

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

September 2020





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1.0 A Master Plan for Parks and Recreation

1.1 Parks and Recreation in Petrolia

The Town of Petrolia has a long history of providing a vibrant parks and recreation system which has contributed to the well-being of the community for decades through the physical health, economic and environmental benefits provided to residents. Major community assets include Greenwood Recreation Centre and Victoria Playhouse Petrolia that contribute to the quality of life of residents. The Town also owns a community centre (formerly known as the Oil Heritage District Community Centre), which is operated by YMCA Petrolia through formal agreement. Petrolia's parks system offer active and passive recreation opportunities ranging from Greenwood Park as a premier destination for baseball to Victoria Park where residents and visitors enjoy downtown Petrolia and can take in one of a number of special events held each year.

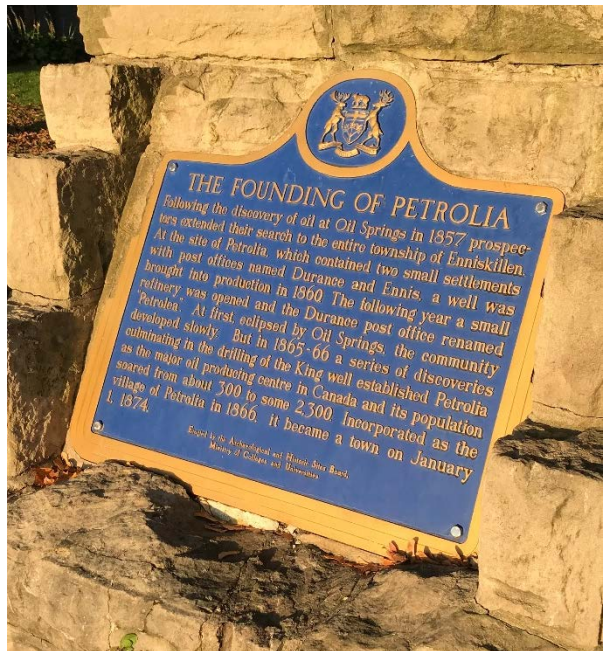
In order to ensure that parks and recreation services meet the needs of Petrolia residents, the Master Plan examines:

- Indoor recreation facilities (e.g., pools, arenas, etc.);
- Outdoor recreation facilities (e.g., sports fields, playgrounds, etc.);
- Special events and spaces (e.g., Victoria Hall, etc.);
- Parks, open spaces and trails; and
- Service delivery.

The Master Plan will assist the Town and community partners to provide the needed mix of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services for residents to engage in meaningful social and physical activities, while also positioning the Town to continue to attract visitors and tourists to the community.



Victoria Hall (Victoria Playhouse Petrolia)



Victoria Park

1.2 Key Trends Influencing Parks and Recreation

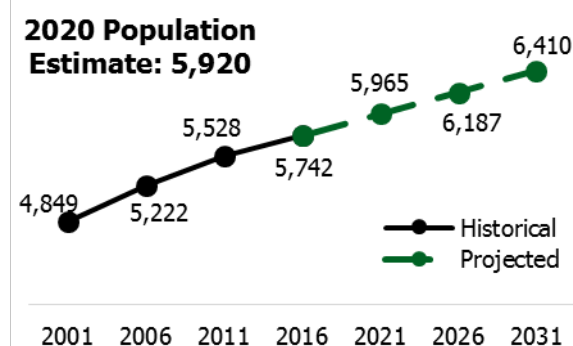
Population Growth

Understanding who lives in a community, both now and in the future, informs the planning of parks and recreation services. It is important to consider how Petrolia's community profile influences parks and recreation needs. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census periods, Petrolia's population grew by 4% to 5,742 persons, predominantly driven by growth in the northwest and southwest peripheries of the Town where undeveloped residential lands are located. Residential development within these vacant areas is expected to continue during the planning period.

Population projections developed by Lambton County (which is currently under appeal)¹ estimates that Petrolia is expected to grow to between 6,410 and 7,372 persons by 2031.² Discussions with the Town suggests that a population estimate on the lower end of that spectrum (Figure 1) is appropriate due to various demographic and growth-related factors. While residential development is expected to continue, the amount of undeveloped residential land is shrinking which in turn is reducing opportunities for new home construction.

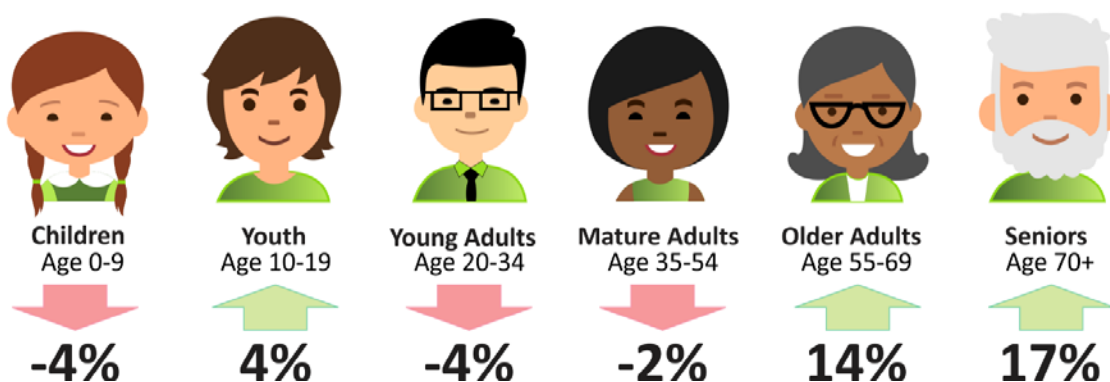
Like many municipalities, Petrolia is an aging community. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, Petrolia's median age increased by two years to 43 years. Comparatively speaking, Petrolia is younger than Lambton County (median age of 46 years), but older compared to the Province (41 years). This greying of the population is primarily driven by the aging baby boomer age cohort. Between 2011 and 2016, the Town's older adult population (age 55+) increased by 15%, while children (age 0-9), young adults (age 20-34) and mature adults (age 35-54) declined by 2% to 4% (Figure 2).³ Petrolia's demographic profile suggests a need to provide a balanced spectrum of facilities, programs and services that appeal to all age groups while ensuring that the parks and recreation opportunities of older adults are recognized as a potential area of increasing demand.

Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population Growth



Source: Statistics Canada Census; County of Lambton Official Plan (currently under appeal.)

Figure 2: Population Growth by Age Cohort



¹ Population forecasts by the County of Lambton are currently under appeal.

² Lambton County. 2019. County of Lambton Official Plan (currently under appeal). Retrieved from <https://www.lambtononline.ca>

³ Statistics Canada. 2016 Census.

Lack of Free Time

A lack of free time is often identified as the primary barriers to participating in parks and recreation. This barrier is generally driven by busy lifestyles at home, work, and school, as well as competing social interests. To combat this trend, municipalities have employed strategies such as extending facility hours of operation and offering programs at different times of the day and week.

As personal schedules become more hectic and unpredictable, people can be unable to commit to regularly scheduled programs. As a result, there has been increasing demand for spontaneous and unstructured programs that residents can participate in without registering in advance or committing to long-term programs. These casual drop-in programs can be found in Petrolia through activities such as public skating, recreational swimming, and gymnasium usage.

Physical Inactivity

The 2018 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children and youth graded overall physical activity levels a “D+” Canada-wide, which is a marginal improvement compared to previous years. This result suggests that there has been limited progress in improving physical activity at the national level. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (ages 5-7) recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity per day; however, the report card found that only 35% of children and youth are meeting this requirement. The report card also found that 62% of children (age 3-4) are getting the recommended 180 minutes of physical activity a day under the same guideline.⁴

Similarly, the 2019 ParticipACTION report card for adults graded overall physical activity levels a “D”. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week, although only 16% of adults (age 18-79) are achieving this goal.⁵

This highlights the importance of communities offering as many opportunities as possible to engage residents in physical activities to ensure that they lead healthy lifestyles.

Aging Infrastructure

The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that approximately one-third of Canada’s sports and recreation facilities were considered to be in “Fair” condition or worse. This suggests that municipal sports and recreation facilities require attention, show signs of deterioration, or have deteriorating components. Facilities that were identified to be in “Poor” or “Very Poor” shape suggests that their condition has the potential to impact service or that the asset is unfit for sustained service. Recreation facilities found to be in the worst condition were single pad arenas, outdoor pools and wading pools, indoor 25-metre pools, indoor curling rinks, and tennis courts.⁶ These pressures have been somewhat alleviated through various provincial and federal stimulus plans.

The Town of Petrolia has been proactive in undertaking capital improvements to improve parks and recreation infrastructure. In 2017, the Town completed a \$549,000 reinvestment project – funded in part by the Ontario Trillium Foundation – to upgrade and update the Greenwood Recreation Centre’s arena. Originally constructed in 1962, a number of improvements were made to the arena including new mechanical equipment, rink boards, safety netting, new change rooms and benches, a new lobby and press box, and accessibility upgrades.⁷

⁴ The ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children and youth. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.participation.com>

⁵ The ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for adults. 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.participation.com>

⁶ Canada Infrastructure. 2019. Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. Retrieved from <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca/>

⁷ Schilz, M. 2017. Petrolia Old Times press box will be replaced as part of \$549,000 arena upgrade. The Observer. Retrieved from <https://www.theobserver.ca>

The Town is currently pursuing funding through the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) program to undertake improvements to Victoria Playhouse Petrolia. The Town is also in the process of undertaking a building conditions assessment study to evaluate the state of key municipal facilities.

Multi-Use Recreation Facilities and Community Hubs

There is a growing expectation that facilities contain something for everyone rather than being designed for singular use. With a focus on user convenience and cost recovery, municipalities are centralizing multiple recreation facilities across fewer sites. This co-location of complementary facility components creates convenient activity centres and generates operating efficiencies.

This approach has evolved in recent years with some municipalities combining multi-use recreation facilities with other civic or community uses (with non-municipal organizations). This 'community hub' concept has been gaining traction by offering strong social benefits, strengthening community cohesion, and fostering enhanced quality of life in a central location to deliver multiple civic services. Not only can a community hub be a community or recreation centre (such as Petrolia YMCA), it can also integrate a school, library, or another type of public and private sector service (e.g., healthcare).

Local Tourism

A high-quality parks and recreation system, when combined with the culture system, is an effective way to draw visitors through sports and tournaments, theatre productions and festivals, special events and cultural heritage. In particular, many of these activities generate multiplier effects from tourism spending (depending upon their scale and catchment), while also promoting a sense of local pride and community spirit. For example, the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia annually draws visitors to a variety of theatrical productions attracting patrons from well beyond the Town and County. Special events such as Art in the Park, Chilli Cook-off and Pizzafest are also significant tourist draws to Petrolia.



Victoria Park

2.0 Community Consultation

2.1 Overview of Community Consultation and Key Themes

The perspectives of residents, stakeholders, Town Council and staff are important elements in developing strategies to address current and future needs. A variety of consultation tools were used so that all members of the community had an opportunity to provide input. Awareness and consultation methods included utilizing the Town's website, social media, a community launch event, a community survey, workshops with stakeholders and staff, and key informant interviews.

The information and suggestions collected throughout the consultation process **do not represent recommendations** but have been used to inform the Master Plan's assessments. Community input has not been altered even in instances where comments incorrectly reflect the Town's actual policies, practices or level of provision.

A summary of key themes from the consultations are presented in Figure 3 (in no particular order).

Figure 3: Summary of Key Consultation Themes



2.2 Community Launch Event

Two Community Launch Events were held on November 4, 2019 at Victoria Hall Petrolia by way of separate afternoon and evening sessions to introduce the Master Plan to the public. Display boards highlighted information about the Town and the Master Plan, and attendees were asked to provide input on how parks, recreation and trail opportunities could be improved.

Over 30 people attended the events in addition to members of Council and staff who were in attendance to observe. The following paragraphs summarize common themes, with a transcription of input found in **Appendix A**.

Improving Parks, Trails and Open Spaces

There is a strong desire to create a connected trail system in Petrolia that links residents to destinations (Petrolia Discovery, Bridgeview Park, and the golf course were specifically mentioned) through the use of off-road trails, sidewalks and bike paths. The trail system would ideally be physically accessible to all residents and maintained year-round to accommodate those that rely on trails and sidewalks as their primary method of transportation. The desire for a community garden was also expressed.

Improving Recreation Activities and Facilities

A variety of recreation activities and facilities were suggested that respond to Petrolia's demographic profile. With respect to outdoor recreation, participants expressed the desire for pickleball courts, an outdoor pool, and community garden. A desire to undertake improvements to aging playgrounds, addressing drainage issues at certain parks, and developing a skateboard park and picnic pavilion were also expressed. Program suggestions included sports leagues (e.g., women's ball hockey) and outdoor events, as well as the need to leverage the assistance of volunteers to realize suggestions.

Suggested indoor recreation activities and facilities included indoor courts for tennis and pickleball, walking track, and multi-purpose rental space for events such as birthdays and weddings.

Petrolia YMCA

A number of comments were made with respect to the Petrolia YMCA, including concern that programs and services provided by the YMCA are affordable. A number of program suggestions were also provided (that could potentially be considered by the YMCA such as: activities for older adults (yoga); more classes during the day, evening and weekend for youth and for all residents during the day; and more swimming programs for youth. Participants indicated a desire to have an ability to purchase a separate swim pass without being required to obtain a full-day pass.

Greenwood Recreation Centre

A need for additional ice time was expressed for the Greenwood Recreation Centre. A number of residents felt that if the Greenwood Recreation Centre was expanded, consideration should be given to providing inclusive programs and services to meet the needs of a broad range of residents. Specifically, the desire for an indoor walking track was put forward.

Victoria Hall/Victoria Playhouse Petrolia

It was clear that the Victoria Hall (Victoria Playhouse Petrolia) is highly valued in the community and as a result, it was felt that the Playhouse should be preserved. Residents felt that the Playhouse's customer service is strong and staff are very accommodating. Suggestions included providing more opportunities for rentals, constructing an outdoor rink at the site, providing more plays geared towards children and youth, and accessibility improvements (e.g., entrance, viewing areas, dressing rooms, etc.).

2.3 Community Survey

A Community Survey was administered in November 2019 to specifically inform the Master Plan by exploring local participation rates, usage patterns, and community priorities. The survey was provided in online and hard copies formats. Due to the self-administered format of the survey, results should not be considered statistically significant or representative of the entire population.

A total of 449 surveys were received and analyzed. It should be noted that respondents were not required to respond to questions they did not feel comfortable answering and some questions were skipped if a response was not required. This section summarizes key survey findings, while a complete summary of the survey can be found in **Appendix B**.

Summary of Respondents

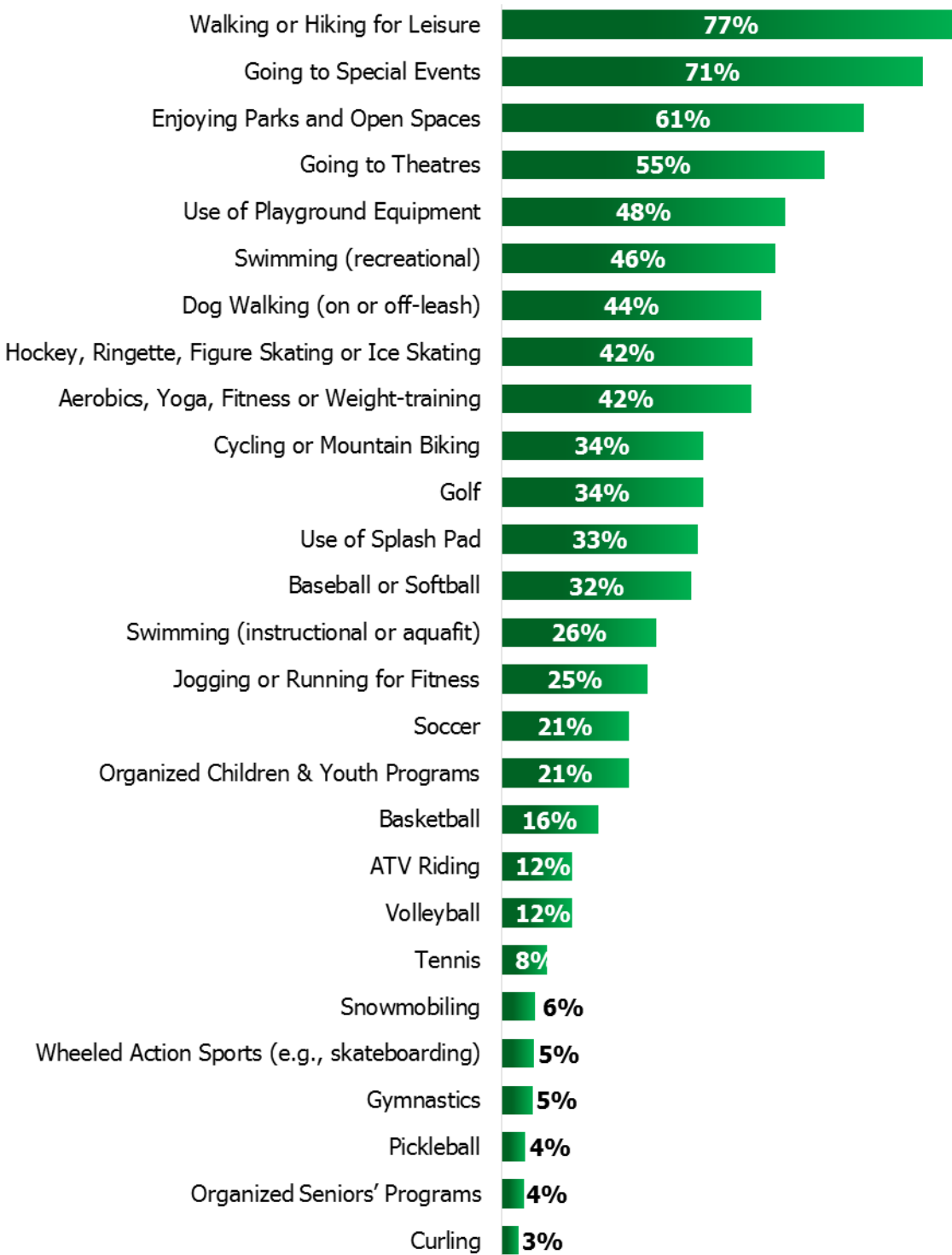
The following is a high-level summary of the demographic profile of respondents:

- While families with young children were slightly more likely to complete the survey compared to households over the age of 40, the household composition of the survey sample was generally similar to that of the current Town population.
- The average household size was 2.6 persons per household, which is slightly higher than what was recorded in the 2016 Census (2.4 persons per household).
- The average age of respondent was 43 years, on par with the 2016 Census (42.8 years).
- On average, survey respondents have lived in Petrolia for 22 years.

Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

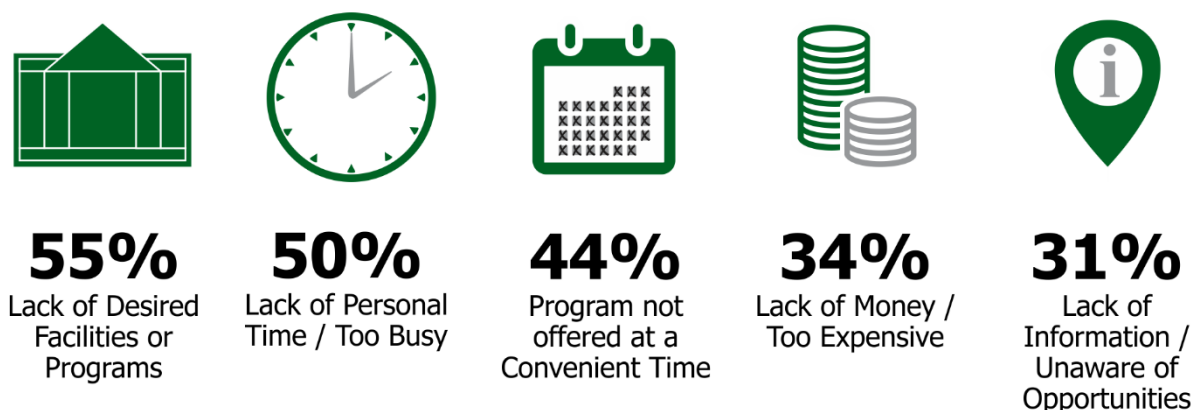
Figure 4 summarizes the most popular parks and recreation activities participated in over the past 12 months. The top five activities were: walking and hiking for leisure; going to special events; enjoying parks and open spaces; going to theatres, and using playground equipment. A common factor among these popular activities is that they are all unstructured and can be self-scheduled, consistent with provincial and national participation trends.

Figure 4: Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities in the Past 12 Months



Approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated that they are not able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as they would like. The most commonly identified barrier was a lack of desired facilities or programs in Petrolia (Figure 5). Other common barriers included a lack of personal time, a program not offered at a convenient time, affordability, and lack information about opportunities.

Figure 5: Top Five Barriers to Participating in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities



The majority of respondents reported that they participate in parks and recreation opportunities outside of Petrolia. Approximately two-thirds (68%) of respondents identified that “about half” to “most” of their parks and recreation needs are met within the Town. The primary reason for participating in parks and recreation opportunities outside of Petrolia was because the facility or program is not available in Town. The facility or program not being available at the preferred time was also a factor.

Respondents had an opportunity to identify what parks or recreation facilities and activities they felt were missing in Petrolia. The top ten requested facilities and activities are summarized in Figure 6 and Figure 7, respectively. It is recognized that some of these facilities or activities may already be offered in Petrolia (either by the Town or by other providers), which suggests that respondents may not be aware that they already exist in the community or the facility/activity does not meet their needs.

