoing
45	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.	Complete
46	Provide two courts for tennis and/or pickleball in Mitchell. This may be achieved by improving the existing courts (and making them available for public use) or developing new courts at another location.	Complete
47	Encourage the Dublin Lions to proceed with the installation of an <b>outdoor pad at Dublin Lions Park</b> . Municipal support should be considered in the context of the proposed Fundraising & Partnership Policy (not yet developed).	Complete
48	Work with local service clubs, stakeholders, and the community to install a <b>permanent skate park</b> at a location within Keterson Park in Mitchell.	Incomplete
49	Work with the Agricultural Society to plan for the replacement of the four <b>Fair barns</b> currently located at the centre of Keterson Park, with the goal of developing new structures that will be appropriately designed and located to meet the long-term needs of the Fair and community.	Complete
50	Undertake a review of the long-term capital and operational requirements of the <b>Lions Park petting zoo</b> .	Ongoing
51	Use the Recreation & Leisure Services Master Plan as a resource in developing West Perth's <b>long-term capital forecast</b> .	Ongoing
52	Ensure that Municipal Council is fully aware of the <b>operating cost implications</b> when deciding on the approval of capital projects.	Ongoing
53	Continue to seek <b>alternative funding sources</b> (e.g., fundraising, sponsorships, grants, etc.) to supplement existing resources and to enable full implementation of the Master Plan.	Ongoing
54	Establish a <b>reserve fund</b> specific to major recreation and parks infrastructure projects with consistent annual contributions through the Municipal budget process, using a 2% facility replacement target as a benchmark.	Ongoing

	<b>Recommendation – Service Delivery</b>	<b>Status (2024)</b>
<b>55</b>	Implement a system for the regular <b>implementation, monitoring, and review</b> of the Recreation & Leisure Services Master Plan, including the creation of an annual work plan.	Complete
<b>56</b>	Reconfirm the direction, priorities, and accomplishments of the Master Plan in 2021. Undertake a complete review and <b>update</b> of the Master Plan in the year 2026.	Ongoing

## **Appendix B.**

# **Community Survey Results**

See following pages.

**Participation**

1) In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in West Perth or elsewhere? (select all that apply)

	#	%	Other (specify):	#
Arts and crafts	50	19%	Shuffleboard	2
Attending a local event (e.g., Corn Fest)	191	71%	Fall Fair	2
Baseball or softball (or other forms)	143	53%	Gymnasium	1
Basketball	48	18%	Track and Field	1
Community garden plot	14	5%	Attending ball games as spectator	1
Curling	31	12%	Water parks	1
Cycling or mountain biking	102	38%	Trampoline parks	1
Dog walking	100	37%	Rollerblading	1
Fishing	61	23%	Square dancing at Rostock Hall	1
Fitness (weight-training, yoga, etc.)	96	36%		
Golf	111	41%		
Gymnastics	52	19%		
Hockey, ringette, figure skating, or ice skating	176	65%		
Horseshoes	5	2%		
Ice skating (outdoor)	43	16%		
Nature appreciation (e.g., birdwatching, etc.)	79	29%		
Organized senior's programs	11	4%		
Organized teen programs	21	8%		
Paddling (canoeing, kayaking)	63	23%		
Performance arts (e.g., dance, music, drama)	37	14%		
Pickleball	54	20%		
Picnicking	65	24%		
Pre-school or children's programs	65	24%		
Running / jogging	66	25%		
Skateboarding / bike park	25	9%		
Soccer	58	22%		
Swimming (lessons)	112	42%		
Swimming (recreational)	111	41%		
Tennis	23	9%		
Use of playground equipment	163	61%		
Use of splash pad	133	49%		
Visiting the Lion's Park petting zoo	197	73%		
Visual arts (e.g., painting, sculpture)	14	5%		
Volleyball	40	15%		
Walking on paved trails	206	77%		
Walking on unpaved trails	178	66%		
None of the above	5	2%		
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>269</b>		
	skipped question	0		

2) Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as you would like?

	#	%
Yes	165	61%
No	86	32%
Don't know	18	7%
	<b>answered question</b>	<b>269</b>
	skipped question	0

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

	#	%
Lack of personal time / too busy	56	55%
Lack of desired parks, facilities, or programs	37	37%
Program not offered at a convenient time	31	31%
Cost / too expensive	22	22%
Lack of information / unaware of opportunities	31	31%
Parks or facilities are too far away	17	17%
Health problems / disability / age	5	5%
Lack of childcare	8	8%
Parks or facilities are too crowded	7	7%
Don't know	4	4%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>101</b>	
skipped question	168	

<b>Other (specify):</b>	#
Lack of accessible opportunities for those with disabilities that are geared to people under 40	1
Things are always Mitchell centric, as opposed to the other settlement areas in West Perth	1
Ball park bleachers need railings to assist up and down- also a step-up on both sides	1
Not enough safe places to walk (sidewalks) with too many speeding trucks and cars	1
Indoor walking track not in community	1
Weather	1
Options are not year round (ex. Swimming)	1

**Program & Activity Gaps**

4) Are there any recreation and parks activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Municipality of West Perth that are not currently available?

	#	%
Yes	111	43%
No	55	21%
Don't know	95	36%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>261</b>	100%
skipped question	8	

5) If you answered "Yes" to the previous question: What activities would you like to see offered?

**Top Themes**

Indoor pool	21
Indoor walking track	16
outdoor ice rink	14
More hiking trails and better maintenance to them	9
Indoor drop in pickleball with better courts	6
Biking trails	4
volleyball / beach volleyball	4
Public Fitness Facility (weight training)	3
More walking / running paths	3
More inclusive / assessible playgrounds and activities	3
atv / off-road trail	3
Improved splash pad that doesn't turn off at 6pm	2
More child based activities	2
Technology - coding club	2
Bicycle paths / lanes	2
kayak / boat launch area	2
Yoga / hot yoga	2
Adult ice / ball hockey	2
Another ice pad	2
Affordable Minor Sports	2
Family based programs	2
tumble/exercise/social activities	2
canoe, kayak or rowing	2
nature walks on the trail to identify plants	2
Snowshoeing	1
Improvements to lions park trail and waterfront	1
Another dog park in lions park to the north with shade	1
Mom and baby yoga/fitness classes	1
Frisbee Golf	1
Adult soccer teams	1
cross country skiing	1
dragon boating	1
Ninja Warrior Courses	1
Nordic pole walking	1
Track and Field	1
Reassuring ownership and maintenance of the Dublin ball diamond	1
Brazilian Ji Jitsu	1
more small greenspace parks all through the town in neighbourhoods	1
Indoor roller skating	1

