



The TOWNSHIP of
NORTH DUMFRIES

Leisure Services Master Plan

June 2022

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Executive Summary

The Leisure Services Master Plan ("Master Plan") guides investments and priorities with respect to leisure services over the 10-year period between 2022 and 2031. Doing so will help the Township of North Dumfries and its community partners to provide the needed mix of recreation, culture and parks facilities, programs, and services for residents to engage in meaningful social and physical activities, while positioning the Township to attract visitors and investment to the community.

More than 1,700 residents, stakeholders and Township representatives were engaged in the Master Plan process. The Township's website, social media, print posters and word of mouth generated much of the project's awareness and input was received through online and hardcopy surveys, virtual workshops and interviews, and written input.

The following pages summarize the key themes heard through the consultation process and recommendations to address needs over the planning period (listed in no particular order). Rationale for the recommendations can be found throughout the Master Plan. A full summary of recommendations, including the timing of implementation, can be found in Section 8.3 of the Master Plan.



Responding to Demands for Leisure Facilities

Residents are proud of the range of leisure opportunities that are available in the Township such as the arenas, parks and trails system. The public felt that there is a need to ensure that these amenities continue to respond to the growing population and to evolving needs of residents and organizations.

The consultation process revealed that there continues to be strong support for constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex. Consultations with stakeholders re-iterated the limitations associated with the aging Ayr Community Centre arena such as the undersized ice pad and accessibility constraints. It was reiterated that constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex would allow groups to grow their programming and participation, while improving the coordination of games, practices and tournaments at a central location. This approach would also achieve other benefits associated with multi-pad construction such as maintenance and operations and elevate the North Dumfries Community Complex as a destination and community hub. The Master Plan recommends that the Township move forward with **constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex**.

Consolidating arena activities at single location will allow the Township to proceed with re-purposing the Ayr Community Centre to address other in-demand facility needs. The consultation process revealed the desire for additional indoor community spaces, particularly a gymnasium given the lack of a high school in Ayr and pressures currently being faced at MacNeil Hall given that it is the North Dumfries' largest indoor multi-use space that is used for a variety of community and leisure functions, coupled with that the Township does not have a gymnasium. **Undertaking an architectural exercise for the Ayr Community Centre** has been recommended to investigate strategies to repurpose the arena to a gymnasium and multi-purpose space (and supporting amenities) to respond to community requests for indoor sports and recreation programs, as well as arts and cultural activities and general meeting space. This exercise would include the second-floor hall space, particularly with respect to accessibility and aging building components noted in the Facility Condition Assessment.

While Ayr is recognized as the primary settlement area in North Dumfries, the Township has a large spatial geography and residents expressed the importance of providing leisure opportunities in the rural area. While leisure opportunities may also be available in adjacent municipalities such as Cambridge and Kitchener, consultations revealed the importance of providing opportunities that are close to home to create complete communities and sense of place. To achieve this, the Township should **position the Roseville Community Centre as a community hub** to create a rural location for programs, events and gatherings, including:

- Constructing a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey;
- Establishing a small-scale skate spot for wheeled actions sports (e.g., skateboarding);
- Developing a small-scale spray feature adjacent to the playground;
- Installing outdoor fitness equipment; and
- Undertaking necessary capital improvements to the indoor space to address aging components and accessibility requirements.

Park development strategies have also been advanced to enhance rural parks to build on what is currently available to address local needs and ensure that these sites offer neighbourhood level amenities that are welcoming and encourage use. This includes:

- **Branchton Park**

- Construct a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey and a small skate spot for wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding). The multi-use court and skate spot should be located within the park to ensure that there is an adequate separation distance with adjacent land uses.
- Undertake park enhancements including a walking pathway that connects park users to existing amenities, seating, and signage.

- **Browns Park**

- Repurpose the underutilized soccer field to address other in-demand needs including one multi-use court for tennis and pickleball and one multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.
- Park amenities should include a walking pathway, seating, and outdoor fitness equipment.
- Suggestions were made for an outdoor skating rink. This should only be pursued as a volunteer-led initiative, with support from the Township in providing materials, setup and removal.

- **Clyde Park**

- Move forward with installing outdoor fitness equipment.
- Construct a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.
- Develop a small-scale skate spot for wheeled actions sports (e.g., skateboarding).
- Establish a walking loop.

- **Riverside Park**

- Promote the park for passive use and outdoor gatherings to ensure that residents are aware that it exists and its location.
- Establish low-cost and low-maintenance improvements such as installing entrance signage, walking pathway, comfort amenities (e.g., seating, tree plantings, picnic tables, etc.), and a pollinator garden (in partnership with the North Dumfries Garden Club).
- Reduce the level of maintenance in strategic areas or returning sections of the park to a naturalized state should also be considered to reduce operational requirements at this park.

Several public requests were made for an indoor aquatic centre. This amenity is one of the most highly desirable facilities in any municipality given the benefits associated with swimming across all age groups. However, they are capital intensive facilities to operate and require significant annual municipal subsidies that range between \$200,000 to \$500,000 or more. Indoor aquatic centres typically serve a large catchment area and in smaller municipalities, they tend to draw regional users; there are currently ten indoor pools and nine outdoor pools in the region. As a result, **an indoor aquatic centre is not recommended** during this planning period, although there is merit in re-visiting this need when the Township approaches a population of 25,000 to 30,000 people.

In the interim the Township should work with adjacent municipalities to ensure that residents have affordable access to swimming opportunities such as providing financial support to existing operations; negotiating registration slots for residents should also be pursued. During the planning period, the Township should evaluate potential site opportunities for a potential indoor aquatic centre, with consideration given to site criteria including, but not limited to, a central location for all residents, existing Township property, opportunities to expand existing facilities or co-locate with other civic uses (including a future community park), site servicing, and other criteria to be identified by Township staff.

The Master Plan's consultation process also found that there was support for emerging leisure activities beyond traditional sports. This is consistent with broader trends as there is a desire for a wide range of pursuits that centre around new active and passive activities, fitness, and activities that respond to youth and older adult needs. The Master Plan addresses these request through the following strategies:

- Ensure that existing and future tennis courts are lined for **pickleball** activities;
- Pursue the development of an **asphalt pump track** for wheeled action sports (e.g., BMX, mountain biking, skateboarding, roller blading, scootering, etc.) at Schmidt Park subject to securing external funding through grants or a partnership with a willing organization to assist with fundraising;
- Install **outdoor fitness equipment** at strategic locations including Cowan Park, Clyde Park, Roseville Community Centre, Schmidt Park, Douglas Park and Browns Park;
- Establish a small-scale **skateboard** park at the future neighbourhood park in the south end of Ayr. Small-scale skate spots should also be constructed at Roseville Community Centre, Branchton Park and Clyde Park;
- Proceed with making an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund to establish **three outdoor skating rinks** at Schmidt Park, Victoria Park and Roseville Community Centre and work with volunteers who would be responsible for daily maintenance during the skating season (continue to explore outdoor skating opportunities with volunteers if the grant application is not successful); and
- Explore the development of a **disc golf course** if there is a willing community partner coming forward with a proposal to establish this new level of service. The proposal should speak to potential locations, site size and design, potential program opportunities to be led by the community partner, and other key considerations.
- Investigate opportunities for public access to the Nith River and Grand River.

Strengthening Trail Connections

The provision of trails is often one of the most requested park amenities in municipalities and this is no exception in North Dumfries. The Master Plan community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 86% of responding households participated in walking and hiking for leisure, which was the most popular leisure activity. Reports of extensive trail usage during the pandemic was also identified as people sought outdoor physical activities at a time when municipal facilities were closed and physical distancing restrictions were put into place. Continuing to invest in trail infrastructure was identified as a high priority by the community as 91% and 81% of survey respondents supported investment in nature trails and paved multi-use trails, respectively.