A variety of suggestions were put forward, demonstrating that residents have a broad interest in parks and recreation. Generally speaking, facilities and activities that were requested primarily centred around facilitating unstructured and drop-in opportunities. A splash pad was the most requested facility type from respondents. Other common requests were walking and cycling trails, off-leash dog-park, second ice pad, skateboard park and inclusive playground. Top requested activities included recreational sports leagues (e.g., baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc.), skating, fitness, activities geared towards all age groups, local minor baseball and educational programs.

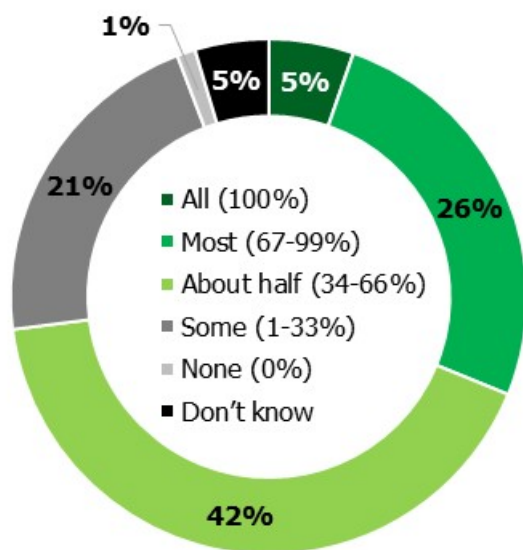


Figure 6: Top Ten Most Requested Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities



Note: Larger text represents more frequent mentions made by survey respondents

Figure 7: Top Ten Most Requested Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities



Note: Larger text represents more frequent mentions made by survey respondents

Satisfaction and Expectations with Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Figure 8 summarizes respondents' level of importance and satisfaction with various parks and recreation facilities. Facilities that have lower levels of satisfaction when compared to the level of importance suggest that expectations are not being met. With this in mind, the biggest gaps where expectations may not be met are recreational trails and pathways. Given that expectations are not being met for any facility type (other than performing arts theatres), the results suggest that there is room for improvement in all other facility areas.

The satisfaction with parks and recreation opportunities for each age group is summarized in Figure 9. Respondents were most satisfied with opportunities for families and young adults. Satisfaction levels were generally lower for other age groups. These results suggest that there is room to improve parks and recreation opportunities for all age groups.

Figure 8: Importance and Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities

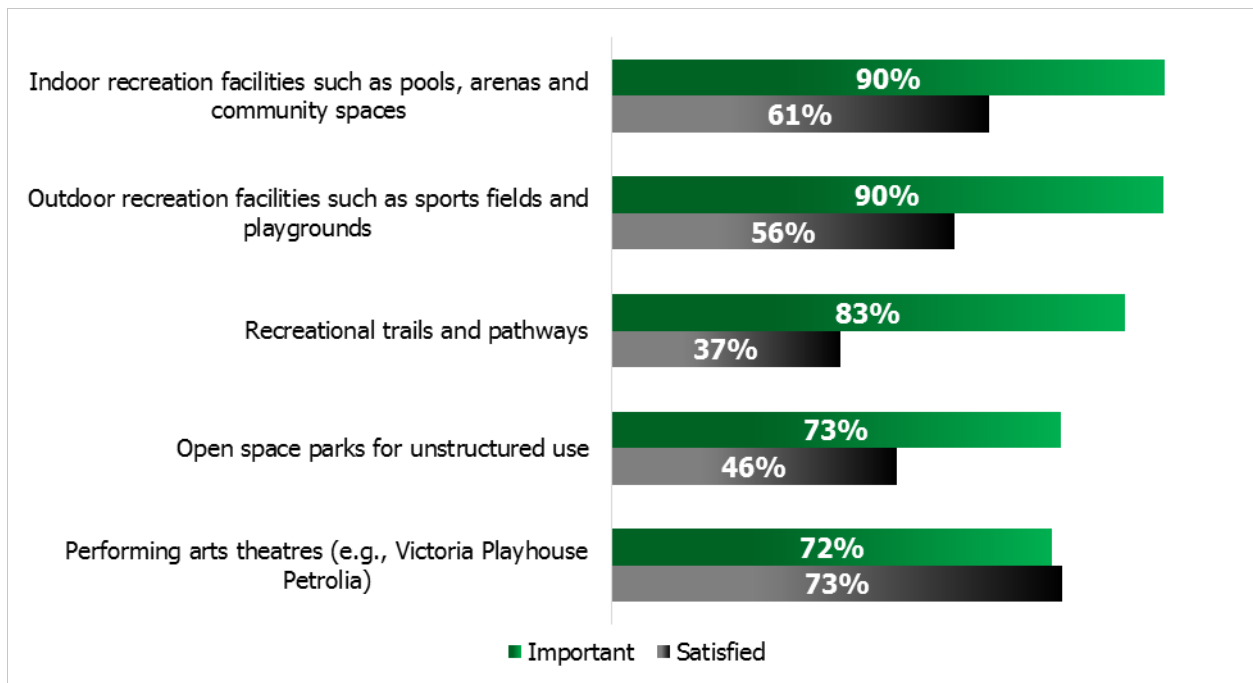


Figure 9: Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities by Age Group

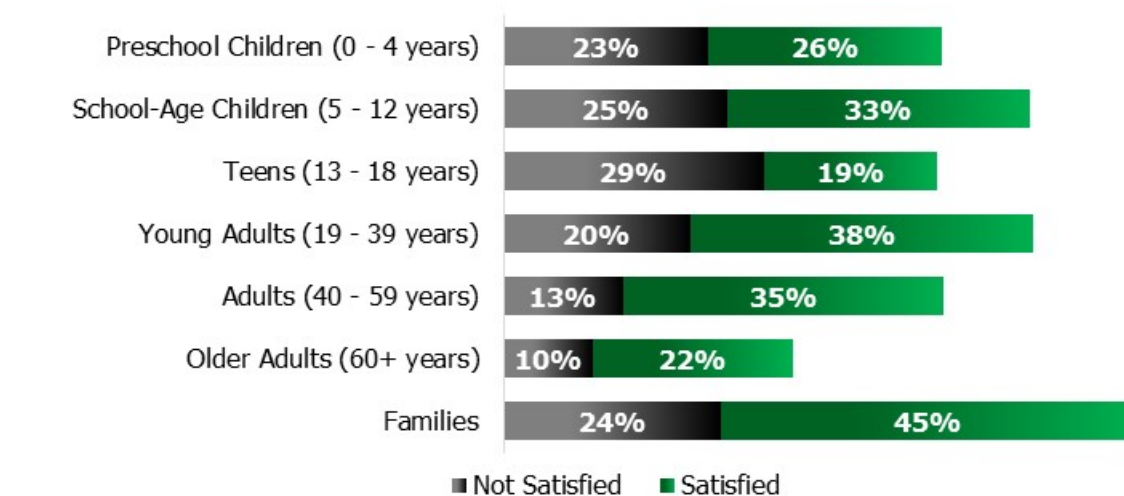
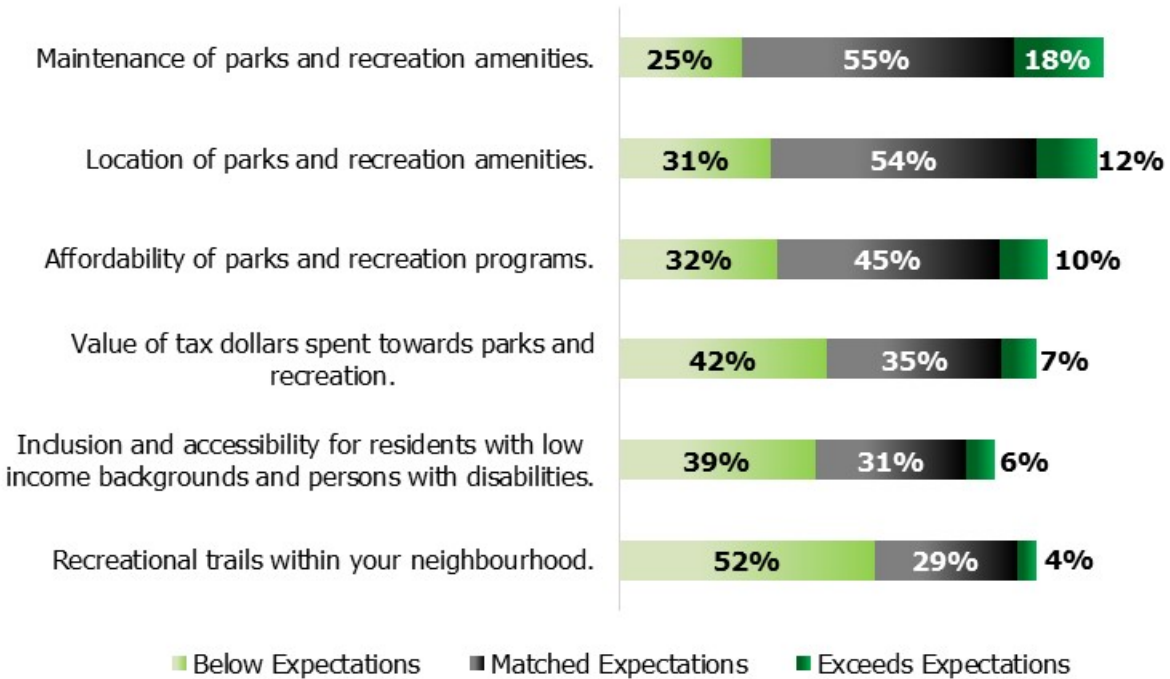


Figure 10 summarizes how various aspects of Petrolia's parks and recreation system meet expectations. Generally speaking, about half of respondents felt that the maintenance, location, and affordability of parks and recreation amenities matched expectations. Between 42% and 52% of respondents felt that the tax dollars spent on parks and recreation and recreational trails within their neighbourhood was not meeting expectations. These results demonstrate that there is some room for improving parks and recreation experiences to meet the expectations of residents.

Figure 10: Expectations for Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities



Priorities for Investment

Figure 11 illustrates the priority for investing in improving parks and recreation facilities (upgrades or new construction). The top five priorities for investment are playgrounds, splash pads, arenas, acquiring parks and open space, and outdoor ice rinks.

Respondents also identified priorities for investment in sidewalk and trail infrastructure, which is illustrated in Figure 12. The highest priority identified by respondents was for sidewalk infrastructure, which was followed by supporting amenities such as seating, shade and washrooms.

Figure 11: Priorities for Investment in Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities

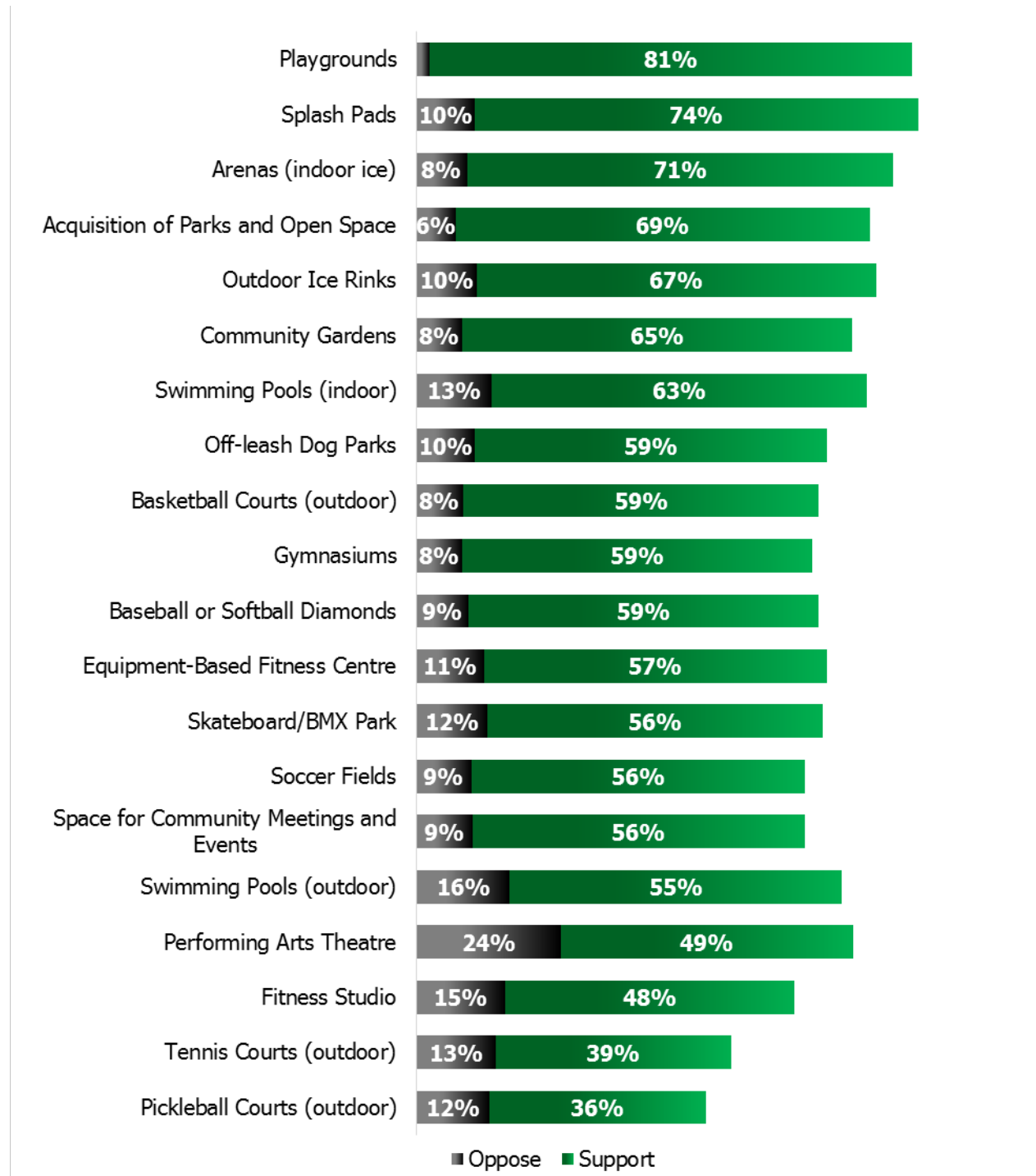
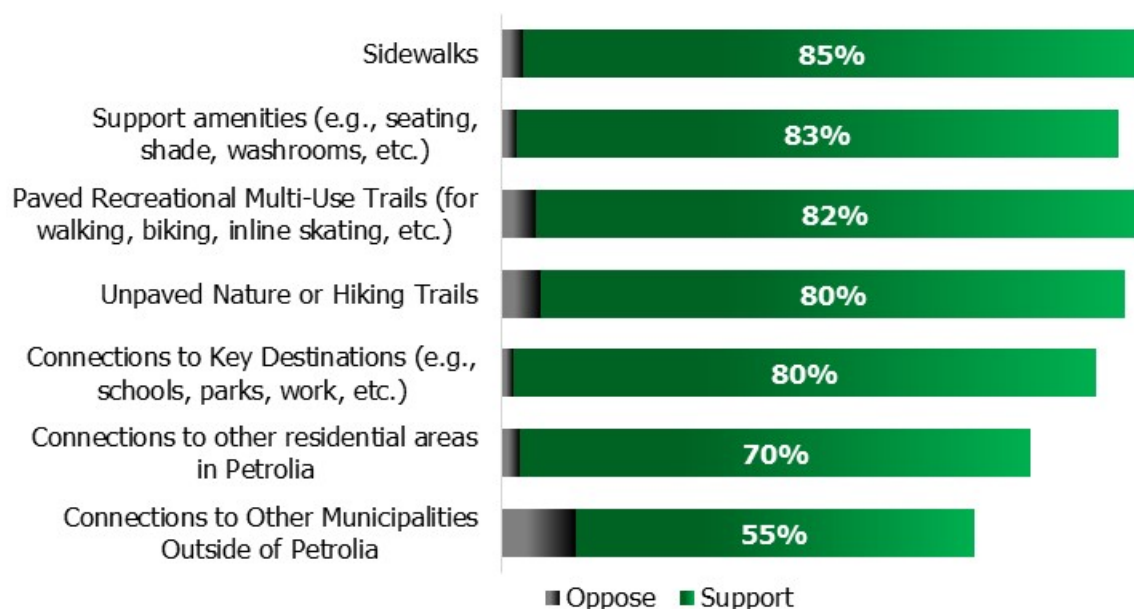


Figure 12: Priorities for Investment in Sidewalk and Trail Infrastructure



Additional Input

The survey provided an opportunity for respondents to provide additional input to be considered as part of the Master Plan. Many comments related to the desire for new parks and recreation facilities including, but not limited to, a splash pad, off-leash dog park, and outdoor pool. Suggestions to improve and upgrade existing assets was also suggested, particularly in relation to playgrounds, park amenities, and the Town's trail network. The need to ensure that recreation opportunities at the YMCA are affordable was also mentioned.

2.4 Stakeholder Workshops

Three workshops with community stakeholders were held on December 3, 2019 to discuss various aspects of Petrolia's parks and recreation system. Each session was segmented based on the type of organization, which were made up of community organizations, service clubs, recreation and sport stakeholders, and other groups.

The workshops were attended by a total of 17 participants representing 13 organizations, including those listed in the table on the right.

This section collectively summarizes the key themes from discussion sessions.

Recreation Organization Workshop

- Participants felt that the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, Bridgeview Park, and dedicated staff are some of the Town's **greatest strengths**.
- Attendees recognized the importance of engaging residents in physical activities through parks and recreation opportunities in order to **minimize sedentary behaviours**.
- There is a **perceived gap in parks and recreation activities for youth**. Suggested programs/activities included skateboarding, wellness activities, afterschool drop-in, and choir.
- Participants expressed the **importance of walking and cycling** given the Town's population profile, emphasizing the need to invest in a connected trail network.
- The group suggested **new recreation facilities** that should be considered as a part of the Master Plan including an indoor walking track, inclusive playground, indoor multi-use field, and a second ice pad.

Community Organization Workshop

- Representatives were proud to live in Petrolia because they felt that **community members are dedicated** to making Petrolia a better place to live.
- Community organizations are willing to **work together** to realize projects that aim to better the lives of residents.
- The **Victoria Playhouse Petrolia** and the **YMCA Petrolia** are valued assets in Petrolia.
- Participants felt that there was a need to review the Town's parks system to ensure that they **respond to the needs of Petrolia's changing demographic profile**. Specifically, it was felt that there were park gaps where there has been recent residential development.
- It was suggested that the development/redevelopment of **parks consider age-friendly components** such as seating and shade, washrooms, trails, pickleball courts, and areas for low-impact activities.

Recreation Organizations

1. Parents for Parks
2. Hillcrest Elementary School Council
3. Just Four Tennis
4. Victoria Playhouse Petrolia
5. Lambton County Developmental Services

Community Organizations

6. Petrolia Lions Club
7. Petrolia YMCA
8. Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire
9. Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist Club
10. Rotary Club of Petrolia

50 Plus Organizations/Representatives

11. Town of Petrolia Business Liaison
12. Albany Retirement Village
13. Residents

- The Town does a good job with **coordinating and communicating** with community organization to ensure that everyone can work collaboratively in promoting and providing parks and recreation opportunities.
- There was a general consensus that **attracting and retaining volunteers** is a challenge for all groups.

50 Plus Organization/Representatives Workshop

- Participants felt that Petrolia has **a lot to offer** when it comes to parks and recreation opportunities. Specifically, participants enjoy using YMCA Petrolia, trails, and attending the special events.
- **Improving the active transportation network** was discussed as an issue, particularly with respect to ensuring that Petrolia's sidewalks are accessible for persons with disabilities. It was noted that some sidewalk sections are not level, which is a physical barrier for some such as those with mobility devices. An enhanced level of trails maintenance was also suggested to allow for year-round use.
- The group identified a number of **priorities for investment** including trails, splash pad, skateboard park, off-leash dog park, pickleball courts, soccer fields, Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, and picnic areas.
- **Park improvements** were suggested to make them more age-friendly, including shade, seating, drinking fountains, access to washrooms, and strategies to make parks feel safe.

2.5 Staff Workshops

A workshop was held on December 3, 2019 to provide an opportunity for Town staff to share their valuable expertise as part of the planning process. The session was attended by 12 staff members representing a range of roles including customer service, operations, payroll, marketing and special events, and more. The following is a summary of the main points of discussion:

- There are **pressures for parks and recreation facilities** including a skateboard park, off-leash dog park, ball diamonds, pickleball, and outdoor gathering space that can be rented by the public. It was recognized that the provision of new parks and recreation facilities may be a challenge due to the availability of developable parkland.
- The **promotion of parks and recreation opportunities** can be improved, particularly when it comes to raising awareness about the Town's trail system as many residents and visitors are not aware that trails exist in Petrolia.
- **Renewing and/or upgrading** the Town's parks and recreation facilities was suggested, such as playgrounds and ball diamonds to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of residents and users. Consideration should be given to the development of a standard of maintenance hierarchy, particularly for sports fields that are used frequently.
- A greater level of **collaboration with community stakeholders and service providers** is needed to ensure that the right mix of parks and recreation opportunities are available and inclusive of all residents, regardless of income and ability.
- Suggestions were made for an **online arena booking program** that users and residents can use to view arena schedules in real-time to book available ice.
- A **long-term replacement plan** for the Greenwood Recreation Centre arena should be considered, although it was recognized that a number of mechanical improvements were recently

completed and a building condition assessment is currently being undertaken through a separate process.

2.6 Key Informant Workshops and Interviews

A workshop with the Community Services Advisory Committee was held in November 2019 to gain their insight and knowledge of the parks and recreation system.