More adult organized recreational opportunities for individuals new to the community	1
Flag football	1
Activities at the Lion's Animal Park	1
More activities at youth centre	1
Indoor baseball dryland training	1
Indoor Rec Facility	1
Indoor play gym for young children	1
Outdoor basketball	1
Senior ice skating	1
Adult recreational soccer	1
Fun baseball games	1
Indoor soccer	1
Kayak rental	1
Pump track for scooters	1
Ball hockey	1
More drop in sports and activities	1
Low cost low impact fitness program - in person or virtual	1
Extending sidewalk in built up areas	1
Free movie nights	1
Indoor drop in basketball	1
a public park offered for children & families near Napier & Frank (with play equipment)	1
Dedicated curling facilities	1
fence for keterson park playground and more swings	1
pickleball outdoor more space and with lights	1
more age diverse playground equipment suitable for younger children at Keterson Park	1
Water slides	1
better dog park	1
youth pickleball	1
More low cost activities	1
Permanent all wheels park	1
More activities at library	1
ANYTHING for adults offered on evenings or weekends - no children	1
Off leash dog trails	1
Outdoor track	1
Food truck festival	1
More toddler friendly play equipment	1
Mud wrestling	1
Sport court (ball hockey, basketball)	1
RC car track	1
Day program for elderly/people with dementia	1

**Importance & Satisfaction**

6) In general, how important are the following items to your household?

	Not at all Important		Low Importance		Important		Essential		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Indoor recreation facilities (such as arenas, youth centres, and halls)	2	1%	16	7%	83	34%	141	58%	242	100%	27
Outdoor recreation facilities (sports fields, courts, playgrounds, pavilions)	0	0%	10	4%	79	33%	152	63%	241	100%	28
Passive parks (preservation of natural areas and open space)	1	0%	25	10%	105	44%	109	45%	240	100%	29
Trails and sidewalks	0	0%	13	5%	88	37%	140	58%	241	100%	28
Recreation programs (registered and drop-in)	4	2%	29	12%	112	47%	95	40%	240	100%	29

7) Thinking about spaces and services that currently exist in the Municipality of West Perth, what is your level of satisfaction with the following?

	Not at all satisfied		Slightly dissatisfied		Reasonably satisfied		Satisfied		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Indoor recreation facilities (Mitchell Arena, Youth Centre, and rural halls)	13	5%	67	28%	127	52%	35	14%	242	100%	27
Outdoor recreation facilities (sports fields, courts, playgrounds, and pavilions)	2	1%	36	15%	152	63%	51	21%	241	100%	28
Passive parks (preservation of natural areas and open space)	4	2%	28	12%	148	62%	59	25%	239	100%	30
Trails and sidewalks	14	6%	38	16%	149	62%	38	16%	239	100%	30
Recreation programs (registered and drop-in)	7	3%	34	14%	162	68%	35	15%	238	100%	31

**Recreation & Park Priorities**

8) To what degree do you oppose or support the Municipality and/or community spending additional public funds to improve the following types of facilities or build more facilities?

	Strongly oppose		Somewhat oppose		Somewhat support		Strongly support		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Arenas	5	2%	21	9%	68	29%	137	59%	231	100%	38
Baseball or softball diamonds	9	4%	42	19%	80	35%	95	42%	226	100%	43
Basketball courts (outdoor)	8	4%	34	15%	116	51%	69	30%	227	100%	42
Bike lanes	25	11%	48	21%	87	38%	68	30%	228	100%	41
Community allotment gardens	12	5%	52	23%	121	54%	41	18%	226	100%	43
Community halls and multi-purpose rooms	7	3%	30	13%	118	52%	72	32%	227	100%	42
Fitness centres	15	7%	49	22%	102	45%	60	27%	226	100%	43
Gymnasiums (court sports)	11	5%	26	12%	103	46%	85	38%	225	100%	44
Mitchell Dam and Reservoir (for recreational uses such as fishing, paddling, etc.)	9	4%	23	10%	111	49%	85	37%	228	100%	41
Nature trails	4	2%	11	5%	78	34%	136	59%	229	100%	40
Off-leash dog parks	25	11%	56	25%	98	44%	46	20%	225	100%	44
Outdoor ice skating rinks	13	6%	42	18%	94	41%	79	35%	228	100%	41
Park pavilions	12	5%	36	16%	110	49%	67	30%	225	100%	44
Parks and open space	7	3%	13	6%	102	45%	105	46%	227	100%	42
Paved trails	10	4%	27	12%	89	39%	101	44%	227	100%	42
Playgrounds	8	4%	19	8%	82	36%	119	52%	228	100%	41
Pickleball courts	17	7%	35	15%	128	56%	47	21%	227	100%	42
Skateboard and bike parks	22	10%	54	24%	116	52%	33	15%	225	100%	44
Soccer fields	13	6%	32	14%	123	54%	58	26%	226	100%	43
Space for seniors programs	8	4%	20	9%	102	45%	97	43%	227	100%	42
Space for youth programs	4	2%	15	7%	93	41%	114	50%	226	100%	43
Splash pads	7	3%	20	9%	95	42%	104	46%	226	100%	43
Swimming pools (indoor)	27	12%	24	10%	48	21%	130	57%	229	100%	40
Swimming pools (outdoor)	5	2%	19	8%	86	38%	117	52%	227	100%	42
Tennis courts	15	7%	45	20%	115	51%	51	23%	226	100%	43

**Other (specify):**

Accessible and family friendly washroom facilities by trails/outdoor areas. Lighting by outdoor areas for safety.  
 Fence to enclose playground in Keterson Park. Kitchen in Mitchell community center needs complete reno- store and cooler are antiques. Get professionals to draw up reno plan.  
 We need to improve sports for GIRLS. Girls fastball does not have enough diamond time. Ringette does not get enough ice time for practice. It leads to too many kids on the ice / diamond at once, which is unfair and unsafe. Why are the two sports that are primarily for girls the sports that get short-changed? It's unfair and discriminatory. We should look at building a small practice diamond for ball to make more diamond time available. Slo-pitch should have to play later. Ringette should have equal practice time when compared to boys hockey. This is something that needs to be addressed to keep girls in sports.