The Township recognizes the importance of trails in North Dumfries and has planned trail investments at Piper's Glen Park and other locations in Ayr. **Updating the 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan** is recommended to renew the Township's vision to active transportation over the long-term. Consideration should be given to the conceptual trail network identified in this Master Plan. Key initiatives include:



- Creating a walking loop within the Ayr settlement area utilizing a combination of sidewalks and off-road linkages;
- Establishing pedestrian circulation areas within existing parks (e.g., pathways to playgrounds, sports fields, pavilions, etc.);
- Identifying active transportation routes within future residential areas as permitted by the Official Plan;
- Strengthening connections to non-Township owned trails and trail systems in adjacent municipalities, including working with landowners to establish public access;
- Either alone or in partnership with others, promote active transportation opportunities including publishing trail routes (e.g., online and print map, mobile application, etc.), establishing walking groups, create pedestrian days in downtown Ayr, raise awareness for non-Township owned trails, and other strategies identified by the Township; and
- Consider trail amenities in strategic location including, but not limited to, signage and wayfinding, seating, distance markers, etc.

Embracing Arts and Culture

The Township's Leisure & Community Services Department recently expanded their mandate to capture the importance of cultural experiences in leisure. The primary role of the Township is to facilitate arts and cultural opportunities by supporting existing community-based providers of programs, services and events to allow groups to flourish and become successful. The Township may also play a role in providing complementary programs and services to address gaps, where it makes sense to do so.

Research indicates that people have a strong interest in meaningful arts and cultural experiences during their leisure time. This is reflected locally through the consultation process as prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 89% of responding households to the Master Plan community survey visited a farmers' market and 80% attended a special event. There was also a desire for a broad variety of arts and cultural opportunities; the top requests were for live theatre and music (e.g., music in the park), creative and performing arts classes, farmers' markets and special events. To respond to these community requests, the Master Plan has recommended that the Township:

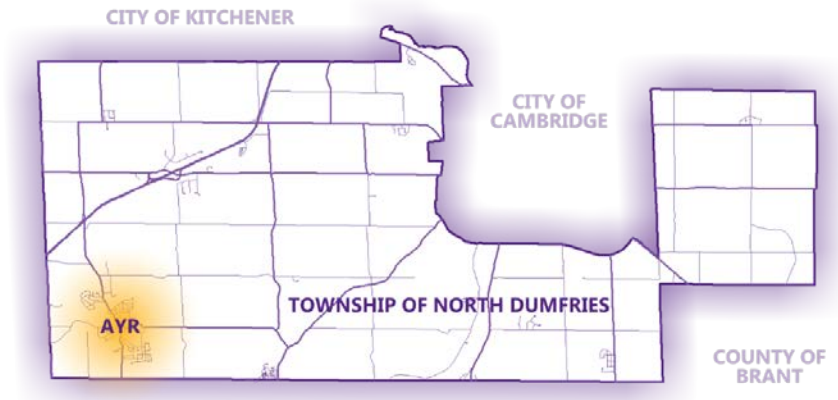
- Continue to **promote and recognize existing arts and cultural opportunities** in North Dumfries and in Waterloo Region including, but not limited to, the Ayr-Paris Band, North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society, Ayr Branch Library, museum archives and performing arts theatres and more. Promoting opportunities for arts and culture in the Township through use of the Community Services Guide recommended in this Master Plan is also encouraged.
- Alone or in partnership with others, **explore opportunities to respond to arts and cultural requests** within existing and planned Township spaces, including a repurposed Ayr Community Centre and the use of outdoor space such as Centennial Park and other greenspaces.
- Proceed with establishing a **farmers' market** at the Ayr Community Centre.
- Develop a **Special Events and Festivals Policy** to outline Council's commitments, partnership conditions, and resource allocations including an evaluation metric.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 A Leisure Services Master Plan for the Township of North Dumfries

The Township of North Dumfries is the smallest of seven municipalities in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. North Dumfries is an urban and rural municipality that is rich in local history and quaint charm, while boasting modern amenities and services, including those found in major urban centres such as Cambridge, Kitchener and Brantford. These attributes have shaped North Dumfries to become the perfect place to live, work and play.



North Dumfries is recognized for its abundance of natural features including the waterways and mature woodlots found throughout the Township. These picturesque views and landscapes are complemented by its diverse leisure and community services system that consists of parks and recreation facilities, as well as special events such as Canada Day, Concerts in the Park and Family Day. Ayr is the largest settlement area in the Township and offers access to a wide variety of leisure services. In addition, the Township's unique geography is such that many residents live close to leisure services that are available in adjacent municipalities, particularly those residing on the east side of the Township near Cambridge.

The Leisure Services Master Plan ("Master Plan") demonstrates the Township's commitment to building upon existing parks, recreation and culture opportunities in North Dumfries. The Master Plan is a priority initiative of Council's Strategic Plan and will establish strategies to meet the needs of residents over the next ten years. The Master Plan aligns with other community priorities and initiatives and is intended to be implemented in conjunction with the Township's Official Plan and other related studies. Collaboration with community organizations and others will be required to achieve full implementation of the Master Plan. The scope of the Master Plan includes:

- Recreation and cultural facilities;
- Parks, trails and natural areas; and
- Service delivery policies, programs and practices.

The Master Plan is an evidenced-based plan to ensure that it is responsive to community needs. As a living document, the Master Plan will need to be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it responds to new opportunities and changing needs in the community. In doing so, the Master Plan will assist the Township in prioritizing corporate initiatives and departmental budgets, and support opportunities for external funding, partnerships, and alignment with related initiatives.

1.2 Guiding Principles for the Master Plan

Leisure opportunities in the Township are provided by the Leisure & Community Services Department, which is comprised of three divisions:

- The **Recreation Division** is responsible for planning, administration, operations and maintenance of parks and facilities.
- The **Community Programming Division** is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating community events and leisure programming for the Township.
- The **Cultural Division** was recently added to the Department's portfolio to facilitate and co-ordinate local arts and cultural opportunities.

The Department's mission statement identifies that *"The Recreation, Community Programming and Cultural Divisions are committed to enhancing the quality of life in North Dumfries by planning, providing and facilitating leisure opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities."*

Guiding principles have been identified that are intended to advance the Department's mission in leisure service delivery and emphasize the values that the Township and its community partners embrace.

The Recreation, Community Programming and Cultural Divisions are committed to enhancing the quality of life in North Dumfries by planning, providing and facilitating leisure opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

LEISURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
MISSION STATEMENT

1. **Citizens First** – Everyone is Engaged – Efforts are made to understand community needs and to provide and enable services that will maximize participation.
2. **A Variety of Choice** – We work with community partners to provide a wide variety of activity choices for people of all ages. We will address gaps in service if there is no community partner available.
3. **Stronger Together** – Collectively with our partners, we all provide safe, enjoyable, and quality recreation, cultural and parks experiences.
4. **Outdoor Experiences are Critical to Healthy Outcomes** – With a wealth of natural resources, North Dumfries will promote use of outdoor spaces to result in healthier results for residents.
5. **Access for Underrepresented Populations** – We work to understand who experience barriers to participation. We listen and take action to make access available for everyone.
6. **Central Source of Information** – We are a central source of information and promote all opportunities available within our community.
7. **Measure our Effectiveness** – We measure satisfaction levels and make needed changes to improve service delivery.
8. **Fiscal Sustainability** – Leisure and community services are provided in a fiscally responsible manner that considers internal and external funding sources and appropriate cost recovery levels.

1.3 The Benefits of Leisure Services

Leisure services encompass a broad range of opportunities related to parks, recreation and culture services and facilities. These components are integral to the community's success and wellbeing. They contribute in a significant way to the Township's social, economic, and environmental priorities by providing spaces for services and programs that benefit residents and support community-building. Universal access to leisure services that address diverse needs and offer affordable high-quality opportunities is vital to individual and community health and prosperity. The Township of North Dumfries recognizes these benefits and advances them through investment in the Master Plan and its implementation.