One-on-one interviews were held with members of Council and key Town staff to establish an understanding of expectations and priorities for the Master Plan and their perspectives on parks and recreation opportunities. A summary has not been prepared due to the nature of the discussions. Key themes that emerged from these sessions have been considered in the preparation of the Master Plan.

2.7 Draft Master Plan Open House

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, physical distancing and restrictions on gatherings, in-person presentation of the draft Master Plan was not possible. As such, a “virtual” Open House was held on the Town’s website between August 11th to September 13th 2020 to provide an overview of the project and a link to a complete version of the draft Master Plan. Information panels were also prepared that provided residents with key highlights and a summary of recommendations of the draft Master Plan. The “virtual” Open House provided an opportunity for the public to review the highlights of the Draft Master Plan, including the directions/recommendations, before the Plan is finalized and presented to Council. The virtual Open House was promoted on the Town’s website as well as through social media.

Interested members of the public had an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Master Plan through an online comment form. A total of 14 responses were gathered including one written response. The online comment form gathered feedback on a variety of topics including: what residents liked best about the draft Master Plan; what residents believe should be the highest priorities for improving and/or developing indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities, trails and programs; whether residents believe there is anything missing from, or that they would like to see changed in, the Draft Master Plan; and, any other additional comments not covered by respondents in the above-noted questions.

The following is a summary of the main feedback responses from the public:

- Interested members of the public **liked** that the draft Master Plan supported the development of a splash pad in Petrolia. Trails for walking and cycling trails were also mentioned frequently, with an emphasis on expanding and strengthening linkages between destinations throughout Petrolia to promote accessibility. Residents also supported tree plantings and long-term plans for updating existing parks and recreational facilities (e.g., Greenwood Arena).
- The public indicated that the development of the splash pad should be a **high priority**, as well as the expanding the trail network (through trails and sidewalks) to enhance pedestrian and cycling connectivity. The provision of new playgrounds, pickleball courts, skateboard parks, and off-leash dog parks in Petrolia were also viewed by residents as priorities.
- A comment was received that indicated that **further consideration** should be given to off-leash dog parks. A concern was raised regarding the off-leash dog park at Bridgeview Park and that alternative locations that are more centralized in Petrolia should be considered. A comment also suggested that the tennis and pickleball courts at Mary Beach Park should be retained at the existing location and an outdoor swimming pool should be developed.
- **Other comments** that were received included requests to improve the quality Petrolia Fairgrounds and ensure that Victoria Park is preserved over the long-term.

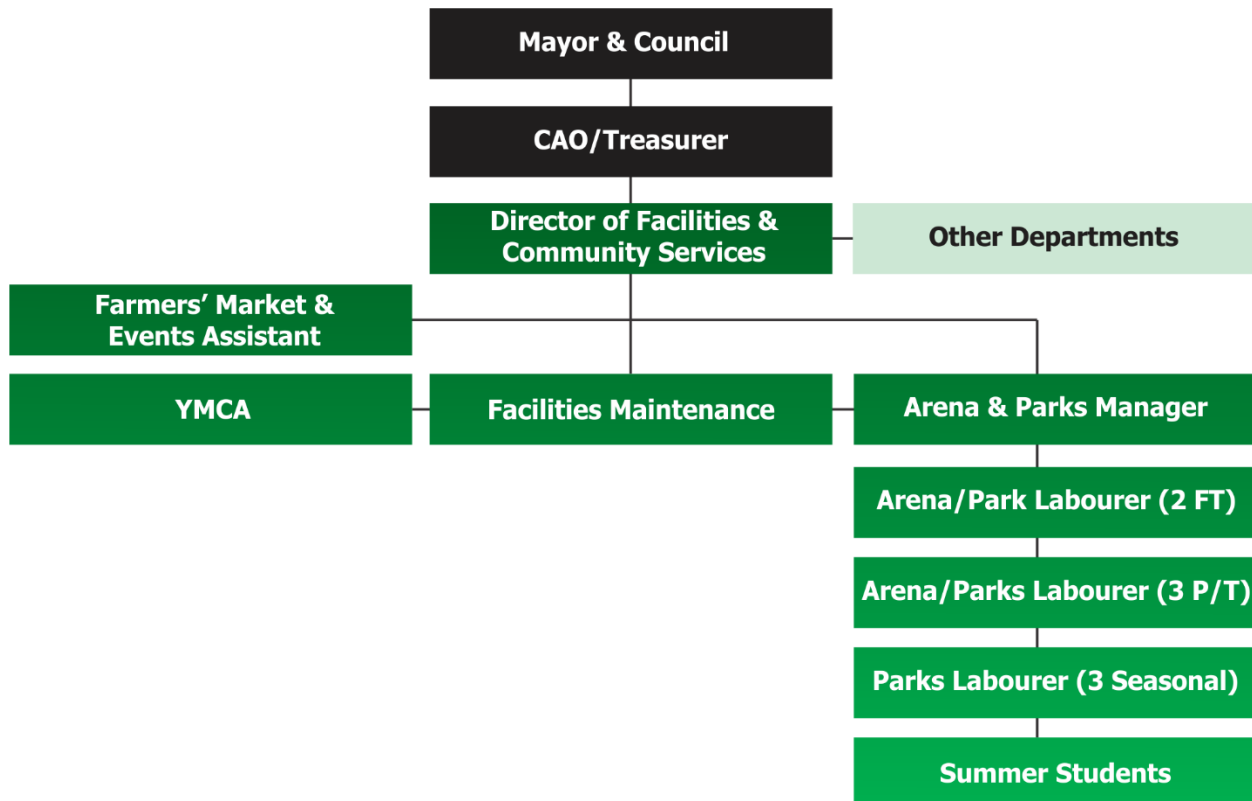
3.0 Service Delivery Objectives

3.1 Organizational Structure

Municipal parks and recreation operations fall under the purview of the Facilities & Community Services Department. The Department's organizational structure is similar to that found in a number of other municipalities across the Province. The Department is led by a Director, who reports to the CAO/Treasurer, through which key decisions are considered for approval by the elected Town Council. The Department is staffed with facility maintenance personnel, an arena and parks manager, labourers, and summer students. Unique to Petrolia's Facilities & Community Services Department is a Farmers' Market & Events Assistant, who is responsible for Petrolia's Farmers' Market and event planning. The Town also owns a community centre with indoor aquatics and gymnasium which is operated by Petrolia YMCA through agreement for the delivery of recreation programs and services.

Supporting the Facilities & Community Services Department are other departments that are responsible for aspects of municipal operations including marketing and communications, Victoria Playhouse Petrolia coordinators, administration and customer service staff.

Figure 13: Existing Organizational Structure, Facilities & Community Services Department



3.2 The Town's Role in Parks and Recreation

Historically, the Town was a direct service provider responsible for providing physical space along with programs at the Oil Heritage District Community Centre (now known as Petrolia YMCA). In 2018, the Town transitioned into more of an indirect service delivery model by partnering with the YMCA (until at least 2023) to operate the Town's community centre in an effort to reduce \$500,000 in operating costs over a five year period. Augmenting these programs and services are those provided by community organizations, sports groups, service clubs, and the private sector throughout Petrolia. While the Town's primary role now is to provide physical space, it continues to facilitate a limited range of programs by obtaining access to school gymnasium space.

The current service delivery model is commonly found in communities that are similar in size to Petrolia. This approach has proven to be successful and as the Town continues to grow and evolve, it will be important to build upon successes to provide parks and recreation opportunities needed in Petrolia. For the Town, this means a continued emphasis on providing high quality spaces that are adequately supported by staff and financial resources, which in turn enables community partners to deliver high quality programs and services.

As the Town is committed to continue as an indirect service provider until at least 2023, the Town should continue to focus on providing quality community facility spaces, while playing a facilitator role for access to non-municipal community spaces (e.g., schools) for community groups and residents. With this in mind, the Town should focus on the strengthening the capacity of local residents and organizations in order to best position them to meet current and future needs, to grow, be sustainable, and to enhance the parks and recreation programs and services that they provide. The Town should focus work on the following objectives:

- Understand the growth of the municipality and plan for any increase/decrease in service provision based on demographic changes, income levels, social issues, activity interests, and more;
- Communicate the importance of being engaged in active lifestyles as a lifelong pursuit;
- Work with community volunteer organizations and partners to ensure that program/service approaches incorporate social development issues within the community such as youth engagement, isolation in older adults, and increased physical activity levels;
- Ensure that the infrastructure and amenities are in a state of good repair and offer multi-purpose uses, where possible;
- Continue to work with community volunteer organizations and partners to promote a full range of activities based on the needs of the general population, local families and within specific age groupings;



Petrolia YMCA

- Enable community partners and other providers to excel and play their part in providing a full range of services including the fulsome utilization of public assets;
- Promote and communicate the available opportunities and the benefits of participating through a variety of mediums;
- Understand the participation rates by age group and set targets to increase participation;
- Comply with legislative requirements, incorporate quality assurance measures while respecting industry standards;
- Planning and coordinating special events;
- Train and support a capable staff team;
- Support and recognize the importance of volunteerism in parks and recreation opportunities;
- Communicate and exchange knowledge with partners and stakeholders;
- Work collectively with partners and stakeholders in addressing needed improvements; and
- Measure the efficiencies and effectiveness of the Town-wide parks and recreation delivery system.

Recommendation – The Town’s Role in Parks and Recreation

1. The Town’s should continue to focus on physical indoor and outdoor space to accommodate a wide range of parks and recreation opportunities while providing appropriate supports to volunteers and community providers (e.g., in developing their internal capacity, long-term sustainability, and enhancing their ability to deliver parks and recreation services in Petrolia).

3.3 Providing Inclusive Choices

Parks and Recreation Departments across the Province are facing increased pressures to provide parks and recreation opportunities for all segments of the community, particularly those populations that face above-average levels of marginalization and vulnerability. Populations that commonly experience barriers to participation include persons with disabilities, low-income households, and the LGBTQ+ community. With a goal of inclusivity in parks and recreation, the Town should engage representatives from these groups to understand their parks and recreation needs, existing barriers, and identify solutions to be implemented so that the provision of inclusive services result in all residents becoming active, connected, and welcomed. As a part of this process, the Town should update or establish policies and procedures related to parks and recreation opportunities in Petrolia to reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.

Persons with Disabilities

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that one-in-five Canadians (or 6.2 million people) reported living with some form of disability, which is most commonly identified as pain-related, flexibility, mobility, and mental-health related. This amounts to 22% of the Canadian population, a substantial increase from the 13% of the population who reported living with a disability in 2012.⁸

While there is no local level data, applying the national disability rate (22%) to Petrolia's population suggests that there could be approximately 1,300 residents living with some form of disability. The Town and its residents are fortunate to have dedicated organizations is committed ensuring that all residents can live independently and contribute meaningfully to the community. Lambton County Developmental Services is a locally-based organization that aims to support persons with disabilities across the County in terms of housing, employment, education, socialization, and general support services.

The Town of Petrolia is dedicated to making its facilities and services more accessible, wherever possible. In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Town's 2017-2020 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan contains a strategy for removing accessibility barriers, including efforts to make Victoria Playhouse Petrolia more accessible; the Town is currently seeking grant funding to undertake various accessibility retrofits to this facility. Additional accessibility retrofits have also been identified the Town's other facilities including the Greenwood Recreation Centre and Petrolia YMCA.

Low-Income

Research has found that income can influence (or can at least be an indicator of) participation in parks and recreation opportunities. Generally speaking, the greater a persons' level of income, the more likely they are to participate in recreation activities.

Statistics Canada reported the Town's median household income in 2015 was \$72,741, which was higher compared to Lambton County (\$70,002) but lower compared to the Province (\$74,287). While Petrolia has a smaller proportion of residents living below the low-income measure (10%), compared to the County and Province (13% and 14%, respectively), income as a barrier to participation will affect a number of households in the Town.

The Town does not have a formal financial assistance policy in place, largely because it is not heavily involved in the direct delivery of programs. While program providers strive to keep rates and fees as low as possible, many groups provide financial assistance for those in need such as the YMCA, Canadian Tire Jumpstart, service clubs, and sports organizations. The Town also assists in an informal manner to seek financial assistance funding sources (often as private donations from members of the community).

⁸ Statistics Canada. (2018). Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>

LGBTQ+

While there is no quantifiable data for the LGBTQ community in Petrolia, a survey found that between 3% and 5% of Canadians identify as LGBTQ.⁹ The LGBTQ community often faces barriers to participation in parks and recreation programs as a result of exclusion and bullying; however, their participation is critical as LGBTQ+ advocacy groups often attribute exclusionary attitudes with mental health issues, homelessness, suicide, and harmful practices in their communities. The Town has been celebrating its LGBTQ+ community since 2015 through its annual pride events and remains committed to ensuring that residents feel welcomed, included, and can participate in programs freely from harassment, hatred, or bias within safe public spaces.

Recommendation – Providing Inclusive Choices

2. Engage representatives of persons with disabilities, low-income households, LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized groups to understand their parks and recreation needs, barriers and potential solutions so that the provision of inclusive services result for all residents becoming active, connected, and welcomed.
3. The Town should update or establish new policies relevant to parks and recreation in Petrolia to reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.

3.4 Addressing Needs for Youth, Older Adults, and Seniors

Addressing the parks and recreation needs of youth and older adults is crucial given that these age groups are often considered to be vulnerable segments of the community that are most at risk of mental health issues, isolation, and other social issues. The provision of a parks and recreation system that responds to the needs of these age groups can help ensure that there are opportunities for them to get involved in the community in a meaningful way.

Youth (Age 10-19)

The 2016 Census reported that there were 685 youth between the ages of 10 and 19 living in Petrolia. Engaging youth in safe and interesting parks and recreation activities is necessary for them to develop as health and productive members of society. Recognizing this, the Town provides a range of recreation facilities geared towards youth such as sports fields and a basketball court, which will be further enhanced by the youth-oriented recreation facilities recommended through this Master Plan. Community partners such as Petrolia YMCA is a key provider of youth-focused activities including indoor soccer, baseball, creative and performing arts, cooking, and fitness. Youth also have the opportunity to participate in local organized ice hockey and skating, soccer and baseball, as well as Girl Guides, Cadets, and other organized activities.

As a best practice, communities are striving to attain a “Youth-Friendly Community” designation from the Play Works Partnership, an organization that was established to ensure that communities are youth friendly and that they have a voice within the community. In order to achieve this designation, communities must be a minimum of seven of ten criteria such as: options for youth play; youth have a voice in the community; information resources for youth; youth recognition and celebration; and more. The Town should review and generally aspire to achieve the general principles of being a youth-friendly community as municipal resources permit.

To address the parks and recreation needs of youth, the Town should engage this age group regularly to understand their needs and priorities. This can be achieved through informal discussion groups facilitated

⁹ Forum Research Inc. (2012). One twentieth of Canadians claim to be LGBT. Retrieved from <https://www.forumresearch.com>

by the Community Services Advisory Committee on issues that matter to youth. Collaboration with others such as Bluewater Health, Lambton Public Health, and others is also encouraged.

Older Adults (Age 55+)

The ability for Petrolia to meet the needs of its aging population was a reoccurring theme during the Master Plan process. The 2016 Census reported that approximately one-third (35%) of Petrolia's residents are over the age of 55. This greying of the population is expected to continue, highlighting the need to ensure that there are adequate parks and recreation opportunities for this segment of the community.

The recreational needs of Petrolia's older adults are primarily met through the programs provided through Petrolia YMCA, the theatre productions at the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, some community volunteer organizations and the private sector.

As the Town's population continues to age, there will be an increasing demand for parks and recreation opportunities for this age group. To meet the growing needs of older adults, the Town will need to engage in regular dialogue with local older adults and seniors (potentially through the Health and Wellness Committee) to better understand their needs and challenges, and to collectively identify solutions. From a parks and recreation perspective, opportunities also exist to identify how the Town can become more "age friendly". This may include ensuring (and retrofitting) facilities to be well-lit, comfortable, inviting, and barrier-free. Parks can also be assessed from a safety and comfort perspective to ensure that they have clear signage, shade, seating, and are physically accessible to serve the needs of this aging population. The 55+ age group also has a strong desire to remain active in sports and/or low impact activities such as pickleball and fitness, which are offered in Petrolia with expectation that demand is likely to increase over time.

Recommendations – Addressing Needs for Youth, Older Adults and Seniors

4. Review and generally aspire to achieve the general principles of being a youth-friendly community as municipal resources permit.
5. Undertake informal discussion groups with youth facilitated by the Community Services Advisory Committee on issues that matter to youth. On-going collaboration with others organizations that serve youth should also continue and/or be established such as with Bluewater Health, Lambton Public Health, and others.
6. Maintain regular dialogue with older adults and seniors (potentially facilitated by the Health and Wellness Committee) to understand their parks and recreation needs, challenges, and priorities, and to collectively identify potential solutions. These discussions should consider how to make the Town's parks and recreation spaces more "age friendly", with consideration given to comfort amenities, gaps in programs and services, and removing/minimizing barriers.

3.5 Recreation Rates Scan

As a part of the Master Plan, a high level scan of facility rental rates was undertaken to understand how Petrolia's fees compare with area municipalities in Lambton County, including Brooke-Alvinston, Sarnia, St. Clair, Plympton-Wyoming, Lambton Shores, Enniskillen, Oil Springs, Warwick, and Dawn-Euphemia. A comparison of rental rates is summarized in Table 1 with a detailed comparison in **Appendix C**. Spaces at the Petrolia YMCA are excluded as they are not operated by the Town.

It is important to note that this scan has certain limitations as direct comparisons to multi-purpose spaces and sports fields is challenged by the quality and size of the facility/field and rate structures established in each community. As a result, rental rates may vary substantially. Where possible, certain assumptions

Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

were made to identify a common comparator such as an hourly rate for basic meeting room, a daily rate for a community hall, or a standard rate for a two hour sports field booking.

Generally speaking, the Town's rental rates are below the benchmark average for minor prime and adult non-prime time ice rental rates, as well as adult soccer and ball diamond rates. The Town's rates are higher with respect to minor non-prime and adult prime time ice, as well as meeting rooms. Sports field rental rates for minor groups were reviewed but a comparison was not identified given that a standard comparator rate could not be established given the varying rate structure. For example, Brook-Alvinston charges an annual per player rate, while Lambton Shores and Plympton-Wyoming do not charge a fee.

Comparative municipalities do not impose non-resident fees for the use of recreation facilities. Non-resident fees are not commonly applied in smaller communities where there is generally available facility capacity in order to attract usage from residents in adjacent communities and in order to facilitate a competitive sporting experience for participants.

These findings should be considered when the Town reviews its recreation rates to ensure that they are affordable for residents, while aligning with County-wide fees. Any adjustments to the Town's recreation rates should consider recovering a sustainable portion of the cost to operate the municipal facilities.

Table 1: County-Wide Scan of Recreation Rates

Facility Rate	Town of Petrolia	Benchmark Average	Town of Petrolia Above / Below Average
Arenas			
Minor Prime	\$123 /hr	\$129 / hr	Below
Minor Non-Prime	\$113 / hr	\$87 / hr	Above
Adult Prime	\$165 /hr	\$159 / hr	Above
Adult Non-Prime	\$113 /hr	\$128 / hr	Below
Multi-Purpose and Meeting Rooms*			
Auditorium	\$630 / day	n/a	-
Community Hall	n/a	\$21 / hr	-
Meeting Room	\$35 / hr	\$33 / hr	Above
Soccer Fields			
Minor (Unlit)	\$8 / game	\$28 / game	Below
Adult (Unlit)	\$40 / game	\$44 / game	Below
Unlit Ball Diamonds			
Minor (Unlit)	\$6 / game	\$26 / game	Below
Adult (Unlit)	\$26 / game	\$35 / game	Below
Adult (Lit)	\$26 / game	\$52 / game	Below

*Community rates; rates for schools or commercial rentals may differ.

Recommendation – Recreation Rates Scan

- Annually review facility and sports field rental rates to inform rates and fees to be applied in the Town of Petrolia.

3.6 Partnerships

In municipalities such as Petrolia, it is common to rely on the assistance of dedicated partners to deliver high quality parks and recreation services. There may be instances where no one party is able to provide a program, service, or facility on its own, or the risk is too great for one party to overcome. The creation of formal partnerships can be a benefit in addressing identified needs or service gaps. As noted throughout the Master Plan, the Town has formed successful partnerships with the YMCA, conservation authority, service clubs, and other community organizations.

Sharing resources and responsibilities in delivering key parks and recreation services should continue to be pursued. As not all partnerships are created equally, careful due diligence is required to evaluate and manage risks, while clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each party. The ability of potential partners to deliver on promises must also be considered to ensure that the Town is not left in a position that requires them to take over operations or financial commitments if a partner is no longer able or willing to participate.

Partnerships can also be a solution to providing services that are not currently offered within the municipal scope, particularly if the Town is approached by a third-party wishing to introduce a new level of service with municipal assistance. A transparent, carefully thought-out partnership evaluation framework is needed so that the Town can demonstrate its decision-making process and justify why it believes that some requests are acceptable, while others should not be pursued with public sector involvement. Each partnership should be considered with the following guiding principles in mind:

- a) The outcome of the partnership is aligned with the municipal values, mandate and priorities;
- b) There is an articulated need for the proposed service in the community;
- c) The financial and liability risks to the municipality are shared or reduced;
- d) The partner is equipped and qualified to co-deliver the service through identified efficiencies and the ability to reach an identified segment of the population;
- e) The quality of the program or service provided through the partnership meets municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation;
- f) Accountabilities and responsibilities can be clearly defined and complied with; and
- g) Annual reporting requirements capture participation numbers, expenditure reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with departmental and community objectives.