Outdoor track and field track also indoor track  
 Another ice pad  
 paddleboard/kayak/canoe launch  
 The amount of support would strongly hinge on the actual location.  
 currently keterson park is a dogrun. playground is not safe because of dogs off leash. Fence needed for playgrounds because of parking lot and dogs. swimming pools indoor are not feasible- ask wingham or st mary's.  
 Kitchen at community centre is a caterer's nightmare- most refuse to cater from it. We need By-law to prohibit dogs in keterson park. Take a day and observe. Large dogs are using this area as a "dog run". Children in park are at risk. Signs need to be posited at ALL entrances  
 Grooming Cross country skiing trails  
 Would love to see more done with the Mitchell Dam Reservoir, but only if the nature trail around it stays "natural." It would be awful to see it urbanized, or having anything requiring heavy construction done to the shoreline. Also, since my house backs on to it, I would not want to see bright lights (The Henry Street Bridge lights and lights from the new subdivision are awful) or anything that's disruptive or attracts heavy traffic and noise.  
 unpaved nature trails not in Mitchell  
 Outdoor pickleball courts  
 Need to be building a second ice pad. Past councils have dropped the ball here and now is the time to expand our indoor ice surfaces  
 Side walk on all streets due to high volume of kids on road ways walking and biking  
 Planning is great based on economy and other capital requirements.  
 Indoor pool would be awesome. Driving to st Mary's for kids swimming currently. A lot of money is spent on hockey arenas. Not all kids wanna play hockey

**Trail Usage & Priorities**

9) On average, how often do you use West Perth's trails (select one per season)? (If you cannot select your desired response, please enter it under "other")

	Summer-Fall season		Winter-Spring season	
	(months without snow)	(months with snow)	(months without snow)	(months with snow)
	#	%	#	%
Daily	57	26%	4	2%
Weekly	89	41%	38	20%
Monthly	39	18%	60	32%
Once or twice a year	31	14%	47	25%
Never	1	0%	37	20%
answered question	217	100%	186	100%
skipped question	52		83	

**Other (specify):**

Daily winter and summer  
 with the paved trails, all depends on how bad cracks are as use wheelchair and sometimes too bad and not safe  
 Summer-Fall - multiple times a week  
 Difficult to walk the paved trail at the river due to it not being maintained for walking in winter/spring.  
 Winter: daily  
 Daily year round  
 every day all year  
 Daily winter and summer

10) Do you walk or cycle to access the following day-to-day services? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Work	20	9%
Grocery store	74	33%
Library	53	24%
Doctor	24	11%
School	37	16%
After School Activities	33	15%
Church	14	6%
Recreation	125	56%
None of the above	76	34%
answered question	225	
skipped question	44	

**Other (specify):**

Pretty hard for a rural person to access any of these services walking or biking  
 Live 5 miles out of town, near busy provincial highway. So vehicle used to access services in west Perth.  
 No because none are within walking or biking distance.  
 Not a practical mode of everyday transportation for most people!!  
 Disability, immune disorder  
 Live to far away in the country have to drive  
 We could bike to the closest rural park (<5 min drive, but road 180 doesn't have bike lanes so it's dangerous)  
 Live outside of town  
 Visiting family, dropping off for childcare

11) What keeps you from using trails, cycling, and/or walking more often? (select up to four)

	#	%
Nothing	45	19%
Trail maintenance issues	39	17%
Safety concerns	21	9%
Poor weather / Winter weather	92	40%
Lack of lighting	76	33%
Lack of desirable routes	41	18%
The trails are too challenging	0	0%
The trails are too easy	7	3%
The trails are confusing / difficult to navigate	10	4%
The trails are difficult to get to	13	6%
The trails are too crowded	0	0%
Conflicts with other trail users	3	1%
Lack of sidewalks	22	9%
Lack of time	78	34%
Lack of parking	5	2%
answered question	232	
skipped question	37	

**Other - Top Answers**

Live out of town / far away from trails	11
Safety concerns	5
Not accessible / not upkeep	4
Lack of promotion / knowledge of trails	3

12) Where do you see the priorities for investment in local pedestrian and cycling routes?

	Not at all Important		Low Importance		Important		Essential		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Improve existing trails	13	6%	54	24%	114	51%	41	18%	222	100%	47
Add new trails and connections	15	7%	55	25%	94	43%	57	26%	221	100%	48
Add additional sidewalks	15	7%	73	33%	88	40%	42	19%	218	100%	51
Improve street crossings	15	7%	60	28%	107	49%	36	17%	218	100%	51
Improve trail signs and maps	20	9%	80	37%	84	38%	35	16%	219	100%	50
Improve safety	9	4%	53	25%	110	51%	43	20%	215	100%	54
Improve trail etiquette on trails	24	11%	103	48%	71	33%	17	8%	215	100%	54
Improve ongoing trail maintenance	11	5%	36	16%	131	60%	41	19%	219	100%	50
Improve accessibility	10	5%	57	27%	111	52%	37	17%	215	100%	54
Improve trail amenities (benches, waste bins)	15	7%	56	26%	112	51%	36	16%	219	100%	50
Improve trail lighting	16	7%	54	24%	92	41%	62	28%	224	100%	45

13) How can information about West Perth's trail network and wayfinding be improved? (select up to three)

	#	%
No improvements are necessary	35	15%
Signs and maps	122	53%
Online maps with QR codes	111	48%
Rules and etiquette information	40	17%
Safety	64	28%
Accessibility features	56	24%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>230</b>	
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>39</b>	

**Other (specify):**

Have walking trails only, need to separate bike trails, electric bikes should not be on sidewalks or trails  
 Promotion and programming  
 Lighting  
 Keep ATV's off trails and wetlands area  
 Please spend money on more important town infrastructure (Hwy 23 south and Hwy 8 corner west of the bridge, terrible for walking on the sidewalks)  
 Plowing in winter  
 Signage about the natural plants, natural environmental features and animals in the area (similar to those in the Demonstration Forest and Lion's Park) (Please do not inst  
 Add to google maps  
 Create an actual network that spans farther than Mitchell

**Statements**

14) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree		Somewhat disagree		Somewhat agree		Strongly agree		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
My household is generally satisfied with the geographic distribution of recreation, parks and trails in the Municipality.	8	4%	29	13%	149	67%	36	16%	222	100%	47
The Municipality's recreation, parks and trails are generally well maintained.	3	1%	32	14%	154	69%	34	15%	223	100%	46
The Municipality's parks are important to my wellbeing.	4	2%	11	5%	76	34%	131	59%	222	100%	47
The Municipality's recreation facilities are important to my wellbeing.	3	1%	13	6%	74	33%	133	60%	223	100%	46
The Municipality's recreational trails are important to my wellbeing.	7	3%	16	7%	95	43%	103	47%	221	100%	48
I am satisfied with recreation programming provided by the Municipality of West Perth, such as aquatics, camps, fitness, and more.	13	6%	52	24%	121	56%	32	15%	218	100%	51
I feel that I am aware of the recreation, park, and trail opportunities that are available in my area.	11	5%	42	19%	123	55%	46	21%	222	100%	47
The cost to participate in recreation programs is reasonable and affordable for my household.	6	3%	42	19%	120	55%	49	23%	217	100%	52

## Comments

15) Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding recreation spaces, parks, outdoor spaces, and trails within the Municipality of West Perth.