Leisure and community services:

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing;
- Enhance social wellbeing and promote engagement and inclusion;
- Help build strong families and communities;
- Help people connect with nature;
- Help people develop critical and creative thinking skills; and
- Provide wide-ranging economic benefits.

1.4 Master Planning Approach

The Master Plan process consisted of four phases, as highlighted below.

Phase 1 Background Research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background review 2. Inventory of parks, recreation and culture opportunities 3. Community profile and trends analysis
Phase 2 Public Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Communications strategy 5. Council and key staff interview 6. Staff workshops 7. Public information centre 8. Community survey 9. Stakeholder focus groups 10. Background and Consultation Report
Phase 3 Needs Assessment and Draft Master Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Recreation and cultural facility needs assessment 12. Parks, trails and natural areas needs assessment 13. Leisure services delivery needs assessment 14. Implementation strategy 15. Draft Leisure Services Master Plan
Phase 4 Finalize Master Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Final public information centre 17. Finalize Mater Plan 18. Council presentation

1.5 Alignment with Strategic Documents

Guiding national and municipal documents have been reviewed to inform the planning process. To ensure alignment, the findings and directions from these reports – as they relate to leisure services – are considered and, where appropriate, are incorporated into the Master Plan. Key strategic documents are highlighted below.

1.6 National Strategic Documents

Framework for Recreation in Canada

The Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC) was developed through significant consultation with Canadians as to their thoughts on the benefits and importance of recreation.

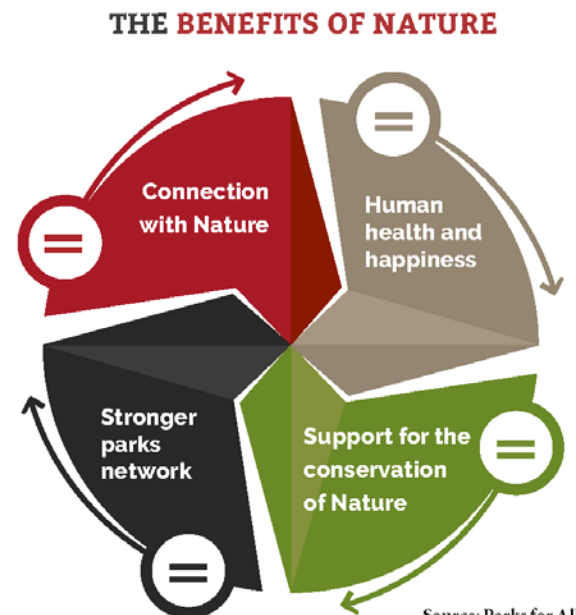
The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – in collaboration with the senior levels of government and the Provincial Recreation and Parks Associations – developed a framework that rejuvenates the definition of recreation and parks, articulates the economic impacts of recreation and parks, identifies their benefits, and states five evidenced-based goals for communities across Canada to strive towards.



Parks for All

Parks for All is **An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community**, published in 2017 through a collaboration between the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. It aligns with and supports the Framework for Recreation in Canada, particularly the FRC's third goal of "Connecting People and Nature".

Parks for All focuses on how all Canadians benefit from healthy parks and natural areas and shares the community's vision and goals for our parks. Parks for All includes a variety of perspectives that helped form a distinct set of responsibilities and practices moving forward. Parks for All is intended to unite the parks community through specific actions, priorities and strategic directions. The plan is guided by four strategic directions: **Collaborate, Connect, Conserve, and Lead**. Each goal contains specific actions that have been considered in the development of this Master Plan.



Source: Parks for All.
Parks Canada Agency, 2017

Harcourt Report on Cities and Communities

The Government of Canada's External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities compiled extensive research regarding the role that cities and communities should play in sustaining the prosperity of Canadians. The Committee, also referred to the Harcourt Commission after its Chair, released its landmark document entitled *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for All Canadians* in 2016. The Harcourt Commission report identified culture as being one of four pillars of community sustainability¹ based on observations from across Canada and around the world that demonstrate the multi-faceted benefits that a thriving arts, culture and heritage system can bring.

Although the sector is commonly associated with performing arts centres, museums and galleries, or studios, culture at its core is about the shared experiences between people that connects a community. The availability of arts and culture opportunities is very desirable, fostering vibrant and liveable communities, contributing to local knowledge and supporting the local economy. Arts and culture can include a wide-range of activities including visual and creative arts (e.g. music and dance), festivals and special events and local heritage.

Since the Harcourt Commission's recognition of culture as a core component of sustainability, more and more municipalities have approached cultural planning in a strategic manner.

The Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy

The 2016 Ontario Culture Strategy was built on a foundation of extensive public engagement regarding the value and significance of culture. Considerable effort was expended to investigate key trends affecting the cultural sector, how other jurisdictions in the world are responding to similar trends and striving to support and reconcile relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The document establishes the following vision for culture in Ontario:

"An Ontario where every person has the opportunity for creative expression and cultural participation, and where the diversity of our stories and communities is reflected, valued and celebrated, now and as part of our legacy to future generations."

The Strategy contains four broad goals centred upon promoting and strengthening culture, economic development, and promoting the value of the arts throughout government. It is a five-year plan containing nine key strategies that guide the provincial government in providing support for culture.

Ontario Culture Strategy Principles:

- Creativity and innovation;
- Quality of life and economic development;
- Diversity and inclusion;
- Respect for Indigenous peoples;
- Collaboration and partnerships; and
- Public value and accountability.

¹ Government of Canada. 2006. *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for All Canadians*. Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities.

Municipal Cultural Planning: A Toolkit for Ontario Municipalities

In 2011, the Government of Canada published a toolkit for municipal cultural planning, a term that it defines as “A municipal government-led process approved by Council, for identifying and leveraging a community’s cultural resources, strengthening the management of those resources, and integrating those cultural resources across all facets of local government planning and decision-making.”

Municipal cultural planning (MCP) is guided by five core consumptions:

- **Cultural Resources:** MCP embraces a broad definition of cultural resources that includes creative cultural industries, cultural spaces and facilities, natural and cultural heritage, festivals and events, and community cultural organizations.
- **Cultural Mapping:** MCP begins with cultural mapping, a systematic approach to identifying and recording a community’s tangible and intangible cultural resources (often using Geographic Information Systems).
- **Adopting a “cultural lens”:** MCP involves establishing processes to integrate culture as a consideration across all facets of municipal planning and decision-making.
- **Cross-Sectoral Strategies:** MCP requires new partnerships or shared governance mechanisms (such as Cultural Roundtables) to support ongoing collaboration between the municipality and its community and business partners.
- **Networks and Engagement:** MCP involves strengthening networks across the cultural sector and comprehensive and ongoing strategies to support community engagement.

Municipal cultural planning is important because it benefits communities by harnessing their cultural resources and creative potential to achieve social and economic benefits. These benefits open doors to attracting new employment and population growth, increased tourism and trade, and building social capital and overall community well-being.



1.7 Municipal Strategic Documents

Corporate Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

The following vision, mission, strategic priorities, goals, and relevant strategies have been set by the current term of Township Council (2019 – 2022).

VISION STATEMENT

North Dumfries, a proud rural community that honours its culture and heritage, and, values its quality of life for its residents.

MISSION STATEMENT

Serving our community to enhance the quality of life in North Dumfries.

Guiding Principles

- a. Commitment to the Strategic Plan as a long-term planning document;
- b. Broad outreach and engagement with partners, businesses, community groups and residents to ensure an inclusive community;
- c. Recognition and encouragement of community contributions and volunteerism;
- d. Leverage partnerships;
- e. Dignity, integrity and respect in terms of our actions, deliverables and decisions;
- f. Leadership in Corporate management;
- g. Progressive Corporate excellence and continuous improvement; and
- h. Commitment to ongoing training and the investment in the professional development of Staff.