Greenwood Park

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with the Department's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships is to provide a net benefit to both organizations (and participants) and to reduce costs to the Town. The most common partnership types and their characteristics in a parks and recreation setting are described in Table 2.

Table 2: Common Municipal Partnership Types

Partnership Types	Description	Formalized Relationship
Not-for-Profit Community Groups	Community groups exist to provide services, leagues, education, etc., typically using volunteers as they are not-for-profit. They may require assistance in forming as a group and implementing good governance and quality assurance measures. They most likely require space and consideration for a not-for-profit rate for rental fees.	Community groups may be governed by a formal policy and thrive more effectively through sharing of information, cross-promotion of opportunities and regular communications to enhance the delivery system.
Complementary Institutions & Agencies	Working more effectively with school boards, hospitals and other agencies such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs can benefit the community through the development of joint programs / initiatives and sharing of resources, including facilities. This will broaden the reach of needed programs and services and reduce duplication.	Preferably involves a Service Level Agreement or a Reciprocal Agreement that outlines the rights, obligations and deliverables of each agency.
Private Service Providers	Private service providers have a for-profit mandate and may provide specialized programs and services that are often outside the municipal mandate.	A Contract or Purchase of Service Agreement will articulate the rights, obligations and deliverables of each party. Specific consideration must be given to ensuring that quality assurance, risk management and service levels are equal to that of the municipality.
Commercial/ Business Entities	A relationship with commercial entities to sponsor certain programs or events including facility naming rights.	A Sponsorship Agreement that outlines the conditions and duration of the sponsorship is undertaken and agreed to by each party.

Recommendation – Partnerships

- Undertake a review of existing partnerships with a view to expanding them to address gaps and recommended actions in the Master Plan. This exercise may include discussions with local agencies, boards, service clubs, public organizations, etc. Opportunities to maximize existing spaces (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, YMCA, schools, etc.) should be explored.
- Evaluate potential partnership opportunities with organizations that share a common goal of providing quality parks and recreation experiences. A standardized partnership framework for evaluating and responding to partnership or new service requests should be developed, with a view of maximizing public interests.

4.0 Parks, Trails and Open Space in Petrolia

4.1 Petrolia's Parkland System

A well-designed parks system offers social, environmental, health, and economic benefits, and they have the potential to bring people together. As outdoor spaces, parks provide an important connection to nature, which is required for our survival as well as personal, community, and societal enrichment.¹⁰

The Town of Petrolia provides approximately 83.5 hectares of park space, which includes active and passive open space. Included in this supply is approximately 62 hectares of naturalized and open space at Bridgeview Park, which the Town manages on behalf of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority. The parkland supply includes Greenwood Park and Lions Park, which are owned by the Petrolia & Enniskillen Agricultural Society and maintained by the Town. There is also a parcel of privately-owned land located adjacent to Greenwood Park maintained by the Town for soccer fields.

Sections 10.2 to 10.4 of the Town of Petrolia Official Plan distinguishes parks by 'major parks', 'community parks', and 'neighbourhood parks' with functions and catchment areas that each park type is intended to serve (Table 3). Each park is permitted to be used for various active and passive uses. Major and community parks also have the ability to integrate environmentally significant and natural areas, where possible. The distribution of parkland is illustrated in Figure 14.

Table 3: Park Classification System

Major Parks	Purpose: Serves the entire Town and provides a broad range of active and passive recreational pursuits, both structured and unstructured.
	Description: Major Parks may include environmentally significant and natural areas, where feasible; active sports activities; low-impact passive recreation activities, and located near an arterial or collector road.
Community Parks	Purpose: Serves recreational needs at the community level.
	Description: Community Parks provide indoor and outdoor recreational facilities serving residents in the Town; provide active recreational activities; be accessible to neighbourhoods and incorporate walkways; incorporate the natural environment; be located adjacent to a school; and located near an arterial or collector road.
Neighbourhood Parks	Purpose: Serves local neighbourhoods and generally consists of play facilities for small children.
	Description: Neighbourhood Parks will be accessible to pedestrians; provide minor recreational activities and opportunities for passive, environmental enjoyment, be located in conjunction with an elementary school (where possible), and be located on a collector or local road.

Source: Town of Petrolia Official Plan, Section 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4.

¹⁰ Parks Canada Agency. 2017. Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community.

Table 4 identifies the Town's parkland inventory, including land area for each location. Overall, the Town is providing 4.3 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents (excluding approximately 57 hectares of naturalized space associated with Bridgeview Park. This level of service compares favourably to parkland service levels in other municipalities across Ontario, where targets usually range between 3.0 and 4.0 per 1,000 residents.

Table 4: Parkland Inventory

Park Name	Area (Ha)
Major Park	
Bridgeview Park Open Space*	5.4
Victoria Park	0.4
Community Park	
Petrolia YMCA Open Space	2.7
Greenwood Park**	10.9
Neighbourhood Park (Active)	
Crescent Park	0.6
Englehart Park	0.1
Fairbank Park	1.0
Kerr Park	1.0
Lions Park**	0.5
Mary Beach Park	0.4
Moncrief Park	0.1
Peace Park	0.1
White Rose Park	0.1
Woodland Park	2.4
Total	25.7

Petrolia's current level of provision of
active municipal parkland is

4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents.

(The parkland provision level excludes approximately 57 hectares of naturalized parkland at Bridgeview Park)

*Bridgeview Park is owned by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority but managed by the Town of Petrolia.

There are approximately 57 hectares of passive parkland at Bridgeview Park.

**Greenwood Park and Lions Park are owned by the Petrolia & Enniskillen Agricultural Society and are managed by the Town of Petrolia. Area includes 1.6 hectares of land that is leased from a third-party for the provision of soccer fields.

4.2 Parkland Distribution & Needs

The strong value that residents place on parks, the physical and social benefits created through these spaces, and the economic spinoffs that are generated lend support for continued investment in parkland. Future active parkland needs will largely be met through two strategies: acquisition/conveyance of new parkland and revitalization of new parks.

Parkland needs are best determined by using population and distribution-based metrics while considering current and future facility needs (e.g., sportsfields, etc.). They provide a framework for planning and optimizing resources, though their implementation should be flexible enough to capitalize on opportunities and maximize investment.



Petrolia YMCA Open Space

In terms of parkland distribution, an examination of the Town's parkland supply found that the majority of residents in Petrolia have access to some level of parkland within walking distance (without having to cross major barriers such as arterial roads and waterbodies). It is recognized, however, that many residents residing on the east side of Bear Creek, south of Petrolia Line, only have access to Peace Park, which does not have any outdoor recreation facilities, nor are there any recommended in this Master Plan due to its small size. Opportunities to establish new parkland to serve residents in this area should be considered and it should be large enough to facilitate meaningful outdoor active and passive recreation experiences. Gaps also exist in the southeast corner of Petrolia and in the north end of Town, south of Discovery Line, where future residential development is expected to occur.

The Town is providing a healthy provision level of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents (based on an estimated population of 5,920). Based upon a forecasted population of 6,410 residents by 2031, **a total of 2 hectares of active parkland would be need to be added to the supply** in order to maintain a provision level of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents. As the Town may be required to replace the soccer fields adjacent to Greenwood Park over the next few years (see section 5.8), these lands will also be required to be replaced, resulting in an adjusted parkland need of 3.6 hectares.

In order to achieve the Town's parkland needs, maximize parkland dedication allowable through the *Planning Act* is recommended. To ensure that the Town obtains meaningful parcels of parkland, it is strongly recommended that a representative from the Town's Facilities and Community Services Department be included in the circulation, commenting and discussions on development applications, particularly with respect to plans of subdivisions. It will be important to articulate where parkland gaps exist, as identified through this Master Plan, and where it may be appropriate to accept cash-in-lieu of parkland. Participating in the land use planning process also provides the Department with a voice to identify where parkland should be located in order to maximize visibility, accessibility in the community, and accommodate needed recreation facilities and passive opportunities.

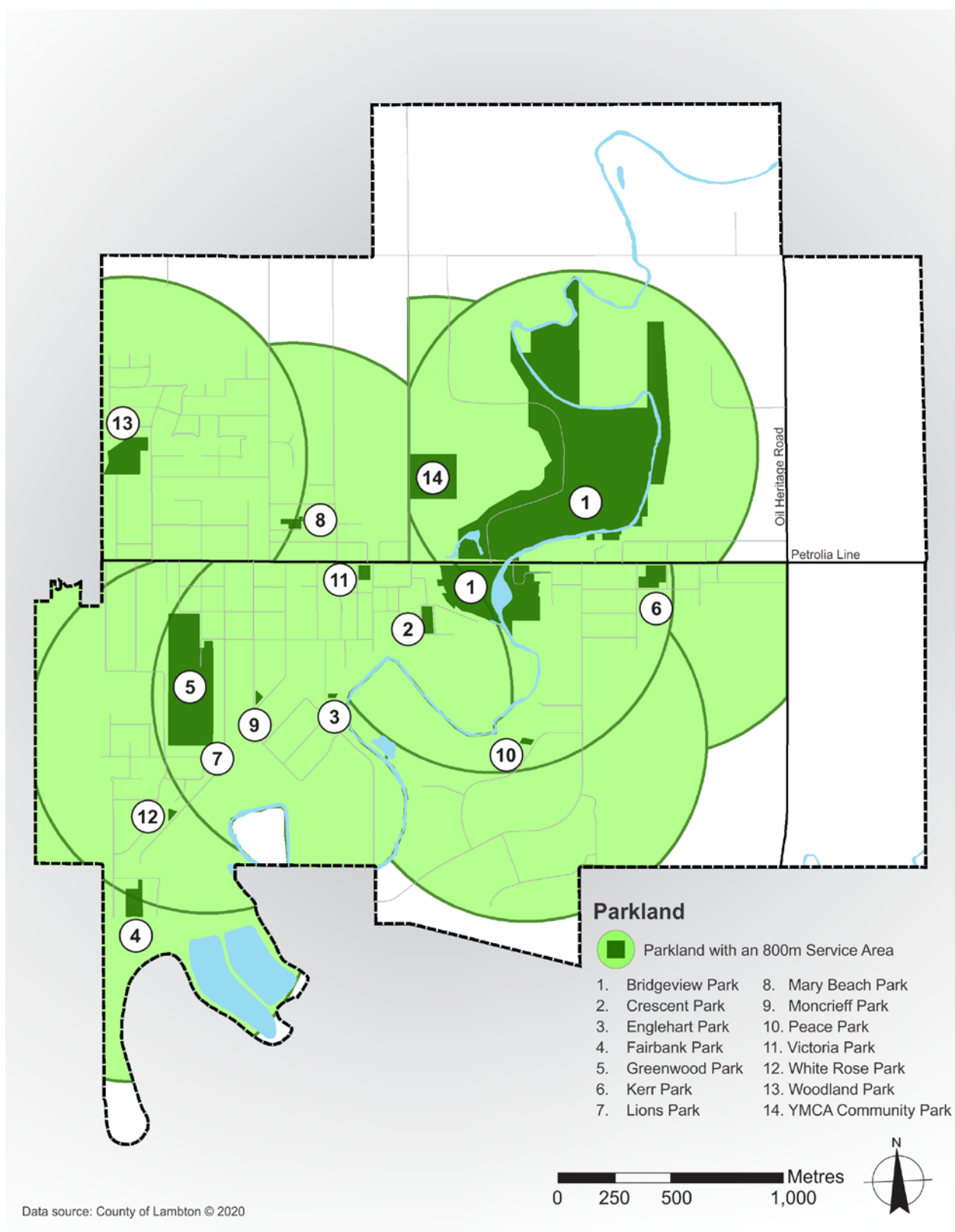
Where necessary, the acquisition of parkland should be augmented by other strategies available to the Town such as land purchase or agreements with landholders. Where opportunities exist, the development of new parkland should address gap areas identified in this Master Plan.

The focus on active parkland supply is not meant to diminish the importance of naturalized parkland as they provide significant ecological benefits, facilitate trail development, etc.; however, the Town will need to ensure that lands conveyed through the development process are unencumbered by natural constraints in order to accommodate the development of recreation facilities to address growth related needs. Consistent with the Town's Official Plan, the acquisition of naturalized parkland (or hazardous lands) should be permitted over and above the parkland dedication requirements permitted through the *Planning Act*. This exclusion should also be extended to stormwater management ponds given its ability to accommodate active parkland facilities.

Recommendations – Parkland Distribution and Needs

10. In order to maintain an active parkland service level of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents and to replace the soccer field lands adjacent to Greenwood Park, acquire 3.6 hectares of new parkland. Emphasis should be placed on acquiring parkland in areas where future residential development is expected to occur including the southwest corner of Town and the area east of Bear Creek, south of Petrolia Line.
11. The Department should request commenting status on development applications (e.g., plans of subdivision) to represent the Facilities and Community Services Department and provide input on where parkland or cash-in-lieu should be accepted, with regard given to the parkland gaps and needs identified in this Master Plan.

Figure 14: Parkland Distribution



4.3 Re-Imagining Parkland

Park experiences are tied to its design, intended function, and the quality of facilities and amenities found within. These factors are often influenced by the era of original construction. A park built decades prior can impact positive feelings of history, sentiment, and pride; however, older parks may also be in need of rejuvenation if deterioration is apparent or if the intended functions no longer respond to modern and/or local area interests and demographics have changed.

Parkland revitalization is thus an important part of attracting continued use over time. Rejuvenation efforts can be major in scale, ranging from complete park development to renewal of major amenities or adding new facilities, where space permits. The Master Plan process revealed opportunities to re-envision two key park spaces – Petrolia YMCA Open Space and Victoria Park.

Petrolia YMCA Open Space

In 2011, a concept plan was developed for the Petrolia YMCA Open Space. To date, only the playground portion of the concept plan has been implemented. Given that the concept plan is now nine years old and with the completion of this Master Plan, there is merit in updating this concept plan to create a new long term vision of the outdoor space. A number of potential recommendations have been identified for the Petrolia YMCA Open Space that should be reflected in the concept plan. Guided by the Master Plan, the Town will need to determine if the Petrolia YMCA Open Space is the preferred location for the following potential recreation facilities, prior to undertaking an update to the concept plan:

- Indoor multi-use facility;
- Expanded Petrolia YMCA to accommodate expanded fitness opportunities and other amenities, as necessary;
- Sports fields (ball diamond and/or soccer fields);
- Two sport courts for tennis and pickleball;
- One basketball court (multi-lined for other activities); and
- Venue for wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding, BMX, etc.).

Victoria Park

Victoria Park is one of the Town's most recognizable parks. Located along Petrolia Line adjacent to the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, Petrolia Library, and Petrolia Farmers' Market, Victoria Park is rich in history and community vibrancy as many of the Town's special events are held at this location. Maintenance and upkeep of the park are performed by the Town with assistance from the Petrolia Rotary Club, which sponsors the park.

A concept plan for Victoria Park should be undertaken to ensure that it continues to function seamlessly as a tranquil, passive park that can be enjoyed on a daily basis and for special events that attract residents and visitors year-round. Consistent with the Community Well-being Master Plan, Victoria Park should continue to function as an outdoor gathering space with limited



Victoria Park

structures. The concept plan should give consideration to the replacement of the aging stage/gazebo, as well as the need to relocate it in a more optimal position (if possible). Mature trees should be preserved and furnishings to enhance use of the park should be reviewed. Other considerations may include, but not be limited to, its relationship in the downtown area and with adjacent buildings, parking, washroom access, and more. This process may be combined with the preparation of a master plan for Market Square (recommended in the Community Well-being Master Plan) and the proposed Arts and Cultural Assessment (see recommendation 29), as there may be benefits in a coordinated approach to create a more vibrant downtown area.

Park Design Considerations

There are a number of cost-effective solutions to re-imagine parks to augment the user experience. The following considerations are some leading best practices that the Town of Petrolia could consider when designing or re-designing parks when warranted in the future. These improvements can increase the likelihood of residents and tourists regularly visiting parks and trails by making them more comfortable, welcoming, safe and able to meet a broad range of desired uses.

Environmental Sustainability

Changing climatic conditions have resulted in extreme weather events that have impacted Canadian cities in a variety of ways including flooding, severe storms, higher water levels, forest fires, and prolonged periods without rainfall. Municipal parkland plays an important part of the green infrastructure system as they contribute numerous environmental benefits. For example, municipal parks help retain stormwater onsite, contributes to the local tree canopy (thereby reducing heat island effect by creating shade), allows for carbon sequestration, promotes active transportation through trails, and can buffer built-land uses from flood-prone areas. Indoor community facilities can also be designed to minimize impacts on the environment such as using green technologies, sustainable building materials, and maximizing the use of natural light.

Naturalization Efforts

Municipalities are placing a greater emphasis on the provision of passive open space (e.g., woodlots, prairie grasslands, flower gardens, etc.), often ensuring that portions of new or redeveloped parks remain in a natural state. Naturalization typically involves reduced grass cutting, planting of native species, and public education to create awareness in the community (e.g. through interpretative signage). Certain communities have gone as far as to partner with their area conservation authorities, community organizations and ecologically-focused enterprises to introduce initiatives into the parks system such as:

- “designing” naturalized spaces through an environmental and climate resiliency lens;
- setting municipal tree canopy targets and striving to attain said targets with tree plantings and proactive urban forestry management;
- Incorporating pollinator gardens and areas designed as habitats for local wildlife;
- edible gardens and plantings through trees and shrubs;
- invasive species and phragmites control programs; and
- delivery of environmental education programs in “outdoor classrooms.”

Welcoming and Comfortable Designs

Parks need to provide attractive and comfortable experiences if they are to be successful in encouraging people to use them and attract a broad range of activities. Once inside a park, park users often look for a number of convenience and comfort-based features depending upon their intended use. In non-programmed or passive parks where social activities such as picnicking, family gatherings, cultural events, etc. are taking place, park visitors look for amenities such as treed areas and shade structures, picnic tables or pavilions, park benches or seating areas, and washrooms (either permanent or temporary).



Kerr Park

Comfort amenities are especially beneficial in strategic locations along major trail routes and at trail heads, and are highly desired by all population segments but particularly families and a growing number of older adults in the community as was expressed through Master Plan consultations. There is an inherent cost to creating a comfortable park, therefore, municipal investment may be strategically directed to those parks which are intended to function as premier destinations for gatherings and events.

Including all People in Parks

Accessibility and inclusivity is an important part of park design. Parks are typically a place for all, thus facilitating access for persons with disabilities and special needs is something to strive towards particularly with a sizeable older adult population already living in the Town and as the population continues to age. Not all parks or areas within them are appropriate for universally accessible infrastructure (e.g. ecologically sensitive or naturalized zones), however, community-focused spaces should consider the ability of all residents to access them.

Multi-Generational, Multi-Seasonal Usage

The ability to attract a broad range of people into a park throughout the year is central to many park design philosophies. Although not all parks can or should be everything to everybody, a good park makes sure there is at least something that a person can do regardless of their age or physical ability. Whether it is a family activity such as use a playground or flying a kite, an ability for adults to meet with friends for a coffee, or simply provide a place for somebody to relax on a shaded bench, parks should be a destination within the catchment area they are intended to serve. Parks are increasingly being designed with a year-round view whereby areas are being incorporated for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, outdoor skating, and supplemented by windbreaks and other areas sheltered from the weather.

Safety

Parks are being designed with patrons' safety in mind through the application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and other design principles. High volume areas should be well lit, low visibility areas should be limited, and neighbourhood level parks should be designed so that there are "eyes on the park" from the street and nearby residences to discourage undesirable activities. Maintenance of parks and open spaces is accepted in the industry as a key component of perceived "safety" in parks and in deterring inappropriate behaviour. Many municipalities engage their local emergency services agencies, including police and fire departments, to aid in their design of safe parks.

Recommendations – Re-Imagining Parkland

12. Update the conceptual park plan for Petrolia YMCA Open Space to recognize the potential recreation facility recommendations contained in this Master Plan. Guided by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Town will need to determine if the Petrolia YMCA Open Space is the optimal location given that recommended recreation facilities may also be suitable and/or accommodated at other parks in Petrolia.
13. Prepare a conceptual park plan for Victoria Park to guide the future development of the park. The design should ensure that the park continues to function as a gathering place for special events and passive outdoor enjoyment, with supporting amenities and the preservation of existing trees. A coordinated approach to create a more vibrant downtown area should be carried out to maximize benefits.
14. Incorporate key design elements when developing or redeveloping parks to ensure that they are comfortable, welcoming, and safe spaces that are able to meet a broad range of desired uses. At a minimum, parks should consider environmental sustainability factors, opportunities for naturalization, accessibility and inclusivity, park safety, and multi-generational and multi-seasonal usage.

4.4 Trails System

The Town of Petrolia's primary off-road trail route is located at Bridgeview Park, which is a 5.5 kilometre walking route through a naturalized area (owned by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority but maintained by the Town). This trail route connects users between Petrolia YMCA and the Petrolia Discovery Centre and forms a part of the broader Lambton County Regional Trail network, which utilizes a combination of on- and off-road routes that connects Petrolia residents with adjacent communities. In addition, there are a number of other naturalized or informal walking pathways in other areas of Petrolia.

Bridgeview Park's trails are complemented by approximately 24 kilometres of paved sidewalks, the majority of which are located within Petrolia's downtown core.