Key Themes	Comments
Infrastructure needs	demand for improved sidewalks, street lighting, road safety measures, and signage concerns about existing facility conditions (arena, ball park and trails) requests for a public gym, indoor pool, and indoor walking track Suggestions for enhancing accessibility (paved trails and sidewalks)
Recreation facilities	requests to upgrade arena (more ice pads and a dedicated curling rink) desires for more diverse activities (indoor and outdoor options for all ages, not enough adult programs/activities during evenings and weekends) concerns about equitable access to facilities and ice time
Maintenance and mangement	a want for more maintenance and upkeep of parks, trails and recreational facilities suggestions for better organization, management and coordination of recreational programs/activities requests for improved cleanliness and safety measures in public spaces concerns about graffiti, garbage disposal, and water quality
Community engagement	desire for more community involvement in decisions making processes a want for more advertising / communication about West Perth's recreational programming and facilities suggestions to promooto local businesses and foster community connections
Environmental considerations	preservation of green spaces and natural areas is key, while enhancing recreational opportunities
Inclusivity and accessibility	advocate for inclusive recreational opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and interests concerns about accessibility barriers and safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists

## Demographic Information

16) How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	11	5%
2	43	19%
3	28	13%
4	74	33%
5+	65	29%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	48	

17) Including yourself, please indicate the number of people within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	#	%
Under 10 years	223	27%
10-19 years	143	17%
20-34 years	111	13%
35-54 years	255	31%
55-69 years	78	9%
70 years or older	21	3%
<b>total people in households</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>answered question</b>	<b>220</b>	
skipped question	49	
<b>average persons per household</b>	<b>3.8</b>	

18) In what year were you born?

	#	%
Prior to 1950 (74 years or older)	4	2%
1950 to 1959 (64 to 73 years)	9	4%
1960 to 1969 (54 years to 63 years)	24	12%
1970 to 1979 (44 to 53 years)	38	18%
1980 to 1989 (34 to 43 years)	92	45%
1990 to 1999 (24 to 33 years)	35	17%
2000 or later (23 years or younger)	4	2%
answered question	<b>206</b>	
skipped question	63	

19) Are you a resident of the Municipality of West Perth?

	#	%
Yes	214	96%
No	6	3%
Unsure	2	1%
answered question	<b>222</b>	
skipped question	47	

20) In which ward of the Municipality of West Perth do you live in?

	#	%
Fullarton Ward	19	9%
Hibbert Ward	19	9%
Logan Ward	22	10%
Mitchell Ward	153	71%
Don't know	1	0%
answered question	<b>214</b>	
skipped question	55	

21) If you are not a resident of the Municipality of West Perth, in which municipality do you reside?

	#
Perth South	2
Perth County	1
London-Middlesex	1
Perth East	2
Huron East	1
answered question	<b>7</b>

## **Appendix C.**

# **Youth Survey Results**

See following pages.

**Participation**

1) In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in West Perth or elsewhere? (select all that apply)

	#	%	<b>Other (specify):</b>	#
Arts & Crafts	56	41%	Horse back riding	3
Attending a local event (e.g., Corn Fest)	47	34%	Hunting	2
Ball hockey	32	23%	Video games	2
Baseball / softball	55	40%	Broomball	1
Basketball	60	44%	Taking care of farm animals	1
Cross country skiing or snowshoeing	15	11%	Running	1
Curling	15	11%	Cooking	1
Cycling	32	23%	Indoor baseball	1
Dance	29	21%	Cheerleading	1
Dog walking	57	42%	Back flips	1
Fishing	51	37%	Arcade	1
Fitness (weight-lifting, yoga, etc.)	40	29%	Outdoor rink	1
Gymnastics	18	13%	Tap Dance	1
Hiking or trail running	53	39%	Indoor soccer field	1
Hockey, ringette, or figure skating	58	42%	Cricket	1
Ice skating (outdoor)	26	19%	Golf	1
Martial arts	22	16%	Bowling	1
Music	52	38%		
Paddling (canoeing, kayaking)	22	16%		
Pickleball	22	16%		
Running or jogging	69	50%		
Scouts / girl guides	7	5%		
Skateboarding / bike park	29	21%		
Soccer	57	42%		
Summer camps	42	31%		
Swimming (lessons)	40	29%		
Swimming (recreational)	55	40%		
Tennis	18	13%		
Theatre / performing arts	17	12%		
Using playgrounds	70	51%		
Using splash pads	36	26%		
Volleyball	41	30%		
Visual arts (painting, sculpture, etc.)	21	15%		
Youth Centre	41	30%		
<b>answered question</b>	<b>137</b>			
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>3</b>			

2) What are the top reasons stopping you from participating in recreation, parks, and trail activities as often as you would like, if any? (select up to three responses)

	#	%	<b>Other (specify):</b>	#
I'm too busy to participate	43	35%	Live too far away	5
Lack of programs that interest me	28	23%	Do not like Mitchell	1
Lack of parks or facilities that interest me	18	15%		
Program times don't fit my schedule	16	13%		
Cost to participate is too high	13	11%		
Unaware of opportunities	20	16%		
Facility or park is too far away (no transportation)	13	11%		
Lack of confidence or knowledge to participate	16	13%		
Do not feel welcome or safe in parks or facilities	8	7%		
Don't know	33	27%		
None - I can participate fully	32	26%		
<b>answered question</b>	<b>123</b>			
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>17</b>			

3) Thinking about the parks and facilities available in West Perth, tell us how satisfied you are with them.

	Dissatisfied		Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied		Satisfied		Answered		Don't use	Skipped	Don't use	Users
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	#		
Arena	10	9%	27	23%	78	68%	136	100%	21	4	15%	85%
Bike Paths and Trails	8	8%	16	16%	77	76%	133	100%	32	7	24%	76%
Playgrounds	3	3%	32	28%	78	69%	134	100%	21	6	16%	84%
Skateboard Park	11	16%	30	44%	27	40%	129	100%	61	11	47%	53%
Sports Fields	8	8%	21	20%	74	72%	132	100%	29	8	22%	78%
Swimming Pool	6	6%	23	21%	80	73%	131	100%	22	9	17%	83%
Youth Centre	6	10%	10	17%	44	73%	132	100%	72	8	55%	45%

4) How can we improve recreation facilities, parks, and trails in West Perth and make them more "youth friendly"?

Top Themes	Comments
Increasing Variety & Maintenance	Enhancing existing facilities, adding more features like playground equipment, trails, splash pads, and sports fields, and maintaining them better.
Inclusivity & Diversity	Creating environments that cater to a diverse range of people, including LGBTQIA+ acceptance, and involving youth in decision-making processes.
Safety & Cleanliness	Ensuring safety through measures like cleaning trails and parks, picking up litter, preventing graffiti, and adding more garbage cans.
Community Engagement & Events	Holding events and activities to encourage community participation and usage of facilities.
Infrastructure Upgrades	Upgrading existing infrastructure such as skate parks, arenas, and adding new amenities like ziplines, basketball courts, and ball hockey pads.
Accessibility	Making facilities more accessible by placing them closer to homes and stores and adding facilities like water fountains and benches.
Youth Engagement	Providing more opportunities for youth involvement, such as through clubs and programs tailored to their interests.
Equity	Ensuring fairness in resource allocation, such as equal ice time for different sports like hockey and ringette.