The Township's Key Pillars of Success and strategies relevant to this Master Plan are summarized in Table 1. A full copy of the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

Table 1: Key Pillars to Success and Key Strategies, North Dumfries Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

Key Pillar to Success	Key Strategies (paraphrased, not a complete list)
Community Growth & Economic Prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct the urban square adjacent to the Cenotaph. Leverage and promote the four season recreational opportunities of the Grand River Conservation Authority Forest Blocks and trail network. Establish a hierarchy of parks and open space to meet the future needs and requirements of a growing community.
Recreation & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the 2014 Trails Master Plan. Identify, confirm and promote trail networks developed and maintained by area partners. Assess opportunities to develop partnerships or leases to access lands to facilitate priority trail connections. Facilitate a Township-wide community recreation program through partnerships; the Township should not be the direct provider of programs, but support organizations to deliver these opportunities. Consider strategic opportunities to enter into partnerships to deliver leisure opportunities. Create a Leisure Strategy to inform future needs. Foster partnerships with adjacent municipalities to access higher order recreation opportunities such as an indoor pool.
Environment & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Conservation & Environment Strategy. In cooperation with partners, educate the public and improve awareness on climate change.
Governance & Financial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with key stakeholders and community collaborators. Reinvigorate volunteerism within the community by building their capacity through facilitation and training. Develop a Succession & Retention Strategy. Invest in continuous improvement and professional development. Leverage changes in technology to improve operational efficiency. Identify and promote opportunities for partnerships, joint initiatives or similar programs with area municipalities.

North Dumfries Official Plan (2018)

The Township of North Dumfries Official Plan provides a framework for the physical development of the community, while taking into consideration important social, economic, and environmental matters. Among other items, the Official Plan directs where new development should be located and the planning of parks, trails, and recreation facilities. Several new legislative requirements, policy frameworks, and initiatives have come into effect since the Township's Official Plan was approved – such as changes to the Planning Act, 2020 Provincial Policy Statement, and Bill 197 (COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act).

Of relevance to the Master Plan, policies related to parks, open spaces and recreation facilities are contained in Section 3.5 of the Official Plan. Policies encourage recreational uses in appropriate locations and in a manner that is complementary to surrounding features and land uses. Specific parks and recreational policies are referenced throughout the Master Plan, as necessary.

Leisure and Community Services Department 2022 – 2024 Business Plan

This Business Plan outlines the key goals and objectives of the Township's Leisure and Community Services Department. The Business Plan outlines goals to be achieved over a three-year period, some of which are highlighted below (paraphrased; not a complete list); some of which will be addressed through the Master Plan:

- Co-ordinate and seek out partners in the private sector, volunteers and others to provide and deliver leisure services on behalf of Township's residents.
- Plan for leisure services delivery in a comprehensive and continual manner through meaningful input and consultation with community stakeholders.
- Assist volunteers, community groups and organizations in their provision and delivery of leisure services.
- Develop, train and support staff and volunteers in the leisure services delivery system.
- Ensure that the Township's facilities and parks are properly equipped, safe and accessible and are in a state of good repair to support a wide range of indoor and outdoor programming opportunities to serve our residents.
- Provide diverse opportunities for passive and active outdoor leisure pursuits through the provision and management of parks, trails and a network of open space systems.
- Acting as a facilitator and co-ordinator, assist the community and volunteers with the provision and delivery of a wide range of community events and festivals.

Arena Strategy (2020)

The North Dumfries Arena Strategy informed future decisions related to the Township's arenas. The Strategy assessed short- and long-term demand for the two existing indoor ice pads. The Strategy recommended that a second regulation-sized ice pad be provided in the North Dumfries Complex and to decommission the Ayr Community Centre ice venue to benefit from operating a twin pad and multi-use centre.

1.8 Potential Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic will affect the demand for, and delivery of, leisure services and that change may be lasting; however, the ultimate scope and scale of change are unknown. As a result, long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the leisure sector plays in personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.

Recognizing that the situation is evolving and new information and guidance is emerging on a regular basis, North Dumfries must prepare for a wide range of scenarios. The following are some potential impacts the pandemic may have on the sector in the short- to longer-term.

- Continued population growth in less urbanized areas such as North Dumfries, particularly in Ayr, which is the Township's primary settlement area;
- Emphasis on health equity and access to parks and trails;
- Growing interest in unstructured, individual, and small group activities;
- Desire for outdoor recreation (including four seasons use), placing pressure on trails, parks, washrooms, etc.;
- A possible shift in prime-time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteers and events;
- Substantial changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.), possibly requiring higher levels of subsidy;
- Impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – people need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking of some third-party partnerships (schools, YMCAs, etc.); and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.).

2.0 North Dumfries Community Profile

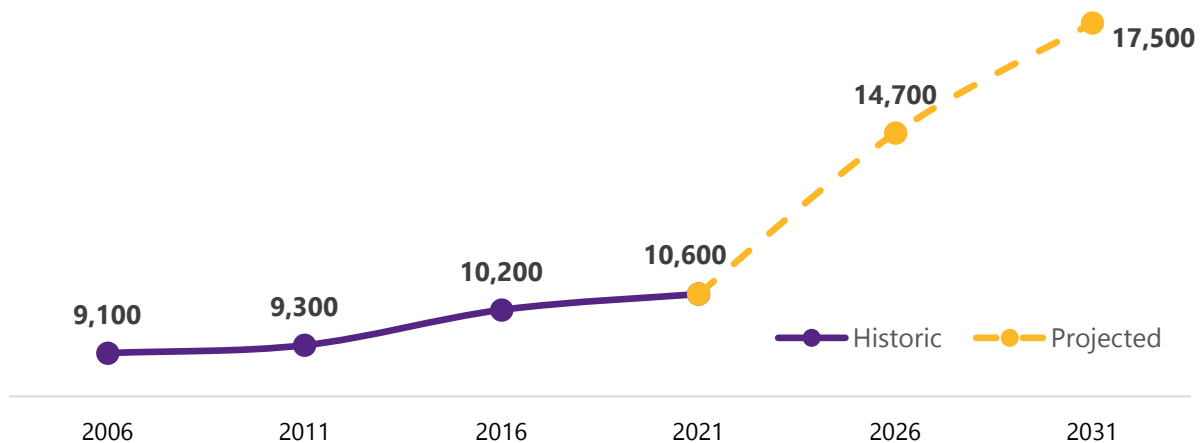
Understanding who, how, and where population growth will occur during the Master Plan's planning period is important to position North Dumfries' leisure services to respond to changing community demographics. This section highlights North Dumfries' historical and projected population, age profile, and related statistics that may have implications on leisure needs. At the time of writing, only a limited amount of the 2021 Census data had been released. As such, data from the 2011 and 2016 Census will be relied upon where more recent data is not available, as well as statistical data from the Region of Waterloo and Township. The Township will need to monitor statistics on an on-going basis as they are released from the 2021 Census to ensure that the Master Plan remains relevant or requires adjustment.

2.1 Historic and Projected Population

Statistics Canada reported that between 2011 and 2021, North Dumfries' population experienced an increase of 14%, reaching a 2021 population of 10,600,² which is generally on par with population forecasts. The majority of this growth has been concentrated in the Township's primary settlement area of Ayr.