Input received during the Master Plan consultation indicated strong support for strengthening linkages between destinations and looped walking and cycling routes throughout Petrolia to encourage use. The public also expressed a desire for trail amenities such as seating, shade, walking markers, signage, and outdoor fitness equipment. Year-round trail maintenance was suggested to ensure that residents have outdoor winter activities (e.g., winter walking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, etc.). Some residents also rely heavily on the Town's sidewalk and trail system to get around, suggesting that they need to be clean and clear of debris, particularly for older adults, including those using mobility devices. To ensure that this segment of the community is able to travel independently throughout the community, the public also felt that there was a need to ensure that sidewalks are accessible for persons with disabilities such as ensuring that sidewalks are level and free of trip hazards.

Create improved and accessible trails and access points to Bear Creek. Design and install a wayfinding system so that people can be confident which areas are accessible, and which are not, and also that they will not get lost.

Trail opportunities identified in the Town of Petrolia Community Well-Being Master Plan.

The Town recognizes the importance of developing a connected trail system. Through Petrolia's Community Well-being Master Plan, a number of recommendations were made to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure, including:

- Pedestrian-oriented signage and marking around un-signalized intersections, especially along Petrolia Line around downtown; along Dufferin Avenue, especially in front of the CEE Hospital and Lambton Central Collegiate & Vocational School. This may include curb bump-outs at key intersections along Petrolia Line.
- Planting street trees on both sides of the street. This may be undertaken on public property at the Town's preferred timing, or on private property, in coordination with landowners. One option for partnering with landowners may be to organize a "Plant a Tree Day" where the Town provides trees and planting instructions for landowners.
- Introducing sidewalks on both sides of the street, particularly along enhanced streetscapes identified in the Community Well-Being Master Plan.
- Providing improved cycling facilities, particularly protected bike lanes along Petrolia Line downtown.
- Enhance accessible trails and trail connections, enabling access to open spaces and naturalized areas for people with reduced mobility.¹¹

The Town's Official Plan contains a number of policies that support the development of trails in the community. Specifically:

- **Section 5.2.11:** The Town will work with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority to establish physical links such as trails between the Town and the Lorne Henderson Conservation Area.
- **Section 5.4.1.2:** To create a park system connected by a network of trails and pedestrian/bicycle ways (may include regular sidewalks) that link existing and future open space.
- **Section 21.1.3(e):** In commercial areas the Town intends to foster links to the former Canadian National Railway corridor trail.

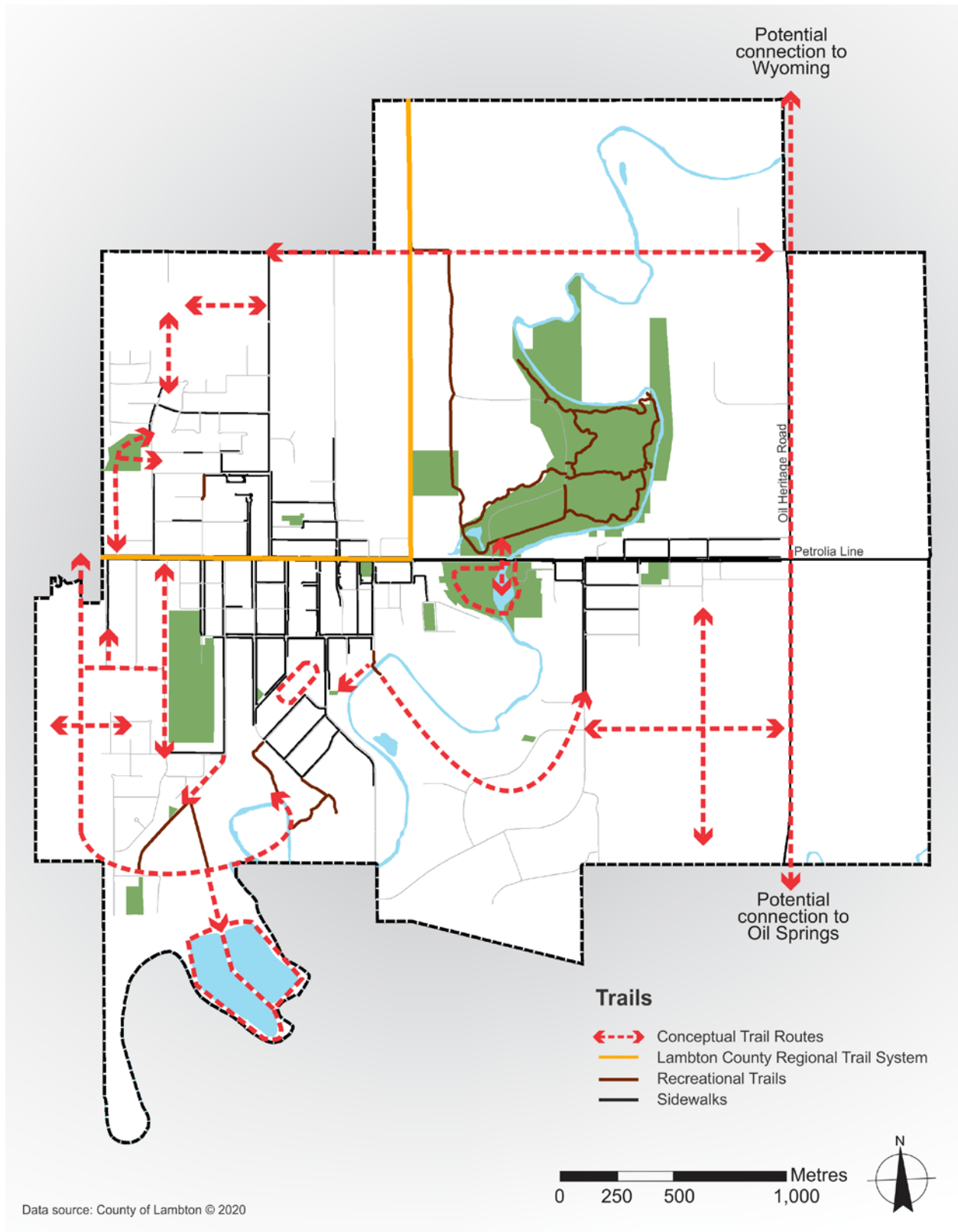
4.5 Conceptual Trail Network

A conceptual trail network is advanced that aims to build upon the Town's existing trail system. As illustrated in Figure 15, the conceptual trail network seeks to create a continuous trail loop throughout Petrolia using a combination of on and off-road routes (e.g., sidewalks, pathways, etc.). Connecting residents and users to key destinations such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, and other points of interest was a key consideration in the development of the concept, which is consistent with the input received throughout the consultation process. Emphasis is placed on strengthening north-south connectivity to direct residents and users to Petrolia's main street area. Beyond Petrolia's boundaries, the conceptual trail network seeks to establish potential connections to adjacent trails and communities, including the Community Trail that connects Wyoming to Reese Corner.

Some portions of the conceptual trail network already exist in an informal manner, such as routes located within naturalized areas or service corridors and municipal easements. In order to encourage physical activity levels, and to respond to the public demand for trails, efforts should be made to formalize these trails, which will require regular promotion and education, and increased maintenance.

¹¹ Town of Petrolia. (2018). Community Well-being Master Plan.

Figure 15: Proposed Conceptual Trail Network



The trail concept put forth in this Master Plan should be viewed as a point of departure through which additional work should be initiated. The conceptual trail network does not go into the level of detail regarding property ownership, geography, ecological impacts, or trail design. Due to these and other factors, implementation of the conceptual trail network should occur on a case-by-case basis as opportunities become available. Given that the implementation of some of the conceptual trail routes may not be feasible, deviations may be permitted provided that the general intent of linking residents to destinations and the broader trail system is maintained. Further consultation with the public during implementation is also recommended to refine potential routes, identify potential amenities, and address any concerns.

Recommendation – Conceptual Trail Network

15. Build upon the Town's existing trail network using the conceptual trail network identified in this Master Plan as a guide in order to strengthen active transportation opportunities in Petrolia.

4.6 Trail Acquisition Strategies

Portions of the recommended trail network requires access through non-municipally owned lands. In order to provide complete linkages throughout Petrolia, the Town will likely be required to employ various land acquisition strategies to achieve full implementation of the recommended trail network.

Informal strategies to acquire land for trail purposes, such as verbal agreements, should be discouraged as challenges may arise with regard to access, routing, safety and liability; although it is recognized that there are several informal trails that currently exist in Petrolia. At the Town's discretion, the following acquisition tools are put forward for consideration for trail development, many of which are supported by the *Planning Act*:

- **Easement** – The Town may establish a formal agreement with a land owner to grant access for a specific activity, without purchasing the land. An easement agreement is registered on the title of the property and remains in effect when property ownership changes.
- **Land purchase** – This is the most costly option for the Town as it requires purchasing all or a portion of land at fair market value. The land owner must also be a willing seller and an agreeable purchase price must be identified.
- **Land exchange** – The Town may make an exchange of lands with a land owner that is located along a proposed trail route. Land exchanges should be based on appraised value and not size.
- **Right of first refusal** – The Town may establish a right of first refusal with a land owner that grants the Town an opportunity to match another party's offer to purchase a specific property, although this may not give the Town immediate access to land.
- **Dedication through Plan of Subdivision** – Supported by the *Planning Act*, this strategy allows the Town to require the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycle pathways as a condition of draft subdivision approval. While it is recognized that there are limited subdivision development opportunities left in Petrolia that would yield large portions of land for trail development, potential linkages within future subdivisions should be considered.
- **Donation or bequest of land** – The Town may accept donations from land owners in exchange for a tax receipt at an appraised value, provided the donation meets the requirements under the *Federal Income Tax Act*. This strategy is typically used for the donation of environmentally sensitive lands as part of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. Alternatively, bequeath of land may be made upon death.

- **Lease/Licence private land** – Similar to an easement, the Town may enter into a lease or license agreement with a land owner to establish access to private lands. This agreement does not bind future land owners and as a result, public access is not guaranteed.

Recommendation – Trail Acquisition Strategies

16. In developing the trail network, the Town should consider utilizing a range of acquisition strategies to secure non-municipal lands.

4.7 Trail Management & Maintenance

Maintenance of municipal trails is critical to ensure user safety and to reduce exposure to any liabilities it may face. Effective inspection and maintenance measures can improve the provision of trails, decrease maintenance costs, and extend the life of trail surfaces if issues are identified and remediated in a timely manner. Ontario Trails suggests that trails should be designed with easy maintenance in mind to minimize future maintenance issues, with consideration given to trail routing or the use of construction materials that are more durable and environmentally friendly, especially given the Town's climatic conditions and naturalized areas (including floodplain areas).

Maintaining a clean and clear pathway is essential to minimizing liability and protecting the Town's natural aesthetics. Grass-cutting and vegetation management along trails should be included as a part of the Town's park maintenance program. While it is recognized that the Town currently does limited maintenance of its trail system in Bridgeview Park, increasing the frequency of maintenance may be required in order to encourage and promote use of the Town's trail network. A more formal trail inspection should be completed once a year and could be undertaken together with the Town's annual sidewalk inspection as required by Ontario Regulation 239/02. Trail inspections should evaluate surface and amenity conditions, deficiencies, vandalism, erosion, and safety and liability concerns to identify potential actions going forward.

While trail litter and debris is generally the responsibility of the Town, the public should be encouraged to take ownership of Petrolia's trails and assist with litter control and vegetation management. This can also be achieved through engaging partnerships with local service clubs and community organizations in sponsorships, clean-up days, or other strategies.



Bridgeview Park

Recommendation – Trail Management & Maintenance

17. Conduct an annual inspection of the Town's trails together with sidewalks to identify deficiencies, damages, safety and liability concerns, and identify repairs.
18. Develop partnerships with local service clubs, community organizations and/or volunteers to assist in litter control and vegetation management along trail routing.

5.0 Recreation & Cultural Facilities in Petrolia

5.1 Summary of Recreation & Cultural Facilities

Petrolia's recreation and culture facilities allows residents to pursue a wide range of leisure activities that keep them physically active and socially connected with others in the community. Table 5 summarizes key recreation and culture assets in the community, including spaces found at Petrolia YMCA (municipally-owned).

Table 5: Summary of Recreation & Cultural Facilities

Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)
Arenas & Ice Rinks	1	Greenwood Recreation Centre
Aquatics	1	Petrolia YMCA
Gymnasium	1	Petrolia YMCA
Multi-Purpose Room	5	Victoria Hall (3), Petrolia Famers' Market, Petrolia YMCA
Fitness & Wellness Spaces	1	Petrolia YMCA
Performing Arts Theatre	1	Victoria Hall
Rectangular Sports Fields	5	Greenwood Recreation Centre (5)*
Ball Diamonds	5	Bridgeview Park, Greenwood Recreation Centre (3), Kerr Park
Sport Courts		
Tennis Courts	2	<u>Tennis Courts:</u> Mary Beach Park (2)
Basketball Courts	0.5	<u>Basketball Courts:</u> Woodland Park (0.5)
Playgrounds		Englehart Park, Greenwood Recreation Centre, Kerr Park, Lions Park, Mary Beach Park, Petrolia YMCA Open Space, White Rose Park, Woodland Park
Off-Leash Dog Parks	1	Bridgeview Park

*Soccer field supply includes two at Greenwood Recreation Centre and three on adjacent lands that are leased from a third-party. Soccer fields can be partitioned into smaller fields to facilitate simultaneous games.

5.2 Indoor Multi-Use and Community Facilities

There are two primary community facilities located in the Town of Petrolia that provide public access to a broad range of indoor facility spaces. The Greenwood Recreation Centre is owned and operated by the Town (the land is owned by the Petrolia-Enniskillen Agricultural Society), which primarily focuses on meeting the arena needs of the community. The YMCA also operates the former Oil Heritage District Community Centre (owned by the Town), which is known as Petrolia YMCA. The YMCA provides a number of programs and services within the facility, which includes an indoor pool, gymnasium, wellness spaces and activity rooms.

From a community perspective, these facilities are expected to adequately serve the Town over the planning horizon of this Master Plan. Instead, the Town should focus on bolstering the use of facilities (in collaboration with Petrolia YMCA) in order to maximize the use of existing resources.

In recent years, Lambton Active People Place (LAPP) approached the Town with a proposal to develop an indoor multi-use facility to provide year-round opportunities for a variety of sports, which may potentially include tennis and pickleball courts, soccer, golfing range, and an indoor track. The proposal envisions the indoor facility would be designed as a domed enclosure with a removable building envelope (i.e.,

walls) to facilitate a cross-breeze during the warmer seasons. Council approved in principle the use of lands adjacent to the community centre lands at Petrolia YMCA for the proposed facility (C-4-01/14/2019) and the organization has been fundraising throughout 2019. The group worked with the Town to submit an application for a Trillium Seed Grant to conduct a feasibility study for the project but was unsuccessful; the group will look to resubmit an application in 2020.

There is no accepted provision standards for the types of non-core municipal facilities being proposed. The provision of an indoor recreation facility of this nature requires that a number of factors be considered such as market demand, partnership opportunities, available resources (e.g., funding), operational implications, and other relevant variables. In order to better position that Town to evaluate the merits of this proposed facility on Town-owned lands, it is essential that the proposal be rationalized through a comprehensive feasibility study and supporting business plan. This exercise should be undertaken by the proponent, should that organization wish to proceed with the proposal with the Town.

To ensure that the feasibility study and business plan is prepared in a timely manner given other parkland facility pressures (e.g. sports fields), the Town should set a timeframe (i.e., 12 months) for LAPP to submit the detailed feasibility study and business plan for the proposed indoor multi-use facility; at which time the Town should undertake a third-party review to better position the Town to determine if or how the Town should be involved.

Recommendation – Indoor Multi-Use and Community Centres

19. The Town should set a timeframe of 12 months for Lambton Active People Place to submit a detailed feasibility study and business plan for the proposed indoor multi-use facility, at which time the Town should undertake a third-party review to determine if or how the Town should be involved. The feasibility study and business plan should include (at a minimum): an outline of the proposal; demonstrated demand for the facility; roles, responsibilities, risks of the parties that are involved; expectations of third parties (e.g., Town, community organizations, etc.); capital funding strategy; short and long term operating business plans; and other key factors determine necessary regarding the proposal.

5.3 Arenas & Outdoor Ice Rinks

The Greenwood Recreation Centre is a single ice pad facility that has been the recipient of over \$500,000 (together with grant funding) to replace aging equipment and meet accessibility requirements. With the completion of these renovations, together with planned capital improvement and replacement projects to be implemented over the next ten years, Town staff expect that the arena will continue to function during the Master Plan planning period and beyond.

The Community Survey found that 42% of respondents participated in ice activities in the past 12 months. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of respondents also supported additional investment in arenas, which was identified as the third highest priority facility. Requests were also made for a second ice pad to relieve perceived pressures at the existing arena.



Greenwood Recreation Centre

During the month of November 2019, which generally represents a typical ice usage profile, booking schedules revealed that the Town's ice pad had a usage rate of 93% during prime time hours. This is a strong level of use that is considered to be fully utilized as it is not reasonable to expect every timeslot to be booked. The majority of available time is after 9:30 pm during the week and on the weekends. Petrolia's strong arena profile is due in part by its ability to draw users and participants from adjacent communities that do not provide arenas, including Enniskillen, Plympton-Wyoming, Oil Springs, and Dawn-Euphemia. In 2019, these communities contributed over \$20,000 towards operating and maintaining the Petrolia arena.¹²

Due to pressures for prime time ice in Petrolia, arena users utilize ice approximately six hours of ice per week in other municipalities to meet their ice needs, driving up to approximately 30 minutes to arenas in Glencoe and Watford. The need to access ice in other communities is a common approach to meeting demand as participation in arena sports is declining Province-wide, resulting in surplus ice capacity. While there are examples of arenas that are operating at (or near) full capacity – such as in Petrolia – it is far more economically-feasible to utilize available ice in adjacent communities, compared to investing in increasing the arena supply, particularly as there is excess capacity at arenas outside of Petrolia.

Petrolia's aging population along with declining ice sport participation trends across Ontario may lessen current and future pressures being placed on the existing arena. No additional arenas are anticipated to be required during the Master Plan period, particularly as forecasted population growth is insufficient to warrant an additional ice pad. The fact that the lands surrounding the Greenwood Recreation Centre are not owned by the Town also presents a challenge to any future expansion to the existing building footprint.

Moving forward, the Town will need to be proactive in maximizing the use of the existing arena during prime and non-prime hours. One strategy to consider is the sale of last minute bookings. While the Town reported that the majority of booked ice is used, there are instances where ice has been turned back due to away games and tournaments. There is currently no system for selling last minute bookings, resulting in unused prime ice (and lost revenue). There is merit in the Town assessing the feasibility of establishing or purchasing an online booking schedule where arena users and residents can view and book last-minute prime time ice in real time.

With no additional ice pads recommended over the planning period, it is imperative for the Town to ensure that its single ice pad remains operationally-sound. As previously mentioned, the Town undertook extensive upgrades to the arena to extend its lifespan. Additional mechanical replacements are expected to be required within the next five years, which will be absorbed through the capital budget process. While the expected lifespan of the Town's arena is beyond the planning horizon of the Master Plan, it is prudent to begin financially planning for its eventual replacement. As a best practice, municipalities are encouraged to establish a dedicated capital reserve for arena replacement. While it may be challenging to implement due to the other competing pressures that Councils typically face, it is a tool to consider in planning for the longer-term replacement of the facility.

During the community consultation process associated with the Master Plan, there were a number of requests for an outdoor skating rink. Historically, the Town converted a ball diamond at Bridgeview Park for outdoor skating during the winter, although this no longer occurs. While the Town recently explored the potential to establish a refrigerated outdoor skating rink (at a cost of \$290,000 or \$690,000 depending on the size), the proposal was ultimately not approved. Outdoor recreational skating has been a Canadian tradition, although refrigerated rinks are costly and the ability to maintain natural outdoor ice has become increasingly difficult due to unpredictable winter weather and cumbersome maintenance.

¹² Town of Petrolia. 2019 Budget. Retrieved from <http://town.petrolia.on.ca>

As a best practice, municipalities that provide outdoor skating rinks tend to partner with others such as a neighbourhood association or a dedicated group of volunteers who would generally be responsible for day to day maintenance of natural ice rinks, while the municipality would provide boards, access to water and space, which tend to be an open field (as was done so in the past in Petrolia), an existing multi-use court, or a dedicated concrete pad. Although this approach could be considered by the Town if there is demand for an outdoor rink and a dedicated group of volunteers that would be willing to take on a partnering role, the Master Plan did not find sufficient rationale to support a recommendation for the provision of an outdoor ice rink.

Recommendations – Arenas

20. Coordinate with arena user groups and nearby municipalities that provide arenas to manage and maximize the use of existing ice pads.
21. Explore the feasibility of creating or purchasing an online portal that users and/or the public can book last minute ice rentals (via the Town's website).
22. Establish a dedicated capital reserve for the long-term replacement of the arena at the Greenwood Recreation Centre; annual capital contributions to the reserve is strongly encouraged.

5.4 Aquatics

Indoor Pools

Petrolia residents are fortunate to have access to an indoor aquatic centre, which is owned by the Town and operated by Petrolia YMCA. Prior to the construction of the indoor aquatic centre, the Town operated an outdoor pool which was closed when the indoor pool was constructed. Available to members to non-members (at a daily use rate), the indoor pool features two tanks and supports a variety of programs including recreational swim, lane swim, therapy aerobics, aquafit, lessons, and private lessons. While participation data is not available, indications suggests that the pool is well utilized as the facility draws from a regional user base (e.g., Plympton-Wyoming, Oil Springs, etc.); the closest indoor municipal pool is located within a 30-minute drive in Dresden.

Swimming is one of the most popular recreational activities as it appeals to all age groups and promotes the development of an important life skill. The Community Survey undertaken for the Master Plan revealed that 46% of respondents participated in recreational swimming in the past year, which was the sixth most popular activity. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents also supported investment in indoor pools in Petrolia.