5) What new recreation, parks, and trails activities or programs would you like to see in West Perth? What time of day or day of week should they be offered?

Top Themes	Comments
Expanded Recreational Facilities	Requests for facilities like basketball courts, tennis courts, gyms, swimming pools, skate parks, running tracks, hiking trails, and sports fields to accommodate various interests and age groups.
Youth Engagement	Suggestions for programs and clubs tailored to youth interests, such as art groups, sports clubs, cheerleading teams, gaming clubs, and outdoor activities like horseback riding and ATV trails.
Community Events & Programs	Calls for more community events, walking groups, art activities, and organized sports camps to encourage social engagement and physical activity.
Accessibility & Inclusivity	Suggestions for facilities and programs that cater to people with disabilities, as well as requests for facilities to be open on weekends and evenings to accommodate busy schedules.
Infrastructure Improvements	Ideas for upgrading existing facilities like arenas, playgrounds, and trails to make them safer, cleaner, and more enjoyable for users.
Sport Opportunities	Requests for sports facilities such as cricket fields, soccer fields, hockey camps, and ball hockey rinks to support various sporting interests.
Art & Culture Activities	Interest in art clubs, writing clubs, spelling clubs, and arts and crafts activities to foster creativity and expression.
Environmental Considerations	Concerns about maintaining cleanliness in public spaces and preserving natural environments, including requests for trash cans, recycling facilities, and efforts to prevent littering.

6) How would you rate the importance of West Perth improving or providing more of the following facilities?

	Unimportant		Neither Unimportant		Important		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Arenas (ice sports)	11	9%	34	27%	79	64%	124	100%	16
Baseball diamonds	19	15%	41	33%	63	51%	123	100%	17
Basketball courts (outdoor)	11	9%	39	32%	73	59%	123	100%	17
Bike paths / trails	13	11%	34	28%	76	62%	123	100%	17
Fitness centres	19	16%	34	29%	64	55%	117	100%	23
Gymnasiums (court sports)	19	16%	41	34%	61	50%	121	100%	19
Mitchell Dam and Reservoir (fishing, paddling, etc.)	22	18%	31	25%	71	57%	124	100%	16
Nature trails	10	8%	36	29%	77	63%	123	100%	17
Off-leash dog parks	17	14%	33	27%	74	60%	124	100%	16
Playgrounds	9	7%	36	30%	76	63%	121	100%	19
Public libraries	10	8%	38	31%	75	61%	123	100%	17
Pickleball courts	34	29%	49	41%	36	30%	119	100%	21
Skateboard and bike parks	21	17%	51	41%	51	41%	123	100%	17
Soccer fields	14	11%	38	31%	70	57%	122	100%	18
Splash pads	19	16%	45	38%	56	47%	120	100%	20
Studio space for dance, music, theatre	22	18%	36	30%	63	52%	121	100%	19
Swimming pools (indoor)	13	11%	25	20%	84	69%	122	100%	18
Swimming pools (outdoor)	13	11%	32	26%	76	63%	121	100%	19
Tennis courts	25	20%	61	50%	36	30%	122	100%	18
Youth centres	22	18%	39	32%	60	50%	121	100%	19

7) Do you live in the Municipality of West Perth (Mitchell, Dublin, Staffa, and area)?

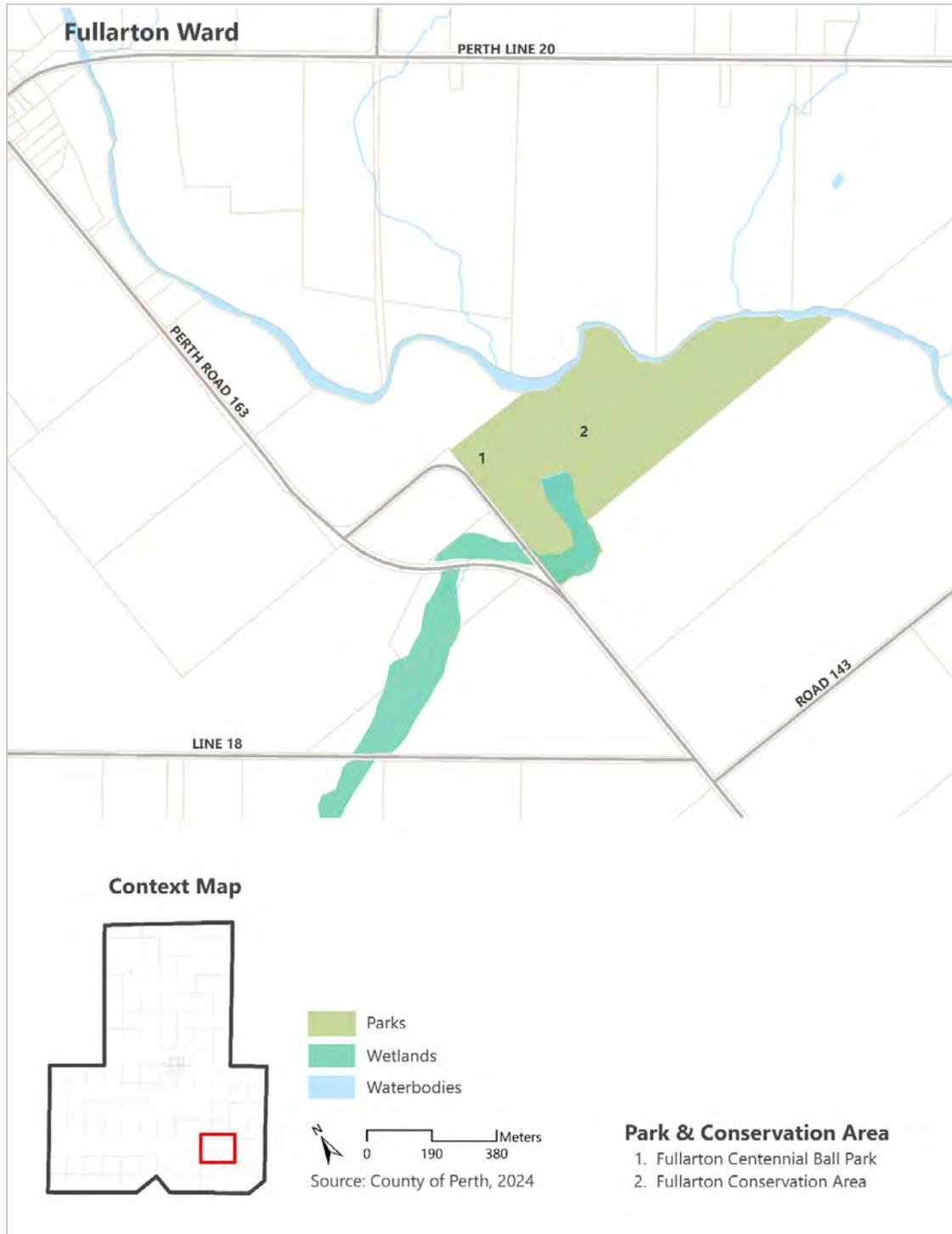
	#	%
Yes	121	98%
No	2	2%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>123</b>	
skipped question	17	

8) What grade are you in?