Population projections allocated to the Township by the Region of Waterloo indicates that North Dumfries is expected to reach a population of 17,500 residents by 2031,³ which aligns with the Township's Development Charges Background Study and 2018 Official Plan. The projected population growth suggests that the Township will experience dramatic growth over the planning period; however, a portion of this growth may be delayed due to various factors including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Historic and Projected Population Growth, 2006 to 2031

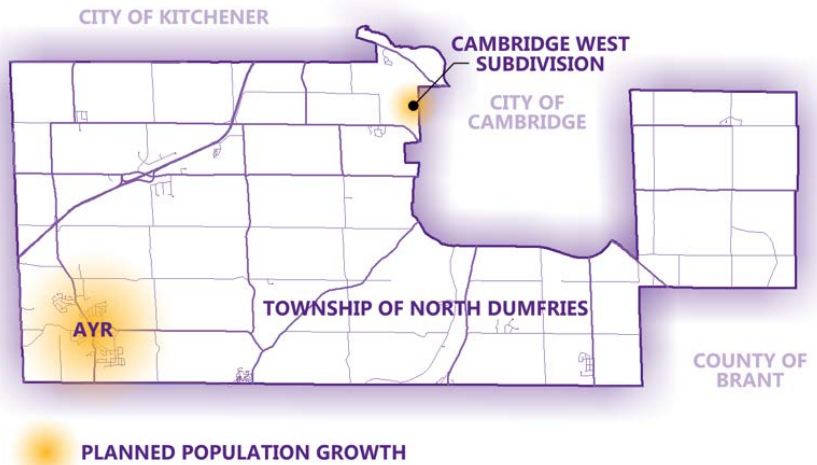


Source: Statistics Canada 2006 – 2021 Census; Correspondence provided by the Region of Waterloo in July 2020.

² Statistics Canada. 2011 and 2021 Census.

³ Correspondence provided by the Region of Waterloo in July 2020.

The projected population accounts for 1,400 residents planned to be accommodated along the North Dumfries and Cambridge boundary (known as "Cambridge West"); the Official Plan identifies this area as Special Policy Area 2.5.2 (b)(iv). Given its proximity to Cambridge, some residents may be drawn to leisure services outside the Township. The balance of the population growth is expected to occur in Ayr, while limited population growth is forecasted for the Township's rural hamlets.

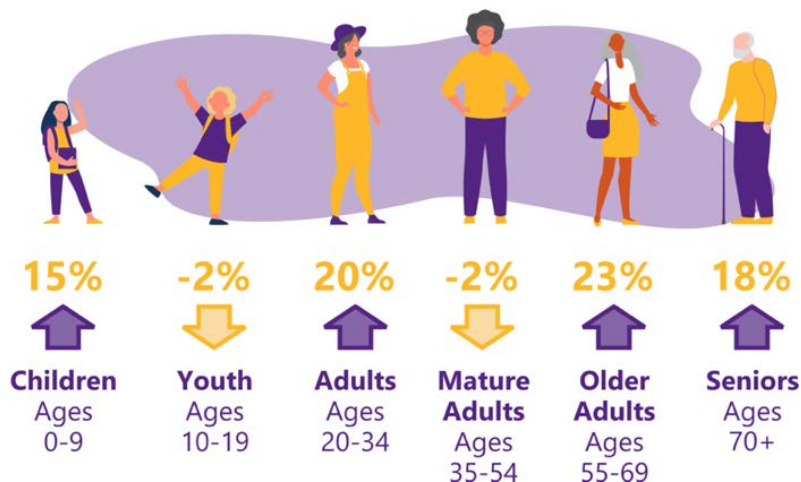


2.2 Population by Age Group

North Dumfries' age profile provides insight into the types of leisure activities that are or will be in demand. Generally, a larger market of children and youth tends to bolster physical activities such as sports, while a larger segment of older adults and seniors drives the demand for low impact and cultural activities that centre around social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the population of children (ages 0 to 9), adults (ages 20 to 34), older adults (ages 55 to 69) and seniors (ages 70 and over) grew between 15% and 23%. By contrast, the population of youth (ages 10 to 19) and mature adults (ages 35 to 54) experienced a decline by 2% (Figure 2). This growth profile resulted in the Township's overall population getting younger, which is contrary to provincial aging trends. During this period, the Township's median population declined from 42.1 years to 41.7 years. Despite this finding, the Township's population is older compared to the Region of Waterloo (38.5 years) and on par with the Province (41.3 years).

Figure 2: Population Growth by Age Group, 2011 to 2016 Census



Based on age group capture rates from the 2016 Census and Regional age cohort projections, Table 2 highlights the Township's population growth by age group. These findings suggest that North Dumfries will experience varying levels of growth in all age groups. The Township's senior population is expected to experience the most growth, increasing by 201% by 2031. All other age groups are anticipated to increase between 13% and 75%.

Table 2: Estimated Population by Age Group, 2021 to 2031

	2021 Population Estimate	2031 Population Estimate	Growth
Children (Ages 0 – 9)	1,300	2,030	62%
Youth (Ages 10 – 19)	1,500	2,442	63%
Adults (Ages 20 – 34)	1,600	2,256	37%
Mature Adults (Ages 35 – 54)	3,100	5,437	75%
Older Adults (Ages 55 – 69)	2,100	2,421	13%
Seniors (Ages 70+)	1,000	2,894	201%
Total	10,600	17,500	65%

Note: 2021 age group estimates were developed by applying the 2016 Census age cohort capture rates to the 2021 Census population. 2031 age group estimates are from the Region of Waterloo.

2.3 Income and Immigration

Research suggests that higher income households are more likely to participate in leisure activities compared to lower income households. The 2016 Census reported a median household income of \$111,000 in North Dumfries, which was higher compared to the Region of Waterloo (\$77,500) and the Province (\$74,300). Approximately 4% of residents live in low-income households (compared to 12% in the Region and 14% in the Province). These findings suggests that Township residents are more likely to participate in leisure activities compared to their counterparts. However, it is important that the appropriate financial supports are available to ensure that all residents have an ability to participate in leisure activities, regardless of income.



Immigration levels can also be an influencing factor in leisure interests and participation. While municipalities across Ontario have experienced a diversification of residents as a result of in-migration, this is not the case for North Dumfries. The 2016 Census reported that approximately 12% of residents in the Township are immigrants, the majority of whom migrated decades ago from countries such as the United Kingdom, Portugal, Netherlands and the United States. This suggests that residents are accustomed to traditional leisure pursuits. Over the planning period, however, the Township may experience some level of growth from new residents with diverse cultural backgrounds as new residential development attracts a wide-range of people to the Township. This is a trend being experienced in many smaller communities being driven by an out-migration of residents from larger urban centres seeking affordable lifestyles, as well as in response to COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to working remotely.

3.0 Leisure Trends

The identification and monitoring of existing and emerging trends in the leisure sector is essential to understanding and responding to local needs. This section explores the major trends that could affect leisure services in North Dumfries based on research at the provincial and national levels.

3.1 General Participation and Leisure Trends

Popularity of Unstructured Activities

A lack of free time is commonly identified as a barrier to participation. Activities such as organized sports and cultural activities, particularly at competitive levels, often require considerable time commitment for training, practices, travel and other league activities. With increasingly busy lifestyles, competing interests, and inability for people to commit to structured activities, there is a growing interest for casual drop-in and unstructured activities that do not require advanced registration and can be self-scheduled. Municipalities are evolving their service delivery models to respond to this trend by extending operating hours and expanding the range and frequency of drop-in programs.



North Dumfries is one of the many municipalities experiencing a growth in demand for unstructured activities and in response, the Township provides flexible opportunities to engage in casual leisure activities, such as public skating and pickleball, as well as its parks, trails and outdoor spaces.

Growing Income Disparity

Income can be a significant barrier to participation in organized sports where equipment, travel and rental fees result in greater costs to the participant. Affordability is a key concern for many households as participation in leisure activities is one of several spending choices for discretionary income.



North Dumfries' median household income is higher compared to Waterloo Region and the Province, suggesting that residents may be more likely to participate in costly leisure activities. For households experiencing financial barriers, the provision of subsidy programs and low-to-no-cost programming options can help alleviate the financial burden of participation.

While North Dumfries does not currently offer a subsidy program for leisure, there are existing subsidy programs available through third parties such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart. Community organizations and other service providers may also offer financial assistance programs to ensure that opportunities are affordable for all.