The Town benefits from having a third-party operator (Petrolia YMCA) that is experienced in aquatic operations and programming. With a projected population of 6,410 by 2031 and continued usage from secondary markets outside of Petrolia, the existing indoor pool is expected to continue meeting the needs of residents over the planning period.

While there were a number of requests during the Master Plan consultation process for the provision of an outdoor pool in Petrolia, the Town's past decision to close the then existing outdoor pool when the new indoor aquatics centre was opened was a sound decision in order to promote year-round swimming opportunities, reduce costs with provision of an outdoor pool, and focus usage on the indoor facility to improve operating efficiency and revenue.

Splash Pads

Splash pads are one of the most highly sought after amenities for young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down in the summer. They can be developed in a wide variety of stimulating designs with a range of water features. The Town does not currently have a splash pad. Parents for Parks (a local organization) has come forward with a proposal to develop a new inclusive playground at Lions Park. While the organization is considering the provision of a water misting pole, a misting feature is not a splash pad.

The Master Plan consultation found significant public support for a splash pad in the community. Three-quarters (74%) of respondents to the household survey supported the development of a splash pad in Petrolia, which was the second highest priority for investment. A number of requests were also received through other consultations undertaken during the Master Plan. One-third (33%) of household survey respondents used a splash pad in the past year, which is likely located in another community (e.g., Wyoming).

Some opposition to a splash pads was also received with concerns including the potential impact on the existing indoor pool, the cost to construct and operate (as well as the amount of water required), and limited number of months each year that splash pads operate.

Overall, it is common for communities such as Petrolia to have at least one splash pad. Based upon best practices and high community support, the Town should proceed with the development of a splash pad in Petrolia, potentially located at Kerr Park or another location deemed appropriate by the Town.

Recommendation – Aquatics

23. Continue to support Parents for Parks in developing an inclusive playground at Lion's Park, including the provision of a misting feature(s).
24. Develop a splash pad potentially located at Kerr Park or other location deemed appropriate by the Town.

5.5 Gymnasium & Multi-Purpose Rooms

Gymnasiums

A gymnasium located at the Petrolia YMCA is available to both members and non-members. The gymnasium is used for a variety of indoor recreational activities such as basketball, ball hockey, pickleball, and group fitness. The Town also facilitates school gymnasium rentals by user groups and individuals wishing to use them for programs.

The consultation process yielded limited input regarding gymnasium space. Less than two-thirds of respondents from the Community Survey supported investment in gymnasiums although some requests were made for more affordable access to gymnasium space.

Gymnasiums are typically incorporated into the development of new community facilities as complementary spaces. Varying degrees of school access also impact the provision of municipal gymnasiums. The Town is fortunate to have access to local school gymnasiums that facilitate the delivery of indoor recreation programming. Given that no new indoor community facilities are proposed, together with the current supply and limited additional demand for a new gymnasium, the preferred strategy moving forward is to continue to work with local school boards to facilitate access to school gymnasium space for the community and continue to rely on the YMCA Petrolia for a variety of gym-based programs and activities (see Recommendation #8).

Multi-Purpose Rooms

The Town provides five multi-purpose meeting spaces, three of which are located at Victoria Hall including the lobby, MacFarlane Room, and Council Chambers. A viewing gallery with a kitchen is located at the Greenwood Recreation Centre that can also be rented for functions and a meeting space is available at the Petrolia Farmers' Market. These spaces are augmented by other meeting spaces located throughout the community including Petrolia YMCA, Petrolia Library, churches, schools, Lions Club of Petrolia, and the Royal Canadian Legion.

Multi-purpose spaces that are affordable and publically accessible are important community assets as they facilitate activities such as meetings, social gatherings, events, and other functions. These spaces offer varying levels of functionality depending on their size, configuration, storage capabilities, and level of amenity. Multi-purpose rooms generally have low levels of utilization, which is normal as these spaces are not typically viewed as revenue generators, but affordable and accessible public amenities that contribute to the quality of life in Petrolia. Multi-purpose spaces are typically integrated within facilities as a means to facilitate access to flexible community space. With no new indoor recreation facilities recommended through this Master Plan, additional multi-purpose space in Petrolia is not anticipated or required. Instead, the Town should focus on promoting the use of existing spaces.

Recommendation – Gymnasiums & Multi-Purpose Rooms

25. Promote the availability of multi-purpose spaces to the community for the wide range of recreation, cultural, and social activities that they are capable of accommodating.

5.6 Fitness & Wellness Spaces

Indoor Fitness & Wellness Spaces

The Petrolia YMCA includes a full-service fitness centre including a group fitness studio through which the YMCA offers active living programs such as yoga, boot camps, and stretching. In addition, there are several private-sector fitness providers found in Petrolia such as Circle Studio Petrolia, Evolution Workout, RIM Fitness, and Petrolia Bluewater Tae Kwon Do.

The YMCA has operated a fitness centre within the community centre since 2018 and since that time, the number of memberships (estimated to be approximately 1,300) has exceeded expectations; drawing from a regional user base. As use of the YMCA's fitness facilities continue to grow, the Town should regularly consult with the YMCA to determine whether existing fitness space continues to meet the needs of users. Should a demand for expanded fitness space be identified, an evaluation process should take place in collaboration with Petrolia YMCA, with consideration given to the demand for space, what an expanded fitness space would provide, timing, cost, and how to address within the current partnership framework.

Indoor Walking Track

Many new and retrofitted recreation facilities incorporate a walking track in some form to facilitate year-round walking, particularly during the winter season. The most common forms of provision are an elevated walking track encircling an arena or gymnasium, or one that is integrated within circulation areas (e.g., walkways, fitness centres, etc.). For the Town, a number of requests for an indoor walking track were made through the consultation process. While no new recreation facilities in Petrolia are proposed through this Master Plan, the Town could encourage creation of walking clubs and opportunities for indoor walking within existing municipal facilities, schools, Petrolia YMCA, etc. through the use of circulation areas or large open spaces within facilities.

Outdoor Fitness Opportunities

With an increasing focus on health and wellness, municipalities have been integrating outdoor fitness equipment within parks in response to growing demands for outdoor exercises opportunities. Popular throughout the United States and Europe, Canadian municipalities have begun introducing outdoor fitness equipment that allow people to participate in free outdoor activities and engage people in the public realm.

With a strong desire to enhance the Town's parks and trail system, there is merit in considering the provision of a limited number of outdoor fitness equipment stations in Petrolia to encourage outdoor physical activities, particularly at parks with active recreation facilities, parks and trails that are within close proximity to older adults, and areas with natural heritage features. Opportunities to integrate outdoor fitness equipment along the trail system at Bridgeview Park is one key location, as well as other new or existing parks and trails on a case-by-case basis.

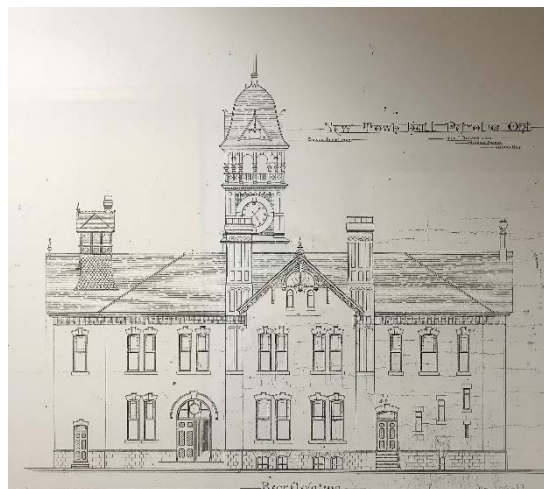
Recommendations – Fitness & Wellness Spaces

26. Initiate periodic discussions with the Petrolia YMCA to determine fitness space needs, timing, cost, and partnership framework for any future expansion of the facility to accommodate expanded fitness opportunities.
27. Encourage the creation of walking clubs and explore the potential to promote indoor walking opportunities within municipal facilities, schools, Petrolia YMCA, etc. through the use of circulation areas or large open spaces within facilities.
28. Investigate opportunities to integrate a limited number of outdoor fitness equipment stations along the trail system at Bridgeview Park, as well as other new or existing parks and trails on a case-by-case basis.

5.7 Arts and Cultural Spaces

While a detailed assessment of arts and cultural needs was beyond the scope of this Master Plan, it is important to recognize key municipal assets that contribute to the quality of life in Petrolia. The Town provides four primary spaces that accommodate a variety of arts and cultural activities and special events.

Victoria Hall, which is also known as the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, was originally constructed in 1889 and is recognized as a National Historic Site of Canada.¹³ Its main attraction is the performing arts theatre that has seating for 400 guests. Other spaces at Victoria Hall includes the municipal office, an art gallery, Council Chambers, and meeting room. About six major productions are planned each year that run over the course of approximately 17 weeks. In addition, the theatre can also be booked for various community uses.



Victoria Hall

¹³ Town of Petrolia. Victoria Hall. Retrieved from <http://town.petroliia.on.ca>

As mentioned in section 4.3, **Victoria Park** is one of the Town's most prominent parks as it is the location where the majority of the Town's special events take place such as Pizzafest, Canada Day, Art in the Park, and Barn Dance. In collaboration with the Petrolia Rotary Club, the preservation and enhancement of Victoria Park as an arts and cultural venue is paramount (see Recommendation #13).

Market Square (Farmers' Market) has been located behind Petrolia Library since 2009 and was made possible by federal and provincial funding, which provided more than \$800,000 towards construction of the outdoor pavilion and supporting amenities. The market is open once a week between May to October, providing residents and visitors with fresh local produce and entertainment.

While the **Petrolia Library** is not a Town-operated facility, its contributions to the arts and culture sector are recognized as they provide a number of programs such as reading groups and painting.

These four spaces create an arts and cultural hub located in the centre of Petrolia. Anchored by Victoria Hall, this hub of activity draws nearly 100,000 visitors and attendees each year. Not only do these activities, programs and events contribute to Petrolia's quality of life, they provide important economic benefits to the Town. In 2019, the Town reported that these arts and cultural activities have generated an economic impact of approximately \$2.7 Million.



Victoria Park



The Town recognizes the value residents place on Victoria Hall and has taken steps to ensure that it continues to serve the community over the long term. The Town is currently seeking approximately \$9 Million in funding through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program in order to undertake various functionality enhancements to Victoria Hall including accessibility upgrades, mechanical replacement, new washrooms, building envelope improvements, freight elevator, expanded staffing and ancillary space, and more. These improvements are supported by the Master Plan as the Town anticipates that the proposed projects will strengthen Victoria Hall as a performing arts venue and location for special events, drawing more theatre participants and downtown visitors, as well as economic spin-offs. Updates will also improve internal staffing operations, reduce energy costs, and address legislative requirements for accessibility.

Provided that the Town is successful in obtaining grant funding to update Victoria Hall, there is more work to be done as an opportunity exists to strengthen the Town's position as an arts and cultural hub. It is clear that Victoria Hall, Victoria Park and Market Square are vital to Petrolia's identity and the preservation of these facilities is emphasized to ensure that they continue to be enjoyed over the long-term. As a detailed analysis on arts and cultural needs was beyond the scope of this Master Plan, the Town would benefit from undertaking a comprehensive Arts and Culture Assessment to guide decision making relating to the Town's important assets and the provision of arts and cultural services in Petrolia. Such an Assessment would ideally incorporate a holistic view of arts and culture in Petrolia, with consideration given to other providers such as Petrolia Library and community and private groups.

Recommendation – Arts & Cultural Facilities

29. Undertake a comprehensive Arts and Cultural Assessment to guide the future decision making and the preservation and promotion of arts, culture and heritage in Petrolia. Emphasis should be given to the role of key facilities and/or spaces including, but not limited to, Victoria Hall, Victoria Park, and Market Square, special events, and the role and responsibility of the Town and community partners.

5.8 Rectangular Sports Fields

While the Town does not own any rectangular sports fields, it facilitates access to five fields. Two of the fields are located at Greenwood Park (owned by the Petrolia & Enniskillen Agricultural Society) while the remaining three fields are located adjacent to Greenwood Park, which are owned by a third-party and leased to the Town. Complementing Petrolia's supply are rectangular fields located at schools.

The Town's rectangular sports fields are used by the Petrolia Soccer Club and are large enough to allow the organization to line them in different configurations according to age and level of play. The Petrolia Soccer Club can also program individual fields for simultaneous games/practices for younger age divisions, making them highly effective in addressing field needs. Due to the ability to run concurrent programs on a single field, the Petrolia Soccer Club is able to make efficient use of the available supply. A review of field booking schedules reveals that the Town's soccer fields are used for two and a half hours per day between Monday and Thursday for games with some usage during the weekends.



Greenwood Park (fields maintained by the Town on privately-owned lands)

A participant-based target of one field per 80 to 90 youth participants is typically recommended to determine long-term field needs in Petrolia. The Town reported that there are approximately 350 participants registered with Petrolia Minor Soccer, which represents approximately one-third of the children and youth population in Petrolia. Applying this capture rate to the projected children and youth population suggests that participation would increase to approximately 390 players. Based on the recommended target, this translates into a need for five rectangular sports fields, matching the current supply. In projecting the demand for soccer fields, it is recognized that many non-residents participate in soccer in Petrolia and, as such, changes in participation rates and location of residents should be monitored in order to ensure that needs can be met in the long-term.

With no net additions to the soccer field supply required, the Town must ensure that it continues to provide this level of service to meet the needs of Petrolia Minor Soccer. This is imperative given that three of the Town's five fields are located on privately-owned lands adjacent to Greenwood Park. While the Town is expected to have access to these fields for at least the next few years, alternative long-term solutions must be explored. Preference should be given to providing soccer fields on municipal lands, such as at major parks, to provide long-term security and leverage the use of amenities such as on-site parking. Soccer fields were historically located at Bridgeview Park, although this location is not desirable due to frequent flooding. Petrolia YMCA Open Space may also be an option, although there is insufficient space to accommodate all three soccer fields. In the absence of sufficient existing parkland to accommodate the need for three replacement soccer fields over the long term, the Town may need to explore the potential to acquire new parkland, preferably a single site large enough to accommodate all three fields.

As a long term strategy, opportunities may also exist to leverage the use of soccer fields in adjacent communities. It is understood that there are currently underutilized soccer fields in Oil City (approximately a ten minute drive), which may be a potential solution. While less than ideal, it is imperative that all options be explored to ensure that there is a seamless transition of soccer fields to minimize programming disruptions when the soccer fields located on privately-owned lands are no longer available and/or to accommodate increasing demand for rectangular fields should demand exist.

Recommendation – Rectangular Sports Fields

30. Pursue alternative location(s) to replace the three soccer fields on lands leased by the Town from a private landowner that are located adjacent to Greenwood Park.

5.9 Ball Diamonds

The Town has five ball diamonds - three are located at Greenwood Park (two of which are lit), while Kerr Park and Bridgeview Park each have one diamond. With two lit and three unlit ball diamonds, the Town has an effective supply of six unlit equivalent diamonds (lit diamonds have 50% more capacity as they can be used later in the evening).

Baseball (and its various forms) appeal to youth and adults. While the popularity of baseball is cyclical, local participation in the sport has remained strong. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Town now permits the ball diamond at Bridgeview Park, which was previously only used for casual, neighbourhood-level play.

The Town does not currently have a minor ball organization thus the majority of local children and youth are registered with Wyoming Minor Baseball that books diamond time between both communities. According to the Town's booking schedules, Petrolia's ball diamonds are used for two hours a day between Monday and Thursday for games, while tournaments and some practices are held occasionally between Friday and Sunday. The Town reported that there are 440 players registered with Wyoming

Minor Baseball (182 of whom are Petrolia residents). There are also 450 players registered with various adult groups, as well as 25 players registered with the Town's blacktop baseball program, which is an adapted game for persons with disabilities. In total, there are 915 participants using Petrolia's ball diamonds.

A provision target based on participants or population is typically used to determine ball diamond needs; however, this practice is not ideal for Petrolia's context given that the Town's largest ball diamond user group – Wyoming Minor Baseball – is a cross-border organization that plays in both communities and only a portion of its membership are local residents. With this in mind, it will be important for the Town to work with Wyoming (and other municipalities as necessary) to ensure that cross-border sports organizations that serve regional players have coordinated access to ball diamonds within and outside of Petrolia so that field capacity can be properly managed.

The Town previously prepared a concept plan for Petrolia YMCA Open Space, which included the provision of a minor-size ball diamond. It was envisioned that this diamond would accommodate the Town's blacktop ball diamond program for residents with special needs, in order to alleviate pressures at the Kerr Park diamond location where it is currently played. As it is recommended that the Town work with Wyoming and other surrounding municipalities to coordinate access to ball diamonds, it may be premature to add another diamond to the municipal supply, particularly given that the Town reported 25 blacktop baseball participants and ball diamonds can typically accommodate between 80 and 100 players. It is recommended that the Town revisit the need for an additional ball diamond at the Petrolia YMCA Open Space (or another location) in the next three to five years.

With no new ball diamonds required over the short term, the Town should engage with ball diamond organizations to identify and prioritize improvements to the existing supply. Through the consultation process, suggested improvements included installing lighting and ensuring existing lighting is functioning properly, and providing washrooms and/or change rooms. The potential to undertake improvements to the ball diamond at Bridgeview Park should also be investigated.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

31. Work with surrounding municipalities to ensure that cross-boundary ball diamond organizations that serve regional players have coordinated access to ball diamonds within and outside of Petrolia and that field capacity can be properly managed.
32. Engage ball groups to identify and prioritize ball diamond improvements. Emphasis should be given to enhancements to the ball diamond at Bridgeview Park to ensure that it is suitable to support regularly scheduled practices and games.



Greenwood Park

5.10 Sport Courts

Tennis & Pickleball Courts

Mary Beach Park contains two lit courts that are lined for tennis and pickleball activities. Pickleball is also played indoors in local gymnasiums at the Petrolia YMCA and at the Lambton Central Collegiate & Vocational Institute.

Across the Province, tennis has been experiencing a resurgence over the past several years due to a number of factors including the success of Canadian professionals, a greater emphasis on grassroots programs to attract younger players, and a growing segment of baby boomers that are returning to the sport.



Mary Beach Park

Older adults are also generating interest in pickleball, which is recognized as one of the fastest growing sports in Canada. Pickleball is a low-intensity sport that can be played on a modified tennis court (pickleball courts are smaller in size with a lower net height). The popularity of pickleball continues to spread across Ontario and its prominence is further bolstered by being played at the Ontario Senior Games.

The Community Survey for the Master Plan generally found that interest in tennis and pickleball was low. Only 8% and 4% of respondents indicated that they played tennis or pickleball in the past 12 months, respectively. Tennis and pickleball courts also had the lowest levels of support for investment, suggesting that there are other community priorities when it comes to the provision of parks and recreation facilities.

The provision of municipal courts is typically evaluated based on a per capita basis. Municipality generally provide outdoor tennis courts at a rate of one court per 5,000 residents. Based on this target, Petrolia's two tennis courts are expected to satisfy community needs over the planning period. While no additional courts are required, it will be important to ensure that the Town's existing courts are adequate to meet the needs of the community. The courts were resurfaced in 2015 due in part to local fundraising efforts and it is expected that the courts should serve residents well during the planning period. At the time of its next redevelopment, consideration should be given to potentially relocating the courts at Mary Beach Park to a more suitable location with appropriate buffering and site amenities (e.g., parking, etc.). The future development or redevelopment of courts should be multi-lined for tennis and pickleball activities.

At the time of replacement, consideration should be given to potential re-purposing opportunities at Mary Beach Park. Potential options may include, but not be limited to, a basketball court (multi-lined for other activities), wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding), or other amenities.

Basketball Courts

The Town provides a half-basketball court is located at Woodland Park, which was sponsored by the Petrolia Rotary Club, while basketball courts/hoops are also located at several local schools. Basketball continues to be a popular pastime activity due to its national appeal, particularly given the success of the Toronto Raptors.

As a best practice, municipalities target a service level of one basketball court per 800 youth between the ages of 10 and 19. This metric would suggest that the Town's existing half-basketball court at Woodland Park is sufficient to meet the needs of the community; however, geographic distribution must also be considered given that this age group is generally limited in the distance that they can travel. A basketball court is proposed to be located at the Petrolia YMCA Open Space, which would be a suitable complement to the site given the other youth-oriented recreation facilities at the YMCA. Basketball courts may also be considered in other parks to strengthen geographic distribution. For example, once the tennis courts at Mary Beach Park are relocated to the Petrolia YMCA Open Space, the remaining hard surface court could be repurposed as a multi-use court capable of accommodating basketball (see Recommendation #33).

Recommendations – Sport Courts

33. At the time of redevelopment, investigate options to relocate the Tennis/Pickleball courts at Mary Beach Park to a more appropriate location with sufficient buffering from adjacent land uses and provisions for supporting amenities (e.g., parking). Future development or redevelopment of courts should be multi-lined for tennis and pickleball activities. The sport court surface at Mary Beach Park should be retained and re-purposed for other outdoor recreation facilities including, but not limited to, a basketball court (multi-lined for other activities), wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding), or other amenities.
34. Construct a basketball court at the Petrolia YMCA Open Space. Other parks may also be considered to strengthen geographic distribution (e.g., Mary Beach Park – see Recommendation #33). Future and redeveloped basketball courts should be designed to be multi-use to accommodate basketball, ball hockey, and other activities requiring a hard surface court.