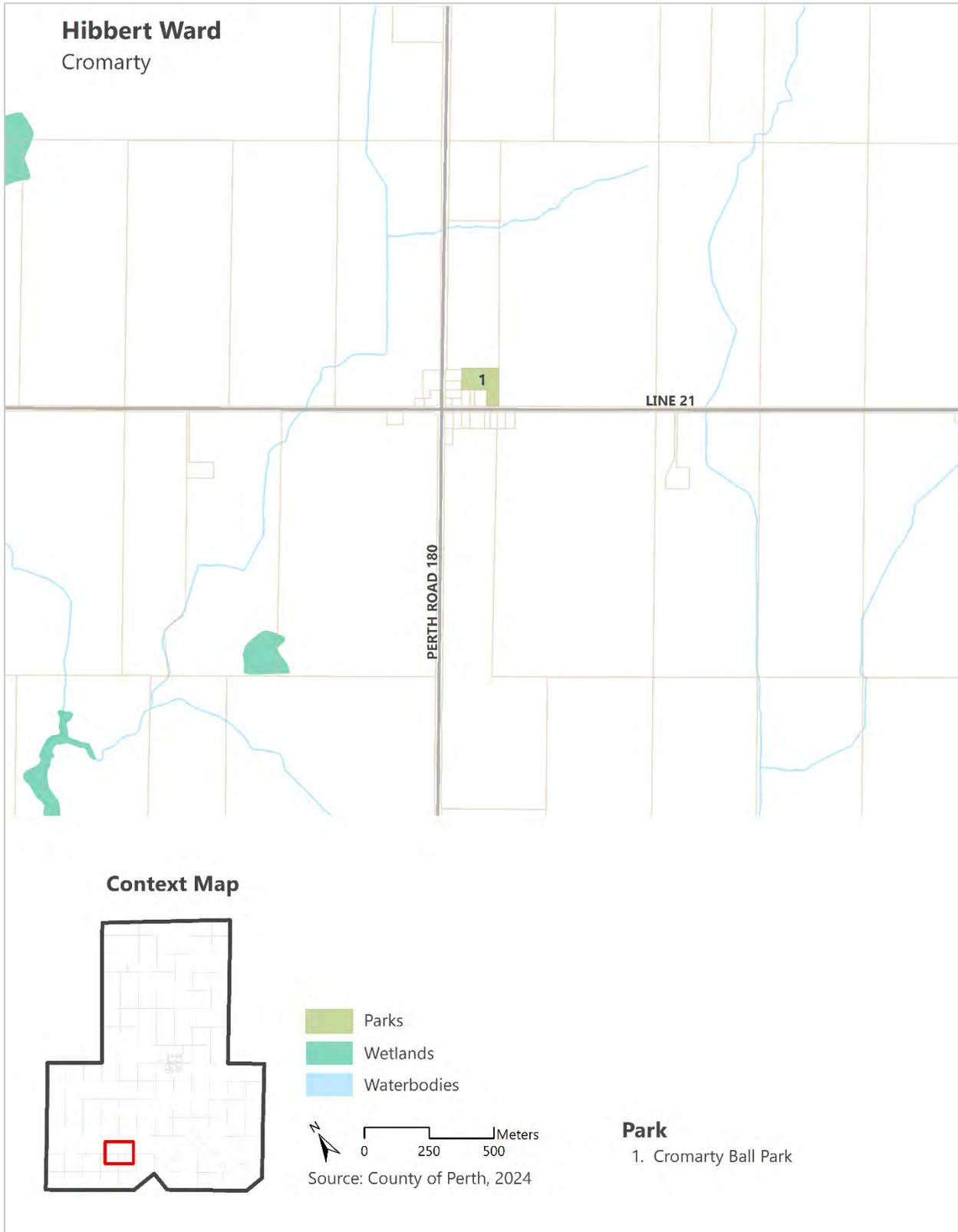
	#	%
4	2	2%
5	44	36%
6	31	25%
7	9	7%
8	4	3%
9	2	2%
10	21	17%
11	1	1%
12	8	7%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>123</b>	
skipped question	17	

# Appendix D. Parks, Recreation Facilities and Trails Mapping

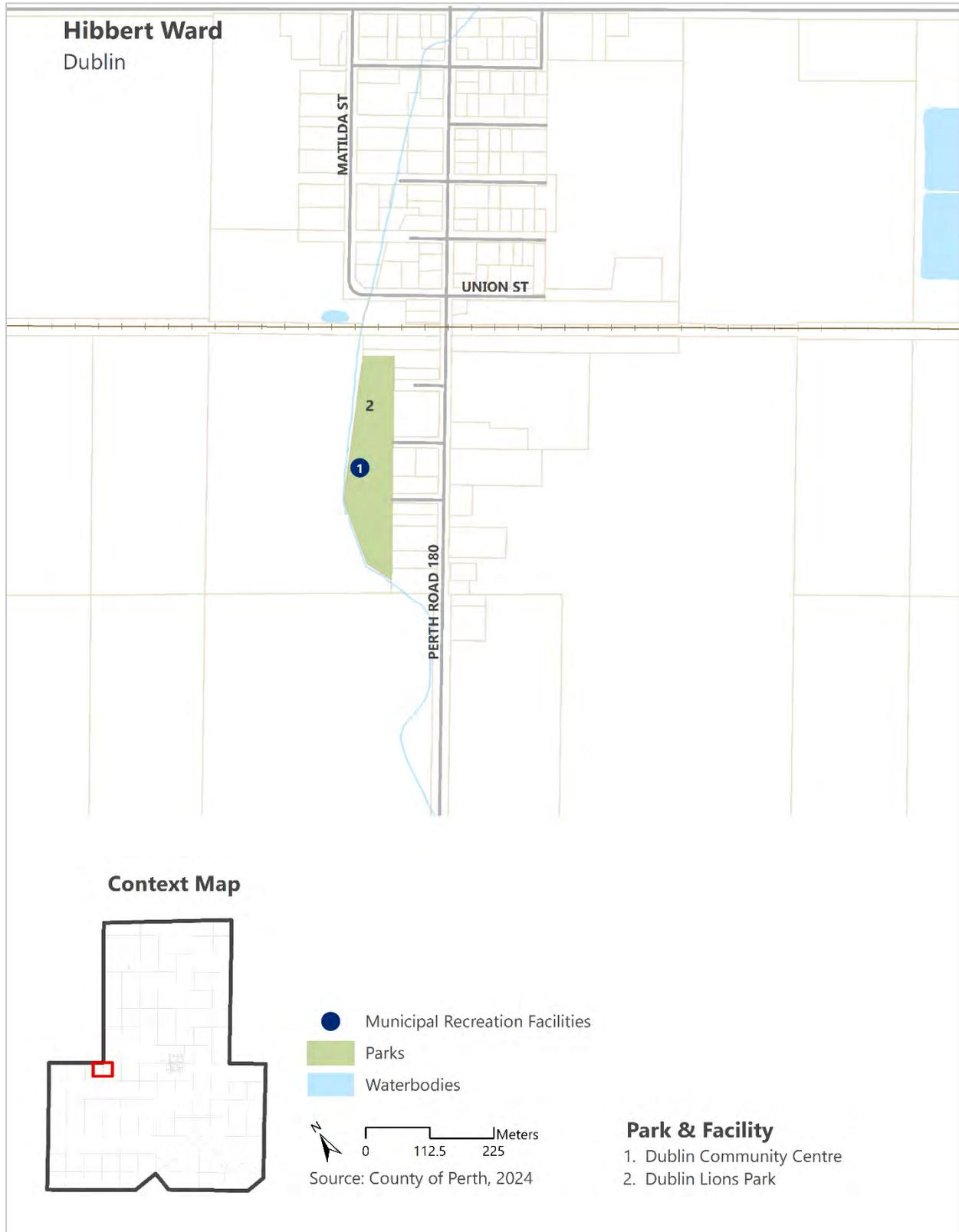
## Parks and Facilities in Fullarton Ward