High Levels of Physical Inactivity

The 2019 and 2020 ParticipACTION report cards on physical activity graded overall physical activity levels a "D+"⁴ for children and youth and "D" for adults, which is a marginal improvement over previous years. Physical inactivity has been found to be a contributor to Canada's growing obesity problem. In 2017, a study by Statistics Canada found that nearly one-third of Canadian children and youth (age 5-17) are obese or overweight, which was an increase from 23% reported in 1979.⁵ During the same period, almost two-thirds (64%) of adults over the age of 18 are obese or overweight, which was an increase from 49% in 1979.⁶



Locally, a 2013 health profile prepared by Statistics Canada for the Waterloo Health Unit determined that 54.2% of the population within the catchment area was obese or overweight, higher than the Province (52.6%). 53.1% of the population was also found to be 'active' or 'moderately active' during leisure time physical activity, which was also higher than the Province (53.8%).⁷ Reliance on automobiles (as opposed to walking or biking) has contributed to a culture of physical inactivity, while sedentary activities such as watching television, playing video games, or using a computer further exacerbate sedentary behaviours. To combat this issue, municipalities have been exploring strategies to increase physical activity. The preparation of this Master Plan is one local example of seeking to understand this issue and seek to broaden the range of opportunities for residents to get active.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is becoming a core element of complete communities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many municipalities observed a surge in their active transportation systems as residents participated close to home and have sought connection with nature through trails. Active transportation also has an environmental benefit to road uses because it alleviates road congestion and minimizes vehicular greenhouse gas emissions, land consumption, and the costs for road construction and maintenance.



The development of the Township's active transportation network is guided by its 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan. This guiding document emphasizes building upon the existing trail network, linking settlement areas and connecting to trails in adjacent communities including Kitchener, Brant, Cambridge and Hamilton.

⁴ The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults (2019) and Children and Youth (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.participaction.com>

⁵ Public Health Agency of Canada. Tackling obesity in Canada: Childhood obesity and excess weight rates in Canada. 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2013. Health Profile, Waterloo Health Unit. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/>

Celebrating Local

Support for cultural activities can be a means of achieving many social goals, beyond simply supporting arts and culture for its own sake. For example, large-scale community events and public engagement opportunities highlight the value of celebrating local experiences and embracing the Township's heritage. North Dumfries celebrates local and regional groups in various ways through the support of community and service groups such as artisan markets, Canada Day Fireworks, Concerts in the Park, Family Day and more.



3.2 Parks and Facility Trends

Multi-use Recreation Facilities as Community Hubs

In this era of user convenience and cost recovery, many municipalities are centralizing multiple recreational and cultural facilities. Multi-use facilities can provide a great number of benefits. While the specific nature and degree of these benefits will depend on local circumstances, facility design and operation, and other factors, there is no denying that multi-use facilities have the potential to generate substantial economic, social, and environmental gains for local municipalities.

The majority of recent recreation facility construction across Ontario has been in the form of multi-use venues. There are a range of benefits of multi-use facilities including the creation of a destination where all household members can gather and engage in recreation activities, thereby contributing to sport development, tourism, and operational efficiency.

The creation of "community hubs" has also been a recent focus in many communities as it offers tremendous social benefits, strengthens community cohesion, and fosters enhanced quality of life by providing a central location to deliver a range of services. A community hub is a central access point that can provide for a range of health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life.

The North Dumfries Community Complex is an excellent example of a multi-use facility that functions as a community hub. This unique facility combines indoor and outdoor recreation activities and amenities together with other civic services and the Community Health Centre all in one location.



Aging Infrastructure

The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card reported that 32% of Canada's municipal arenas and pools are in fair to very poor condition.⁸ Many of these facilities were built between 1956 and 1980 whose age and/or deferred infrastructure renewal/maintenance activities have accelerated the number of facilities in need of replacement.

The Ayr Community Centre was built over 40 years ago and is a local example of a facility with structural and mechanical components that have reached or are approaching the end of their useful life. Grant and shared funding programs have been introduced by senior levels of government over the past 15 years to renew aging facilities including the 2011 RinC program (which was leveraged for the North Dumfries Community Complex), the Building Canada Fund, and most recently the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. While these programs have gone a long way toward reducing the infrastructure deficit, significant shortfalls remain in municipalities across the country.



Environmental Sustainability

There is an increasing desire to reduce our impact on the environment to be more sustainable. To support this desire, an emphasis is being placed on leaving open spaces in a natural state, which is also beneficial to support and preserve important ecological functions and habitats. Many municipalities have made efforts to design facilities that utilize state-of-the-art technologies to enhance energy efficiency and achieve environmental objectives such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. From an outdoor perspective, parks are being positioned to be more environmentally sustainable through reducing grass cutting in strategic locations, planting native species, establishing tree canopy targets, creating pollinator gardens and programs aimed at creating awareness and educating the public about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms or interpretive signage), and considering strategies to be more resilient to climate change.



North Dumfries' 5-Year Energy Conservation Demand Management Plan examines historical energy consumption in the Township, establishes goals to be met over a five-year period, and outlines a strategy to achieve these goals. Energy conservation measures recommended in this document include, but not limited to, LED lighting retrofits and replacing mechanical equipment.

⁸ The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card measured the condition of municipal arenas and pools together.

3.3 Service Delivery Trends

Inclusion and Accessibility

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) directs municipalities to consider the needs of persons with disabilities through facility design and service delivery. By 2025, municipalities are required to remove all barriers within new and redeveloped municipal facilities, including those related to physical space as well as customer service through training.

The Township demonstrates its commitment to minimizing barriers for persons with disabilities to make North Dumfries a more inclusive community. All Township of North Dumfries staff have completed accessible customer service training, which forms part of the Township's staff training program; senior staff are also trained in the design of accessible public spaces.

The North Dumfries Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was also developed in response to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005). Specifically pertaining to the Master Plan, the Accessibility Plan identifies actions including, but not limited to, providing accessible customer service training, ensuring that all new or redeveloped public spaces are barrier free (e.g., playgrounds, walking paths, facilities, etc.), and regularly engaging the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee. Accessibility audits were also completed for the Township-owned facilities and cost estimates were identified to bring facilities into compliance.

There are other segments of the population that are common users of leisure programs, services and facilities such as youth and seniors, persons experiencing low income, people with diverse cultural backgrounds, and the LGBTQ2S+ community. The Federal Government has declared the goal of gender equity in sport and recreation by the year 2035. This is particularly timely given that girls drop out of sport and recreation at pre-adolescence and fewer girls are committed to sport participation post-COVID. Research found that 600,000 women have dropped out of the workforce during the Pandemic and specific emphasis will need to be undertaken to include females in sport and recreation. National best practices and awareness of local support groups and services need to be considered to ensure that leisure services in North Dumfries are welcoming of all residents, regardless of gender, ability, age, income, background and orientation.



Technology

Technological advances have enabled both service providers and users to be more aware of the leisure opportunities in their communities. This includes websites that summarize facilities, services and program offerings; online portals for program registration; synchronization with smartphone applications; virtual programming; video-conference meetings; streaming Council meetings; and more. The Township has embraced the use of technology using some of these services to improve the way it engages with the public. Additionally, the Township is connected with approximately 4,600 social media followers.



Partnerships with Municipalities and Organizations

Throughout Ontario municipal leisure departments are increasingly challenged to provide and maintain top quality facilities, services and programs within defined budget envelopes. As financial pressures mount and the need for cost containment rises, communities are examining new and creative service delivery models including developing relationships with third-party entities.



There are many potential advantages of a collaborative service delivery approach including the sharing of risk, possible cost or service efficiencies, gaining a competitive advantage in having programs and services delivered by specialized community groups, the sharing of vital data to identify emerging trends and opportunities, and minimizing service duplication. The Township currently collaborates with many partners and additional partnerships are considered through this Master Plan.