5.11 Playgrounds

The Town provides playgrounds at seven parks across Petrolia, which vary in scale and design from basic structures (e.g., swing set and or slide only) such as at White Rose Park or Mary Beach Park, to more comprehensive play structures such as the Town's newest playground at the Petrolia YMCA Open Space. To assist with offsetting municipal costs, some of the Town's playgrounds are funded by community groups, such as the playground located at Kerr Park, which was funded by the Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist Club.

The Community Survey for the Master Plan found that 48% of respondents have used a playground in the past year, which was the fifth most popular activity. Investment in playground infrastructure



Kerr Park

was identified as the highest priority need in Petrolia as four-fifths (81%) of respondents supported spending additional public funds on improving existing or building new playgrounds.

A best practice is to provide playgrounds within a five- to ten-minute walk (or 500 to 800-metres) of residential areas, without having to cross major pedestrian barriers such as arterial roads, highways, railways, and waterbodies. Applying these standards to existing playgrounds reveals that the majority of the Town's residential areas are served with some form of playground. Notable gaps exist on the east side of Bear Creek, on the north and south side of Petrolia Line. A gap also exists in the north end of Petrolia, south of Discovery Line, as well as in the south end of Petrolia. Playgrounds should be provided in these gap areas at an existing park (e.g., Fairbank Park) or future park(s) as opportunities become available.

It is important to ensure that the Town's playgrounds inventory is accessible and visible to residents to encourage use and promote safety. With a number of antiquated playgrounds in Petrolia (e.g., White Rose Park and Englehart Park), the Town would benefit from the creation of a playground replacement strategy to ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds once they reach the end of their lifespan (typically 15 to 20 years).

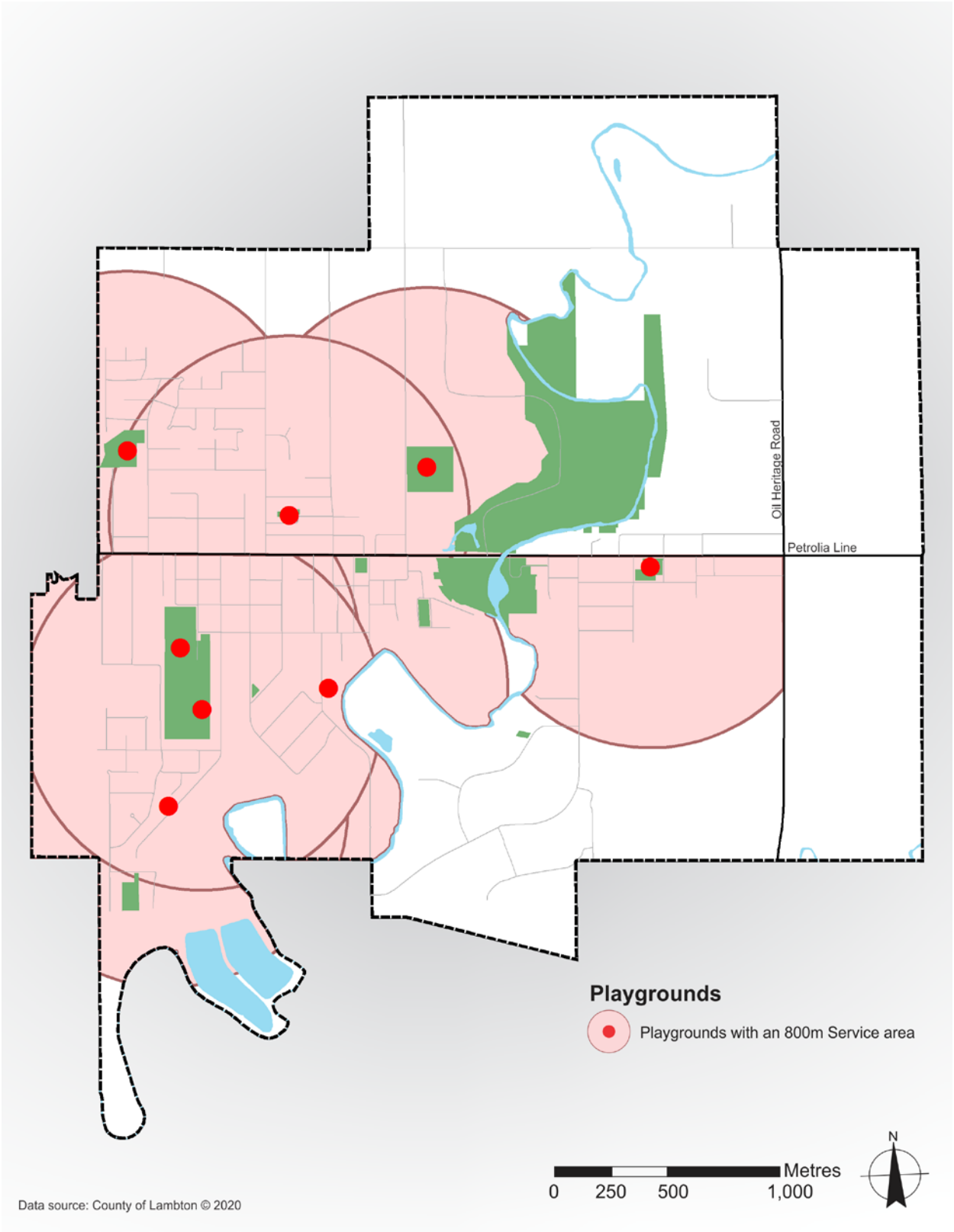
There is also an ongoing initiative being led by Parents for Parks to raise funds to replace the aging playground at Lions Park with one that is inclusive of all abilities. This initiative demonstrates the value played on playgrounds in the community and is supported by this Master Plan.

As a part of future playground development or playground redevelopment projects, consideration should be given to creative playground structures with inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces in order to comply with accessibility legislation and promote inclusion within Petrolia's park system. As an alternative to create playgrounds, natural/adventure playgrounds may also be considered, which are becoming more popular with examples found around the world. These types of playgrounds encourage the use of existing landscapes and materials such as wood, logs, boulders, and ropes to create more daring experiences.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

35. Support Parents for Parks initiative to replace the aging playground at Lions Park with one that is inclusive of all abilities.
36. Reconcile playground gap areas by constructing playgrounds at Fairbank Park and at future parks to address gap areas, as opportunities become available in residential areas, such as on the east side of Bear Creek (north and south side of Petrolia Line) and in the north end of Petrolia (south of Discovery Line).
37. Establish a playground replacement strategy to ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds. New and redeveloped playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Consideration should be given to mixing the creative playground equipment with natural/adventure play components that incorporates the existing landscape and natural materials such as wood, logs, boulders, and ropes that encourage challenging play experiences.

Figure 16: Distribution of Playgrounds



5.12 Wheeled Action Sports Park

The Town does not currently have dedicated facilities for wheeled action sports such as skateboards, BMX bikes, scooters, or inline skates. While once considered a fad, these wheeled activities have sustained longevity and are now considered a core recreation facility in most municipalities across Ontario. Historically, skateboarding and other wheeled sports have been viewed by many in terms of a negative behaviour; however, this perspective has changed now that the activity has become mainstream. Wheeled action sports parks are now viewed as safe places to engage in outdoor physical activity, while gathering and socializing with others who share common interests.

The consultation process yielded a number of requests for a location for skateboarding and other wheeled activities and it was the fifth most requested recreation facility type from the Community Survey. In an effort to support unstructured and low-cost activities for local youth, there is merit in the Town establishing a wheeled action sports park in an area that is geographically accessible for youth in the community, particularly given that this segment of the community is limited in the distance that they can travel.

The location should also be highly visible from the street. Preference should be given to a location that is within close proximity to a school and with sidewalk access. Based on a scan of potential locations, Bridgeview Park or Petrolia YMCA Open Space are potential candidates given that they are centrally-located in the community and can be accessed within a 20 minute walk from local schools (less time if traveling by skateboard). Other candidate sites may be considered provided they are accessible by youth, including Mary Beach Park at the time when the sport courts are re-purposed. Best practices suggest that wheeled action sports parks should be constructed from concrete and feature a range of components (e.g., ramps, rails, stairs, etc.) that are suitable for a variety of wheeled-action sports. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to confirm the design and location.

Recommendation – Wheeled Action Sports Park

38. Construct a wheeled action sports park suitable for skateboarding, BMX biking, inline skating, and other wheeled activities. Potential locations include Bridgeview Park, Petrolia YMCA Open Space, Mary Beach Park (when the existing sport courts are re-purposed), or another location that is easily accessible by youth and located to be highly visible. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to confirm the design and location.

5.13 Off-Leash Dog Parks

The Town has one off-leash dog park at Bridgeview Park, providing an opportunity for pets to exercise within a controlled area and allowing pet-owners to socialize with others; research suggests that off-leash dog parks are beneficial for pet owners as much as the pets themselves from a community interaction perspective, particularly for older adults and residents living in isolation.

Dog walking is a popular activity in Petrolia. The Community Survey found that 44% of respondents participated in (on and off-leash) dog walking in the past 12 months, which was the seventh most popular activity. Nearly two-thirds (59%) of respondents also supported investment in off-leash dog parks in Petrolia, which ranked as the 8th highest priority.

The desire for a quality off-leash dog park was heard throughout the consultation process as residents felt that the existing dog park is not adequate to meet the needs of the community. This is primarily due to the fact that it is not visible in the community as it is relatively hidden in dense vegetation. Its location is also commonly flooded, limiting access to creating a breeding ground for insects. Residents reported that the off-leash area is inadequate at containing pets due to the instability of the fence as a result of

the flooding. While the Town has made previous attempts to repair the fence, they have not been successful with long-term repairs due to the severity of flooding.

Based upon the research and consultation undertaken for the Master Plan, the Town should initiate a process to explore relocation of the existing off-leash dog park to a more suitable site. There may be an opportunity to relocate the off-leash dog park to the south side of Bridgeview Park, which is a more visible location in the community. The St. Clair Conservation Authority is currently in the process of completing a wetland rehabilitation project on the south side of Bridgeview Park, which aims to reduce the frequency of flooding. Once this project is completed and the Town can re-establish flood limits, a more suitable location can be identified. Alternatively, other parks may also be considered provided that adequate amenities are available such as parking, shade and access to sidewalks or trails.

Recommendation – Off-Leash Dog Park

39. Relocate the off-leash dog park at Bridgeview Park to another location within the park that is more visible in the community and less prone to flooding. Other parks may also be considered as an alternative provided that adequate amenities are available such as parking, shade and access to sidewalks or trails.

5.14 Other Recreational Needs

The Town may be pressed for additional indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are not currently provided through the core municipal service mandate or that are not of sufficient demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the Master Plan at this time (e.g., community gardens). However, the Town must be prepared to respond appropriately to requests pending future market characteristics related to population growth, emergence of new sports, future recreational trends and preferences, and other demands that may arise for existing activities or facilities.

When requests are brought forward for investment in new, non-traditional, emerging and other non-core municipal services, the Town should evaluate the need for these recreational pursuits on a case-by-case basis. This should involve an examination into (but not limited to):

- Local, regional and provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- Examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- Local demand for the activity/facility;
- The ability of existing municipal facilities to accommodate the new activity;
- The feasibility for the Town to provide the activity/facility as a core service, and be able to do so in a cost-effective manner; and
- The willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the activity/facility if provided with appropriate municipal supports

Recommendation – Other Recreational Needs

40. Requests for activities/facilities presently not part of the Town's core parks and recreation mandate should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, after first considering the Town's role in providing the service in relation to quantified market demand and cost-effectiveness of the service.

6.0 Implementing the Master Plan

By setting priorities, creating a phased plan for implementation, and working with community stakeholders and partners to achieve more, the Town of Petrolia can ensure that the intent of this Master Plan and its key recommendations are achieved over the next ten years.

On March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario enacted a declaration of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. As a result of this declaration, public facilities including parks and recreation facilities were ordered to close, recreation programs were cancelled, and social gatherings were prohibited. This unprecedented event transformed social interaction, while reinforcing the importance of certain unstructured parks and recreation activities such as walking and hiking outdoors. The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly impact how the recommendations contained in the Master Plan are implemented over the next ten years, underpinning the need to be flexible in adapting to evolving environments.

The Town should regularly review and assess – and periodically revise – the recommendations of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This will ensure that the directions remain reflective of current realities and responsive to the changing community needs. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, conducting annual reviews of the Master Plan's achievements, determining which recommendations have or have not been implemented, tracking satisfaction levels of residents and undertaking a detailed five to ten-year update to the Plan.

Additional tasks are required to enable active implementation of the Plan, including the monitoring of participation levels and regular dialogue with the community. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal and external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

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

- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, partnerships, etc.);
- Issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, related Town initiatives, etc.);
- Review of the Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- Preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- Communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the coming year; and
- Budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Recommendation – Implementing the Master Plan

41. Post the Parks and Recreation Master Plan on the Town's website as a resource for the community, Council and staff.
42. Develop annual work plans to guide strategic implementation of the Master Plan, with key priorities identified on a year-to-year basis.
43. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.
44. Undertake a full update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in five to ten years (2025-2030).

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

The recommendations identified in this Master Plan are 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 Town is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

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

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

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

Priority is often, but not always, synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. Timing has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process and with consideration of public input, trend and demographic analysis, capacity and demand, etc. Generally, municipalities seek to make efficient use of resources through initiatives that have the broadest community benefit and serve the widest range of needs.

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

Timing

Short-term (2020 to 2023): Immediate attention is recommended during the proposed timeframe.

Medium-term (2024 to 2026): Attention is required when the short-term recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.

Longer-term (2027 and beyond): Attention is required when short- and medium-term recommendations have been initiated/completed

Ongoing: Continuous directions that should be implemented throughout the course of the entire planning period

Key Considerations

Some of the recommendations identified in this Master Plan will require some level of capital investment. Recommendations that have a capital requirement would be brought forward on an annual basis through the budget process. Potential cost impacts and all cost estimates provided below will need to be confirmed through future study and/or through Town staff experience. The most capital intensive expenditure include the following:

- Potential cost to acquire property for parkland to address gap areas, as well as trails, noting that this may be provided at no cost to the Town through parkland dedication and other provisions under the *Planning Act*.
- Develop a master plan for Victoria Park, with consideration given to extending the project to include Market Square, potentially in the range of \$15,000 to \$20,000.
- Prepare an Arts & Culture Assessment, potentially in the range of \$40,000 - \$50,000.
- Construct three full size soccer fields, potentially for \$450,000 (\$150,000 each).
- Construct a sport court for basketball (multi-lined for other activities), potentially for \$50,000. Additional courts may be required as opportunities become available.
- Construct a sport court for tennis and pickleball activities, potentially for \$50,000.
- Construct four playgrounds at Fairbank Park, at future parks on the east side of Bear Creek (north and south of Petrolia Line) and in the north end of Petrolia, south of Petrolia Line, to reconcile gap areas, potentially in the range of \$300,000 - \$600,000 (\$75,000 - \$150,000 each). Additional playgrounds may be required as new parkland opportunities become available.
- Construct a venue for wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding, BMX, etc.), potentially in the range of \$200,000 - \$250,000.

Recent legislation introduced by the Government of Ontario through Bill 108 alters the way in which municipalities fund its parks and recreation facilities. While Bill 108 has received Royal Assent, a number of its implementing regulations have not been identified at the time of writing thereby requiring municipalities to be apprised of the Bill's implications. The Town should monitor this legislation and evaluate its implications on local parkland acquisition.

Recommendation – Financial Considerations

45. Augment the Town's municipal funding practices with external sources to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan. This may require working with community partners, exploring grant opportunities as they become available, and other funding sources to be identified by the Town.
46. Review the implications of Ontario Bill 108 and other relevant legislation on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan given the new provincial legislative planning and funding framework.



Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Service Delivery Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
The Town's Role in Parks and Recreation				
1. The Town's should continue to focus on physical indoor and outdoor space to accommodate a wide range of parks and recreation opportunities while providing appropriate supports to volunteers and community providers (e.g., in developing their internal capacity, long-term sustainability, and enhancing their ability to deliver parks and recreation services in Petrolia).				Ongoing
Providing Inclusive Choices				
2. Engage representatives of persons with disabilities, low-income households, LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized groups to understand their parks and recreation needs, barriers and potential solutions so that the provision of inclusive services result for all residents becoming active, connected, and welcomed.				Ongoing
3. The Town should update or establish new policies relevant to parks and recreation in Petrolia to reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.		•		
Addressing Needs of Youth, Older Adults and Seniors				
4. Review and generally aspire to achieve the general principles of being a youth-friendly community as municipal resources permit.			•	
5. Undertake informal discussion groups with youth facilitated by the Community Services Advisory Committee on issues that matter to youth. On-going collaboration with others organizations that serve youth should also continue and/or be established such as with Bluewater Health, Lambton Public Health, and others.		•		
6. Maintain regular dialogue with older adults and seniors (potentially facilitated by the Health and Wellness Committee) to understand their parks and recreation needs, challenges, and priorities, and to collectively identify potential solutions. These discussions should consider how to make the Town's parks and recreation spaces more "age friendly", with consideration given to comfort amenities, gaps in programs and services, and removing/minimizing barriers.		•		
Recreation Rates Scan				
7. Annually review facility and sports field rental rates to inform rates and fees to be applied in the Town of Petrolia.				Ongoing
Partnerships				
8. Undertake a review of existing partnerships with a view to expanding them to address gaps and recommended actions in the Master Plan. This exercise may include discussions with local agencies, boards, service clubs, public organizations, etc. Opportunities to maximize existing spaces (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, YMCA, schools, etc.) should be explored.				Ongoing
9. Evaluate potential partnership opportunities with organizations that share a common goal of providing quality parks and recreation experiences. A standardized partnership framework for evaluating and responding to partnership or new service requests should be developed, with a view of maximizing public interests.				Ongoing

Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Parks, Trails and Open Space Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
Parkland Distribution and Needs				
10. In order to maintain an active parkland service level of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents and to replace the soccer field lands adjacent to Greenwood Park, acquire 3.6 hectares of new parkland. Emphasis should be placed on acquiring parkland in areas where future residential development is expected to occur including the southwest corner of Town and the area east of Bear Creek, south of Petrolia Line.			Ongoing	
11. The Department should request commenting status on development applications (e.g., plans of subdivision) to represent the Facilities and Community Services Department and provide input on where parkland or cash-in-lieu should be accepted, with regard given to the parkland gaps and needs identified in this Master Plan.			Ongoing	
Re-Imagining Parkland				
12. Update the conceptual park plan for Petrolia YMCA Open Space to recognize the potential recreation facility recommendations contained in this Master Plan. Guided by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Town will need to determine if the Petrolia YMCA Open Space is the optimal location given that recommended recreation facilities may also be suitable and/or accommodated at other parks in Petrolia.		•		
13. Prepare a conceptual park plan for Victoria Park to guide the future development of the park. The design should ensure that the park continues to function as a gathering place for special events and passive outdoor enjoyment, with supporting amenities and the preservation of existing trees. A coordinated approach to create a more vibrant downtown area should be carried out to maximize benefits.		•		
14. Incorporate key design elements when developing or redeveloping parks to ensure that they are comfortable, welcoming, and safe spaces that are able to meet a broad range of desired uses. At a minimum, parks should consider environmental sustainability factors, opportunities for naturalization, accessibility and inclusivity, park safety, and multi-generational and multi-seasonal usage.			Ongoing	
Conceptual Trails Network				
15. Build upon the Town's existing trail network using the conceptual trail network identified in this Master Plan as a guide in order to strengthen active transportation opportunities in Petrolia.			Ongoing	
Trail Acquisition Strategies				
16. In developing the trail network, the Town should consider utilizing a range of acquisition strategies to secure non-municipal lands.			Ongoing	
Trail Management & Maintenance				
17. Conduct an annual inspection of the Town's trails together with sidewalks to identify deficiencies, damages, safety and liability concerns, and identify repairs.			Ongoing	
18. Develop partnerships with local service clubs, community organizations and/or volunteers to assist in litter control and vegetation management along trail routing.			Ongoing	

Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Recreation Facility Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
Indoor Multi-Use and Community Facilities				
19. The Town should set a timeframe of 12 months for Lambton Active People Place to submit a detailed feasibility study and business plan for the proposed indoor multi-use facility, at which time the Town should undertake a third-party review to determine if or how the Town should be involved. The feasibility study and business plan should include (at a minimum): an outline of the proposal; demonstrated demand for the facility; roles, responsibilities, risks of the parties that are involved; expectations of third parties (e.g., Town, community organizations, etc.); capital funding strategy; short and long term operating business plans; and other key factors determine necessary regarding the proposal.		•		
Arenas & Outdoor Ice Rinks				
20. Coordinate with arena user groups and nearby municipalities that provide arenas to manage and maximize the use of existing ice pads.	Ongoing			
21. Explore the feasibility of creating or purchasing an online portal that users and/or the public can book last minute ice rentals (via the Town’s website).	•			
22. Establish a dedicated capital reserve for the long-term replacement of the arena at the Greenwood Recreation Centre; annual capital contributions to the reserve is strongly encouraged.	•			
Aquatics				
23. Continue to support Parents for Parks in developing an inclusive playground at Lion’s Park, including the provision of a misting feature(s).	•			
24. Develop a splash pad potentially located at Kerr Park or other location deemed appropriate by the Town.	•			
Gymnasiums & Multi-Purpose Rooms				
25. Promote the availability of multi-purpose spaces to the community for the wide range of recreation, cultural, and social activities that they are capable of accommodating.	Ongoing			
Fitness & Wellness Spaces				
26. Initiate periodic discussions with the Petrolia YMCA to determine fitness space needs, timing, cost, and partnership framework for any future expansion of the facility to accommodate expanded fitness opportunities.			•	
27. Encourage the creation of walking clubs and explore the potential to promote indoor walking opportunities within municipal facilities, schools, Petrolia YMCA, etc. through the use of circulation areas or large open spaces within facilities.			•	
28. Investigate opportunities to integrate a limited number of outdoor fitness equipment stations along the trail system at Bridgeview Park, as well as other new or existing parks and trails on a case-by-case basis.			•	
Arts & Cultural Spaces				
29. Undertake a comprehensive Arts and Cultural Assessment to guide the future decision making and the preservation and promotion of arts, culture and heritage in Petrolia. Emphasis should be given to the role of key facilities and/or spaces including, but not limited to, Victoria Hall, Victoria Park, and Market Square, special events, and the role and responsibility of the Town and community partners.			•	

Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Recreation Facility Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
Rectangular Sports Fields				
30. Pursue alternative location(s) to replace the three soccer fields on lands leased by the Town from a private landowner that are located adjacent to Greenwood Park.		•		
Ball Diamonds				
31. Work with surrounding municipalities to ensure that cross-boundary ball diamond organizations that serve regional players have coordinated access to ball diamonds within and outside of Petrolia and that field capacity can be properly managed.		Ongoing		
32. Engage ball groups to identify and prioritize ball diamond improvements. Emphasis should be given to enhancements to the ball diamond at Bridgeview Park to ensure that it is suitable to support regularly scheduled practices and games.		•		
Sport Courts				
33. At the time of redevelopment, investigate options to relocate the Tennis/Pickleball courts at Mary Beach Park to a more appropriate location with sufficient buffering from adjacent land uses and provisions for supporting amenities (e.g., parking). Future development or redevelopment of courts should be multi-lined for tennis and pickleball activities. The sport court surface at Mary Beach Park should be retained and re-purposed for other outdoor recreation facilities including, but not limited to, a basketball court (multi-lined for other activities), wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding), or other amenities.				•
34. Construct a basketball court at the Petrolia YMCA Open Space. Other parks may also be considered to strengthen geographic distribution (e.g., Mary Beach Park – see Recommendation #33). Future and redeveloped basketball courts should be designed to be multi-use to accommodate basketball, ball hockey, and other activities requiring a hard surface court.		•		
Playgrounds				
35. Support Parents for Parks initiative to replace the aging playground at Lions Park with one that is inclusive of all abilities.		•		
36. Reconcile playground gap areas by constructing playgrounds at Fairbank Park and at future parks to address gap areas, as opportunities become available in residential areas, such as on the east side of Bear Creek (north and south side of Petrolia Line) and in the north end of Petrolia (south of Discovery Line).			•	•
37. Establish a playground replacement strategy to ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds. New and redeveloped playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Consideration should be given to mixing the creative playground equipment with natural/adventure play components that incorporates the existing landscape and natural materials such as wood, logs, boulders, and ropes that encourage challenging play experiences.		•		
Wheeled Action Sports Park				
38. Construct a wheeled action sports park suitable for skateboarding, BMX biking, inline skating, and other wheeled activities. Potential locations include Bridgeview Park, Petrolia YMCA Open Space, Mary Beach Park (when the existing sport courts are re-purposed), or another location that is easily accessible by youth and located to be highly visible. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to confirm the design and location.		•		

Town of Petrolia Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Recreation Facility Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
Off-Leash Dog Parks				
39. Relocate the off-leash dog park at Bridgeview Park to another location within the park that is more visible in the community and less prone to flooding. Other parks may also be considered as an alternative provided that adequate amenities are available such as parking, shade and access to sidewalks or trails.			•	
Other Recreational Needs				
40. Requests for activities/facilities presently not part of the Town’s core parks and recreation mandate should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, after first considering the Town’s role in providing the service in relation to quantified market demand and cost-effectiveness of the service.		Ongoing		
Implementing the Master Plan	Suggested Timing	2020 to 2023	2024 to 2026	2027+
Implementing the Master Plan				
41. Post the Parks and Recreation Master Plan on the Town’s website as a resource for the community, Council and staff.		•		
42. Develop annual work plans to guide strategic implementation of the Master Plan, with key priorities identified on a year-to-year basis.		Ongoing		
43. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.		•		
44. Undertake a full update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in five to ten years (2025-2030).			•	•
Financial Considerations				
45. Augment the Town’s municipal funding practices with external sources to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan. This may require working with community partners, exploring grant opportunities as they become available, and other funding sources to be identified by the Town.		Ongoing		
46. Review the implications of Ontario Bill 108 and other relevant legislation on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan given the new provincial legislative planning and funding framework.		•		

Appendix A – Community Launch Event Summary of Input

Parks and recreation in Petrolia

- Dedicated team of employees.
- They are fun.
- Love community events – please continue. I love the market.
- Farmers Market.
- Love the free events, such as art in park, chili cook off, pizzafest, etc.
- Love that the town promotes events – pizzafest, art in the park, etc.

Improving indoor recreation activities and facilities in Petrolia

- New pickelball courts indoor and outdoor.
- Align programs and services to match the population trends (Age-friendly).
- Would be great to have a running tennis league in town and/or summer lessons.
- Would love to have a space to rent for events such as birthdays, weddings, etc.
- Offer women's ball hockey again.
- Walking track

Improving parks, trails and open spaces?

- Need bike trails and walking trails for safety of children.
- Establish walking trails and walking areas other than on sidewalks.
- Would like safe off road trails.
- Love the idea of trails for biking and walking.
- More accessible parks, trails and outdoor space to promote inclusion and integration ("Age-friendly").
- Community Garden opportunities.
- Would like to see more walking trails, potentially on Discovery line, bridgefield, and/or golf course area.
- Trails for walking and biking. Winter flood for skating.
- Add bike trails.
- Build bike paths.
- More trails for bikes and walking.

How can we improve outdoor recreation activities and facilities?

- Senior events, such as pickleball.
- More use of seniors for volunteers.
- Recondition old playground equipment.
- Community Garden.
- Skate Park.
- Fix drainage of Woodland Park.
- I really like spinners.
- Outdoor pool would be amazing.
- More accessible and, more importantly, affordable outdoor and indoor pickleball.
- Women's ball hockey league needed.
- Research best practices from other communities regarding park and recreation improvements.
- Work with agencies and clubs, etc. to increase volunteer involvement.
- Be involved in organizing leagues, events for outdoor activities.
- Utilize Summer Students (grants) to assist with running additional summer programs like soccer and baseball for all age groups (youth, adult, and senior).
- It would be nice to have a Pavilion to rent for Family Functions.

Petrolia YMCA.

- More programs for older adults and seniors.
- Yoga for seniors.
- Affordability is key.
- More evening and weekend classes for youth to access and for those who work during the day.
- Would love to have swim pass again without all day pass.
- Kids swimming programs and classes.
- Our family doesn't really use the YMCA. We use private gyms and seldom use the pool.
- Swim pass separate from full day pass.

Please provide us with your thoughts about the Greenwood Recreation Centre.

- Not enough ice time at the arena.
- More inclusive programs and services. Less segregation.
- Expand the infrastructure to be more inclusive of more recreational activities, other than ice sports.
- If planning a future build, consider adding a walking track.

Victoria Playhouse Petrolia.

- Staff are very accommodating – good customer service.
- Lack of good availability for use.
- Outdoor Rink.
- Accessibility Improvements needed – entrances, viewing areas, dressing rooms.
- Love the VPP! David Hogan and David Rogers are fantastic. The VPP truly adds to our community.
- This is a gem in our community that needs to be preserved.
- I would like more kid's plays.
- Needs to be more accessible.
- I love the VPP and clean performances and love the music.

Other Comments

- Promote more members to join Parks and Recreation like one member from each service club.
- The old tennis courts will not last forever (Mary Beach) – there is a need for other tennis courts (indoor and/or outdoor).
- Nature trails/bike trails would be really a great addition to the town.
- Developing a collaborative team with residents, service clubs, and Town of Petrolia employees to determine where fundraising money could best be used.
- I just found out about this open house a few hours ago. I don't think many people are aware. Perhaps you should reach out to schools, businesses, etc. to help spread the word.

Appendix B – Community Survey Summary of Input

Q1. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following (parks and recreation) activities? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participated, either at home or in public.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	77%	343
Going to Special Events	71%	315
Enjoying Parks and Open Spaces	61%	271
Going to Theatres	55%	242
Use of Playground Equipment	48%	212
Swimming (recreational)	46%	205
Dog Walking (on or off-leash)	44%	194
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating or Ice Skating	42%	188
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness or Weight-training	42%	187
Cycling or Mountain Biking	34%	151
Golf	34%	151
Use of Splash Pad	33%	147
Baseball or Softball	32%	142
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	26%	116
Jogging or Running for Fitness	25%	109
Soccer	21%	95
Organized Children & Youth Programs	21%	95
Basketball	16%	72
ATV Riding	12%	53
Volleyball	12%	53
Tennis	8%	34
Snowmobiling	6%	25
Wheeled Action Sports (e.g., skateboarding)	5%	24
Gymnastics	5%	23
Pickleball	4%	18
Organized Seniors' Programs	4%	17
Curling	3%	13
Other (please specify)	3%	13
Answered	443	
Skipped	6	

Q2. Are you and members of your household able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53%	239
No	38%	172
Don't Know	8%	36
Answered	447	
Skipped	2	

Q3. Why are you NOT able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Lack of desired programs or facilities	55%	109
Lack of personal time / Too busy	50%	99
Program not offered at convenient time	44%	88
Lack of money / Too expensive	34%	67
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	31%	61
Lack of motivation / Not interested	13%	25
Lack of child care	10%	19
Health problems / Disability / Age	9%	17
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	7%	14
Don't know	2%	4
Other (please specify)	14%	27
	Answered	198
	Skipped	251

Q4. Generally, what percentage of your household's parks and recreation needs are met within Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
All (100%)	5%	23
Most (67-99%)	26%	112
About half (34-66%)	42%	181
Some (1-33%)	21%	92
None (0%)	1%	5
Don't know	5%	20
	Answered	433
	Skipped	16

Q5. What factors lead you (and your household) to seek parks and recreation activities outside of Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Facility / Program is not available in the area	61%	228
Facility / Program not available in the area at the same cost	43%	162
Less expensive elsewhere	28%	106
Quality of facility / Program is superior	27%	100
Tournaments / Special events / Travel teams	23%	86
"Connected" to the other community / Used to live there	14%	54
Closer to home, work or school	11%	42
Don't know	5%	20
Other (please specify)	3%	13
	Answered	373
	Skipped	76

Q6. If applicable, list up to two (2) parks and recreation activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in Petrolia that are NOT currently available.

Top 10 Requested Facilities

Splash pad (147)
Trails for walking and cycling; paved and unpaved (52)
Dog park (appropriate for small dogs) (45)
Second ice pad (25)
Skateboard park (21)
Accessible playground and improvements to existing playgrounds (13)
Gymnastics space (12)
Outdoor pool (12)
Curling rink (7)
Ball diamond improvements (e.g, lighting) (6)

Top 10 Requested Activities

Recreational sports leagues (baseball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc.) (11)
Skating (recreational, power skating, girls hockey, etc.) (9)
Fitness (group, outdoor fitness, pole-dancing, low-impact, etc.) (5)
Activities for infants, children, youth and adults (5)
Local minor baseball league (5)
Educational, language and environmental stewardship programs (4)
Dance (3)
Year-round events and activities (weekends, winter, summer) (3)
Swimming (affordable lane and recreational swim) (3)
Art classes

Q7. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household used any sidewalks within Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	97%	399
No	2%	10
Don't know	0%	2
Answered		411
Skipped		38

Q8. In the past 12 months, have you or anyone in your household used any recreational trails within Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	48%	199
No	49%	203
Don't know	2%	9
Answered		411
Skipped		38

Q9. What barriers have prevented you from using recreational trails in Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
There are no trails in my area	26%	49
Trails do not connect to my destinations or they	23%	43
Trails are not maintained well	17%	33
Trails lack the amenities that I desire, such as w	17%	33
I don't feel safe using trails	15%	28
I have no interest in using trails	14%	26
Trails are not accessible for persons with disabili	5%	10
Don't know	16%	30
Other (please specify)	22%	42
Answered		191
Skipped		258

Q10. What are the main reasons you or members of your household use the recreational trails and sidewalks in Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
For fitness or recreation	83%	173
For nature appreciation	70%	145
To make trips to the shop, run errands, or visit fr	57%	118
To access parks and recreation facilities	43%	89
To go to school	20%	41
To go to work	14%	29
Don't know	2%	4
Other (please specify)	5%	10
	Answered	208
	Skipped	241

Q11. In general, how important are the following items to your household?

	Not at all important / Neither unimportant / Very important / ScDon't Know / Don't							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indoor recreation facilities such as pools, arenas	17	4%	19	5%	359	90%	5	1%
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields	21	5%	13	3%	357	90%	7	2%
Recreational trails and pathways	25	6%	36	9%	333	83%	5	1%
Open space parks for unstructured use	31	8%	63	16%	289	73%	13	3%
Performing arts theatres (e.g., Victoria Playhous	47	12%	59	15%	285	72%	7	2%
							Answered	400
							Skipped	49

Q12. What is your level of satisfaction with the following parks and recreation facilities in Petrolia?

	Not at all satisfied / Neither dissatisfied c Very satisfied / sonDon't Know / Don't							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Indoor recreation facilities such as pools, arenas	77	19%	58	15%	245	61%	20	5%
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields	91	23%	64	16%	222	56%	22	6%
Recreational trails and pathways	109	27%	83	21%	148	37%	58	15%
Open space parks for unstructured use	41	10%	122	31%	183	46%	49	12%
Performing arts theatres (e.g., Victoria Playhous	14	4%	52	13%	291	73%	41	10%
							Answered	400
							Skipped	49

Q13. For each age group listed below, what is your level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation activities available in Petrolia?

	Not at all satisfied / Neither dissatisfied c Very satisfied / sonDon't Know / Don't							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Preschool Children (0 - 4 years)	81	23%	35	10%	92	26%	152	42%
School-Age Children (5 - 12 years)	89	25%	39	11%	120	33%	114	31%
Teens (13 - 18 years)	103	29%	41	11%	68	19%	147	41%
Young Adults (19 - 39 years)	74	20%	61	17%	136	38%	90	25%
Adults (40 - 59 years)	48	13%	77	21%	129	35%	112	31%
Older Adults (60+ years)	36	10%	61	17%	80	22%	188	52%
Families	86	24%	56	16%	163	45%	54	15%
							Answered	392
							Skipped	57

Q14. For the recreation amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support/oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards improving existing or building new ones?

	Strongly Oppose / S		Neither Support or C		Strongly Support / :		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Playgrounds	8	2%	40	11%	299	81%	24	6%
Splash Pads	36	10%	41	11%	277	74%	19	5%
Arenas (indoor ice)	32	8%	65	17%	269	71%	12	3%
Acquisition of Parks and Open Space	24	6%	77	21%	257	69%	13	4%
Outdoor Ice Rinks	37	10%	64	17%	249	67%	22	6%
Community Gardens	28	8%	87	23%	242	65%	14	4%
Swimming Pools (indoor)	47	13%	83	22%	235	63%	10	3%
Off-leash Dog Parks	36	10%	87	23%	223	59%	31	8%
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	29	8%	89	24%	221	59%	33	9%
Gymnasiums	28	8%	107	29%	218	59%	19	5%
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	32	9%	92	25%	219	59%	31	8%
Equipment-Based Fitness Centre	42	11%	103	27%	215	57%	15	4%
Skateboard/BMX Park	44	12%	76	20%	209	56%	44	12%
Soccer Fields	34	9%	96	26%	206	56%	34	9%
Space for Community Meetings and Events	35	9%	114	30%	209	56%	18	5%
Swimming Pools (outdoor)	58	16%	82	22%	207	55%	26	7%
Performing Arts Theatre	91	24%	92	24%	184	49%	10	3%
Fitness Studio	55	15%	115	31%	180	48%	22	6%
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	49	13%	118	32%	147	39%	59	16%
Pickleball Courts (outdoor)	45	12%	119	32%	136	36%	73	20%
Other (please specify)								30
Answered							382	
Skipped							67	

Q15. For the recreational trail and sidewalk amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support/oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards improving existing amenities or building new ones?

		Strongly Oppose / S		Neither Support or C		Strongly Support / :		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Sidewalks	11	3%	43	12%	315	85%	2	1%	
Support amenities (e.g., seating, shade, washro	7	2%	49	13%	307	83%	8	2%	
Paved Recreational Multi-Use Trails (for walking	17	5%	44	12%	309	82%	5	1%	
Unpaved Nature or Hiking Trails	20	5%	45	12%	299	80%	9	2%	
Connections to Key Destinations (e.g., schools,	6	2%	59	16%	295	80%	9	2%	
Connections to other residential areas in Petrolia	9	2%	87	24%	256	70%	13	4%	
Connections to Other Municipalities Outside of F	37	10%	109	30%	202	55%	21	6%	
Other (please specify)								15	
Answered								375	
Skipped								74	

Q16. For the items listed below, please indicate your level of satisfaction with Town's current ability to provide appropriate parks and recreation services.

	Greatly Below/Below		Matched Expectation		Greatly Exceeds/E		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Maintenance of parks and recreation amenities.	89	25%	199	55%	66	18%	8	2%
Location of parks and recreation amenities.	111	31%	195	54%	45	12%	12	3%
Affordability of parks and recreation programs.	116	32%	163	45%	36	10%	49	13%
Value of tax dollars spent towards parks and rec	151	42%	127	35%	25	7%	57	16%
Inclusion and accessibility for residents with low	142	39%	110	31%	21	6%	87	24%
Recreational trails within your neighbourhood.	185	52%	103	29%	14	4%	57	16%

Q17. Please provide us with any additional comments.

The input received for this question has been considered in preparation of the Master Plan.

Q18. What is the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories?

	Total		2016 Census	
under 10 years	178	19%	12%	7%
10 - 19 years	176	18%	12%	6%
20 - 39 years	221	23%	17%	6%
40 - 59 years	215	23%	25%	-2%
60 - 74 years	105	11%	20%	-9%
75 years and over	60	6%	15%	-9%
Total	955			
Answered	366			
Skipped	83			
Persons Per Household	2.6			

Q19. In what year were you born? (Optional)

Average age of respondent 43 Years

Q20. Are you a resident of the Town of Petrolia?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	85%	315
No	14%	53
Answered	369	
Skipped	80	

Q21. Approximately how many years have you lived in the Town of Petrolia?

Average residence in Petrolia 22 Years
Answered 307
Skipped 142

Q22. If you live outside of the Town of Petrolia, in which municipality do you live?

Enniskellen (14)	Oil Springs (2)
Wyoming (11)	Alvinston
Plympton Wyoming (8)	Brights Grove
Samia (5)	Camlachie/Plympton-Wyoming
Brooke-Alvinston (4)	St Clair township
Moore Township (2)	Warwick

Appendix C – Recreation Rates Scan

Use Description		Brooke-Alvinston	Sarnia	St. Clair	Plympton-Wyoming	Lambton Shores	Enniskillen	Oil Springs	Warwick	Dawn-Euphemia	Petrolia	Average	Difference
Arenas	Adult Prime	\$ 118.00	\$ 246.00	\$157.50	-	\$ 149.00	-	-	\$ 130.00	-	\$ 165.00	\$ 160.92	-\$ 4.08
	Adult Non-Prime	\$ 77.00	\$ 82.00	\$105.00	-	\$ 73.00	-	-	\$ 80.00	-	\$ 113.00	\$ 88.33	-\$ 24.67
	Minor Prime	\$ 108.00	\$ 177.00	\$124.00	-	\$ 127.00	-	-	\$ 115.00	-	\$ 123.00	\$ 129.00	\$ 6.00
	Minor Non-Prime	\$ 108.00	\$ 62.00			\$ 73.00			\$ 80.00		\$ 113.00	\$ 87.20	-\$ 25.80
	Adult Dry Pad (per day)	\$ 488.00	\$ 1,650.00	-	-	\$ 471.00	-	-	\$ 600.00	-	\$ 480.00	\$ 737.80	\$ 257.80
	Minor Dry Pad (per day)	\$ 488.00	\$ 1,650.00	-	-	\$ 404.00	-	-	\$ 276.00	-	\$ 480.00	\$ 659.60	\$ 179.60
Room Booking	Auditorium (starting at) (per day)	-	-	-	No data available	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 630.00	\$ 630.00	\$ -
	Community Hall (per 12 hour day)	\$ 10.00	\$ 25.00	-	No data available	\$ 24.00	-	\$ 30.00	\$ 17.00	\$ 20.00	-	\$ 21.00	N/A
	Meeting Room (starting at) (per hour)	\$ 15.00	\$ 20.00	-		\$ 14.00	-		\$ 25.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 33.17	-\$ 1.83
Soccer	Unlit Adult (two hour block/game)	-	\$62	-	Fields not used	\$ 30.00	-	No soccer fields	-	-	\$40	\$ 44.00	\$ 4.00
	Minor (two hour block/game)	-	\$47	-		N/C	-		-	-	8.2	\$ 27.60	\$ 19.40
Ball Diamond	Lit Adult (two hour block/game)	\$ 32.00	\$ 90.00	-	Fields are maintained and used by the group	\$ 62.00	\$ 50.00	Fields are maintained and used by the group	-	-	\$ 26.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 26.00
	Unlit Adult (two hour block/game)	\$ 16.00	\$ 60.00	-		\$ 38.00	-		\$75/night	-	\$ 26.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 9.00
	Minor (two hour block/game)	\$10/player/year	\$ 45.00	-		N/C	-		\$10/night	-	\$ 6.00	\$ 25.50	\$ 19.50