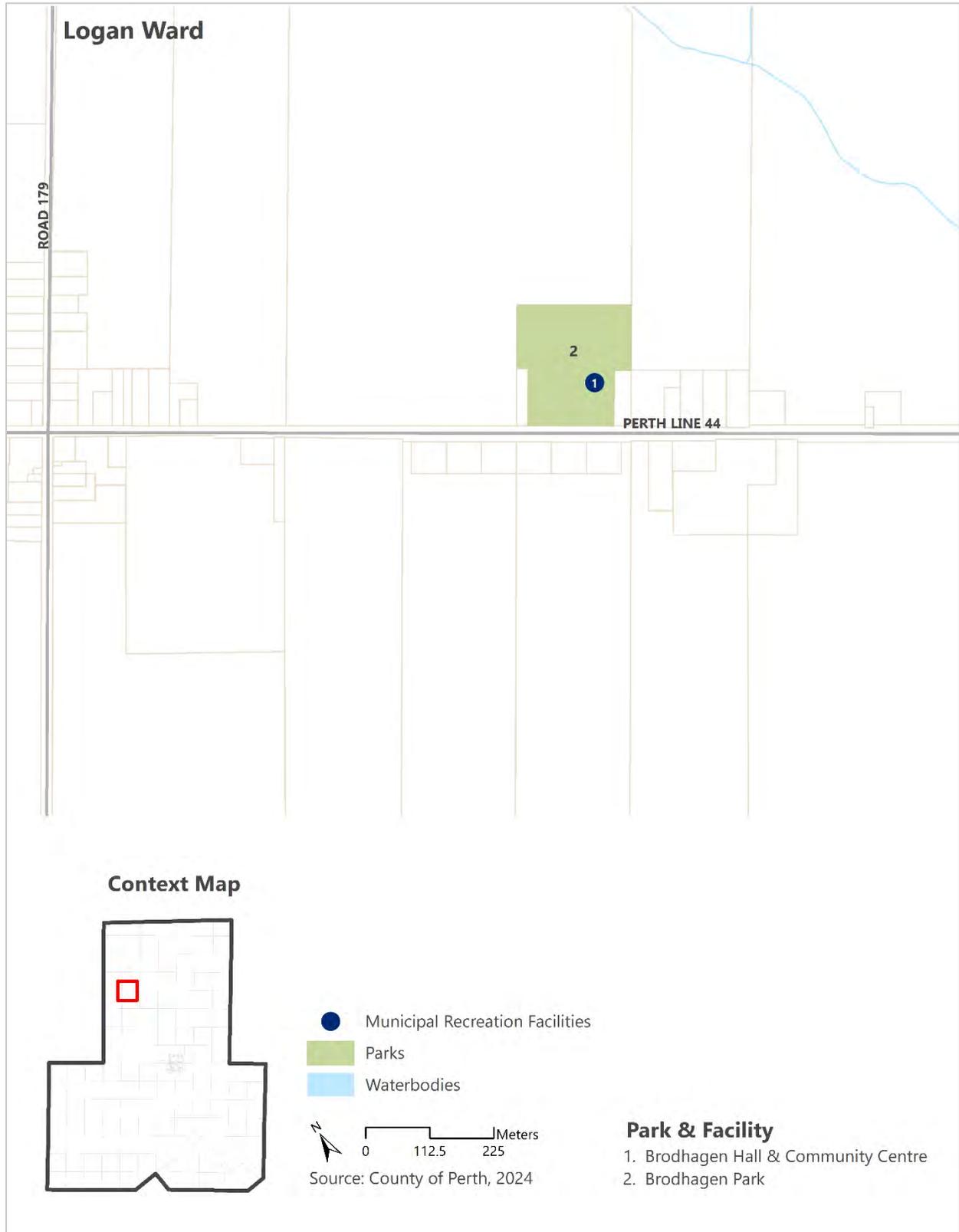
### Parks and Facilities in Hibbert Ward (Cromarty)



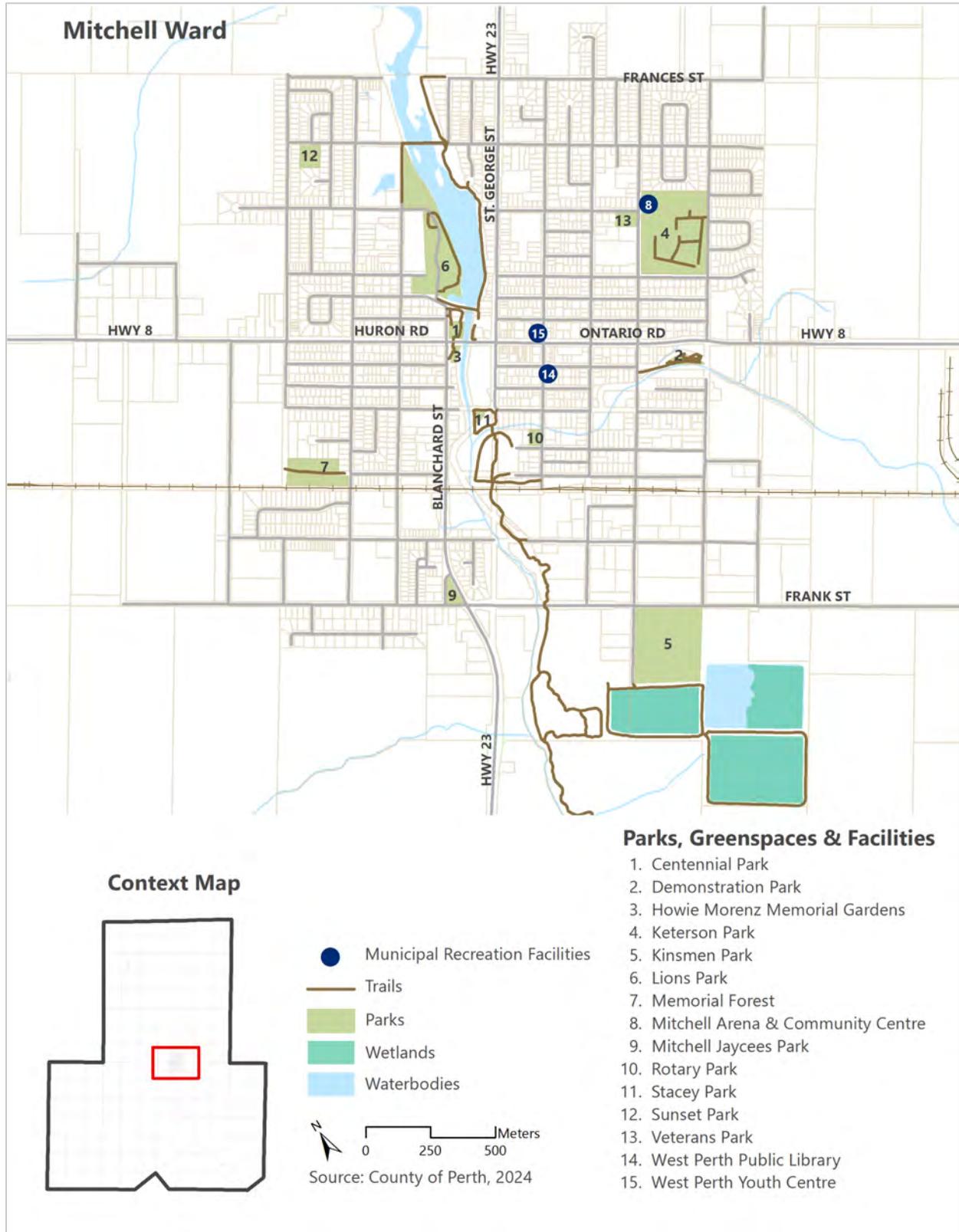
**Parks and Facilities in Hibbert Ward (Dublin)**



### Parks and Facilities in Logan Ward



**Parks and Facilities in Mitchell Ward**



## Appendix E.

# Municipal Benchmarking of Recreation Facilities

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to collect information on recreation facility provision levels in nearby municipalities. This data is one of several inputs that has informed the development of provision targets for the master plan. It is noted that the data represents a snapshot in time and does not capture differences facility quality, size, access, and service. Unless otherwise noted, the data includes facilities that are owned and/or permitted for public use by the municipality.

### Indoor Ice Pad Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	3	1 : 2,513
Huron East	9,512	3	1 : 3,171
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	1	1 : 5,680
Mapleton	10,839	3	1 : 3,613
North Perth	15,538	2.65**	1 : 5,863
Perth East	12,595	1	1 : 12,595
South Huron	10,063	1	1 : 10,063
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 : 6,262</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>6,988*</b>	<b>1.35**</b>	<b>1 : 9,435</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

\*\* Arena split between West Perth and North Perth; share is estimated based on 2024/25 usage

### Ball Diamonds Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	5	1 : 1,508
Huron East	9,512	6	1 : 1,585
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	5	1 : 1,136
Mapleton	10,839	4	1 : 2,710
North Perth	15,538	13	1 : 1,195
Perth East	12,595	5	1 : 2,519
South Huron	10,063	8	1 : 1,258
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1 : 1,702</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435*</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1 : 944</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Soccer Field Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	2	1 : 3,770
Huron East	9,512	2	1 : 4,756
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	8	1 : 710
Mapleton	10,839	6	1 : 1,807
North Perth	15,538	9	1 : 1,726
Perth East	12,595	3	1 : 4,198
South Huron	10,063	8	1 : 1,258
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1 : 2,604</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435*</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 : 4,718</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Playground Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	4	1 : 1,885
Huron East	9,512	8	1 : 1,189
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	5	1 : 1,136
Mapleton	10,839	11	1 : 985
North Perth	15,538	12	1 : 1,295
Perth East	12,595	4	1 : 3,149
South Huron	10,063	2	1 : 5,032
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1 : 2,096</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435*</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1 : 1,179</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Outdoor Pool Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	0	-
Huron East	9,512	2	1 : 4,756
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	1	1 : 5,680
Mapleton	10,839	0	-
North Perth	15,538	2	1 : 7,769
Perth East	12,595	1	1 : 12,595
South Huron	10,063	2	1 : 5,032
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 7,166</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 9,435</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Splash Pad Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	2	1 : 3,770
Huron East	9,512	1	1 : 9,512
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	1	1 : 5,680
Mapleton	10,839	1	1 : 10,839
North Perth	15,538	1	1 : 15,538
Perth East	12,595	0	-
South Huron	10,063	1	1 : 10,063
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 9,234</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 9,435</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Tennis & Pickleball Court Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Tennis Supply	Tennis Service Level	Pickleball Supply	Pickleball Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	1	1 : 7,540	0	-
Huron East	9,512	2	1 : 4,756	1	1 : 9,512
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	2	1 : 2,840	3	1 : 1,893
Mapleton	10,839	3	1 : 3,613	0	-
North Perth	15,538	5	1 : 3,108	0	-
Perth East	12,595	0	-	0	-
South Huron	10,063	2	1 : 5,032	2	1 : 5,032
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 : 4,481</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 5,479</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435*</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 : 4,718</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1 : 2,359</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

### Multi-Sport Pad Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Bluewater	7,540	2	1 : 3,770
Huron East	9,512	0	-
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	4	1 : 1,420
Mapleton	10,839	2	1 : 5,420
North Perth	15,538	0	-
Perth East	12,595	0	-
South Huron	10,063	0	-
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 3,537</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate

**All-Wheels Park Service Level Comparison of Nearby Municipalities**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2021 Census Population</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Service Level</b>
Bluewater	7,540	0	-
Huron East	9,512	0	-
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	1	1 : 5,680
Mapleton	10,839	1	1 : 10,839
North Perth	15,538	1	1 : 15,538
Perth East	12,595	1	1 : 12,595
South Huron	10,063	1	1 : 10,063
<b>Average</b>	<b>10,252</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 10,252</b>
<b>West Perth</b>	<b>9,435</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 : 9,435</b>

\* Current (2024) population estimate