Volunteerism

Volunteers are critical to the leisure services system, especially in municipalities such as North Dumfries that rely on community volunteers to deliver programs, events and services. In January 2015, Statistics Canada published a Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey whose section focused on volunteering and charitable giving found that 12.7 million people in Canada volunteered nearly 2 billion hours in 2013. However, the research found that volunteers are aging and despite high reports of hours volunteered, the general volunteer rate was lower than recorded in previous surveys. Municipalities recognize the importance of maintaining a strong group of local volunteers and have made efforts to support community organizations through promotion, awareness, training, coordination, and other strategies.



4.0 Community Engagement & Consultation

Community engagement and consultation is critical to the success of a Master Plan. The perspectives of residents, stakeholders, Council, and Township staff are important elements in the development of strategies to address current and future needs. This section summarizes the community consultation findings from each activity undertaken for the Master Plan.

This section summarizes the community consultation findings from each activity undertaken for the Master Plan. The findings contained in this section should not be interpreted to be recommendations. Detailed needs assessments and recommendations can be found in Section 5 to 7 of the Master Plan.

4.1 Approach to Public Consultation

A Public Consultation Strategy was prepared to identify and guide the engagement activities for the Master Plan. The Strategy identified initiatives to raise awareness of the project including the creation of a project webpage on the Township's website, social media, and word of mouth. Public consultation activities included:

- Virtual Initial Public Information Centre;
- Community Survey;
- Stakeholder Focus Groups;
- Staff Workshops;
- Interviews with Council;
- Presentations to Council;
- Virtual Final Public Information Centre; and
- Written input.



4.2 Public Consultation Summary of Key Themes

Consultation is vital in this planning process. 613 households (representing over 1,700 residents) completed the community survey and 16 community organizations provided input and ideas.

Preliminary findings and observations from the initial community consultation phase are summarized below (in no particular order). These highlights are assessed, along with community profiles, usage data, and other inputs to inform the assessments and recommendations in the Master Plan.

COVID-19 Impacts	The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the way people participate in leisure opportunities. With restrictions on using indoor facilities, there has been an increase in the use of outdoor space, parks and trails. This trend is expected to continue post pandemic.
A Variety of Choices	There is a strong feeling of pride in the variety of choices residents have regarding leisure opportunities in the Township such as the community centres, arena, parks, and trails.
Inclusion and Accessibility	Inclusion and accessibility are top of mind priorities to ensure that all residents can participate, regardless of ability, background, orientation and income. Many stakeholders expressed the desire for more affordable rental spaces.
Communication of Opportunities	The Township's website and social media pages are excellent resources for finding information about leisure opportunities, but more work is needed to strengthen communication and marketing to improve awareness and bolster participation. Suggestions were received for a Leisure Services Guide that lists all opportunities regardless of who leads them. Working with organizations to ensure that special events and activities do not take place at the same time was also suggested so that residents have an opportunity to participate in a variety of activities and ensure that they are successful.
Improved Leisure Opportunities	A range of new leisure opportunities was expressed including, but not limited to, an indoor pool, a second ice pad (at the North Dumfries Community Complex), pump track, trails, group fitness programs, and more. Suggestions to re-purpose the arena at the Ayr Community Centre included multi-purpose program space, arts and culture spaces, and an indoor artificial turf field.
Volunteerism	Community groups and volunteers are viewed as the strength of the community; however, concerns were raised regarding the ability to attract and retain volunteers, particularly among the younger demographic.

4.3 Virtual Public Information Centre

A public information centre was developed at the beginning of the process to raise awareness of the Master Plan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public information session was held on the Township's website. Information panels were created to highlight the purpose of the Master Plan and summarize the Township's community profile, as well as relevant trends impacting the leisure sector. The public information session also encouraged residents to get involved in the Master Plan process and promoted ways for the public to provide input, including provision of a link to the community survey.

4.4 Community Survey

To support the development of the Master Plan, a community survey was conducted to collect input about leisure needs and priorities in North Dumfries. The survey gathered information regarding participation and barriers, facility usage, suggested improvements, priorities for investment, and opinion and agreement with various statements. Respondents were requested to complete the community survey on behalf of their entire household.

The community survey was available from mid-October 2021 to early November 2021. The survey link was posted on the Township's website and was promoted through social media, posters and signage around the Township; a hardcopy of the survey was also made available and distributed at various locations. A total of 613 responses were received and analyzed; being a voluntary, self-directed survey, respondents were not required to answer every question. The following is a high-level summary of key findings. Tabulated survey response data has been provided in Appendix A.

Summary of Respondents

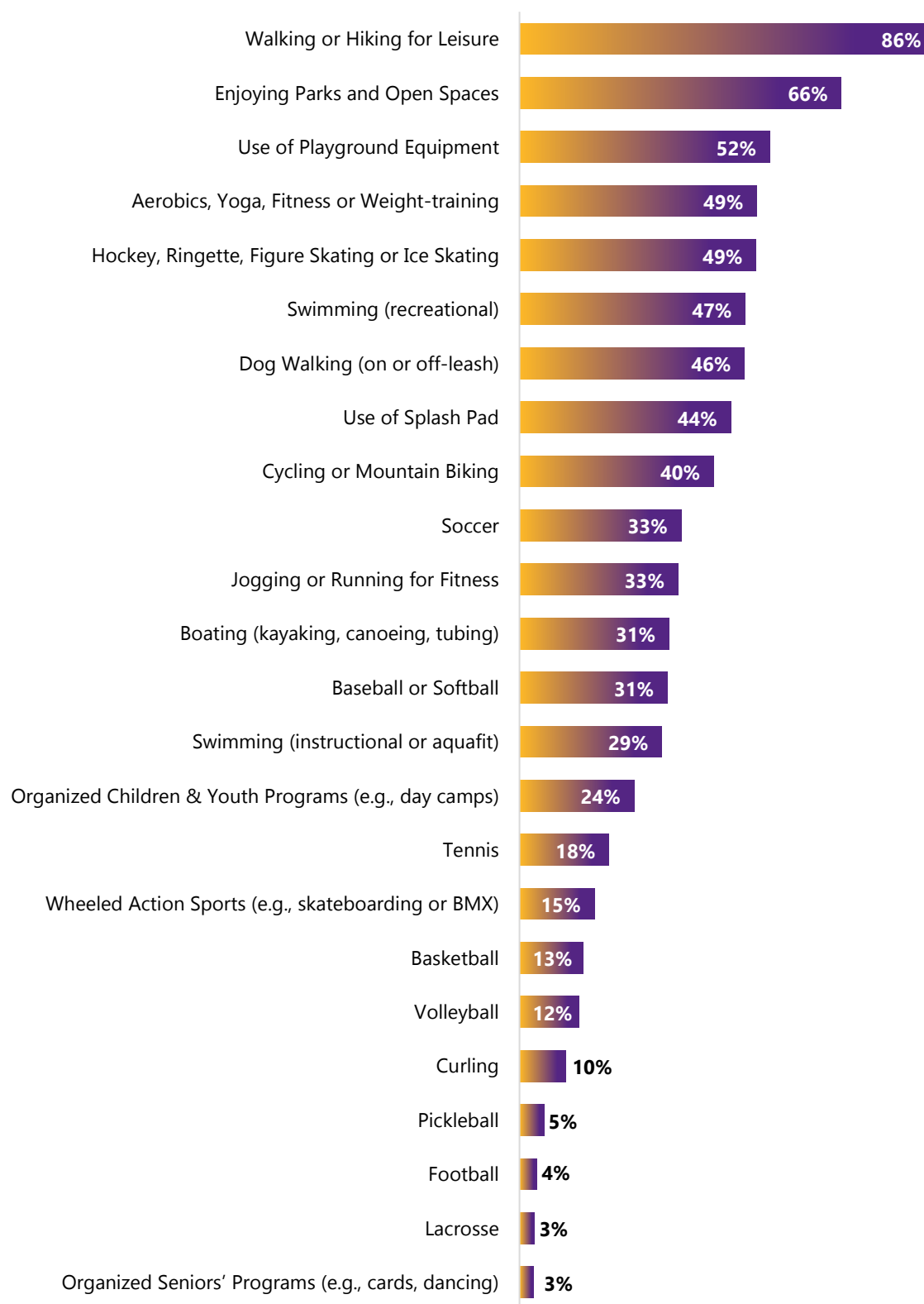
- Compared to the 2016 Census, the survey sample over-represented children (ages 0 to 9), youth (ages 10 to 19) and mature adults (ages 35 to 54). The survey sample under-represented adults (ages 20 to 34), older adults (ages 55 to 69) and seniors (ages 70+). This is common as households with children are more likely to complete this type of survey.
- The average age of respondents was 43 years, (the 2016 Census was 41.7 years).
- 83% of responding households lived in Ayr, 8% lived in the rural area of the Township, 4% lived in a rural settlement (e.g., Roseville, Clyde, and Branchton), and 4% live outside of the Township.

Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

Walking and hiking for leisure (86%) was identified as the most popular activity that respondents and/or their households actively participated in prior to the pandemic. Other top parks and recreation activities that were identified included enjoying parks and open spaces (66%), use of playground equipment (52%), aerobics, yoga, fitness or weight-training (49%), and arena activities such as hockey, ringette, figure skating (49%). Figure 3 highlights respondents' participation in parks and recreation activities.

Apart from arena activities, a commonality among the most popular activities is that they are unstructured and self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with broader participation trends. Organized sports such as soccer and baseball ranked lower and tend to be played by a subset of the community. Lower ranked activities tended to be more specialized or age-specific in nature.

Figure 3: Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities in 2019 (n=596)



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated that they were able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as they would have liked. Among those who were not, a lack of desired programs or facilities was the most common participation barrier that was cited (61%). Other common barriers included a lack of personal time or too busy (35%) and programs not being offered at convenient times (33%). A summary of participation barriers identified by respondents is contained in Figure 4.

I often hear that people are unaware of what is being offered at the various community centres unless they happen to already be involved in programs. Finding ways to reach the community with this information might help with their success.

Survey Respondent Comment

Figure 4: Participation Barriers to Recreation and Park Activities in 2019 (n=208)

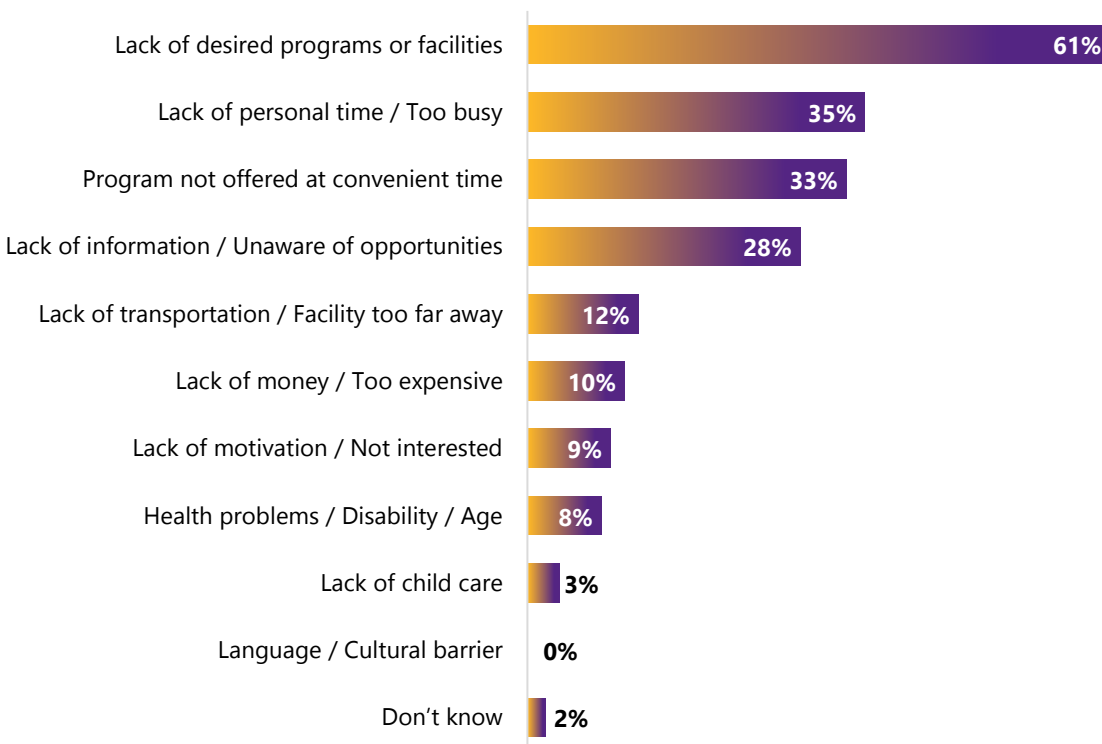


Table 3 highlights the top 10 parks and recreation opportunities that respondents would like to see offered in North Dumfries. A broad range of suggestions were received including swimming, walking trails, pump track, arena activities (public skating and more ice time in general), and disc golf.

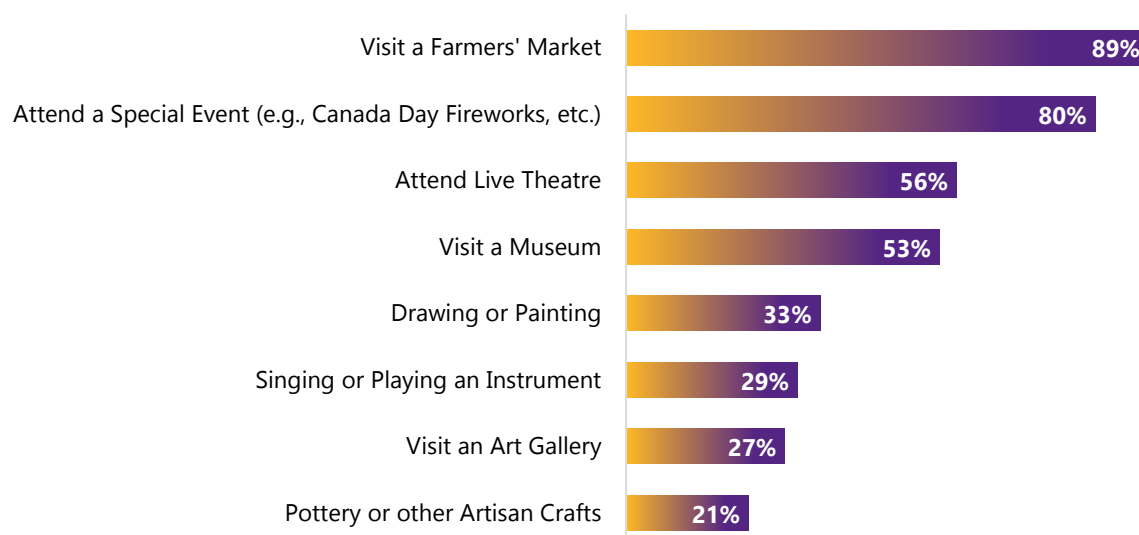
Table 3: Top 10 Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Top 10 Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities	
1. Swimming (including aquafit)	6. Group Fitness (e.g., yoga, aerobics, etc.)
2. Walking trails	7. Basketball courts
3. Pump track	8. Bike trails and supporting infrastructure
4. Arena activities (e.g., public skate and more ice time)	9. Gymnasium activities (e.g., badminton, volleyball, basketball, etc.)
5. Disc golf	10. Outdoor skating

Participation in Arts and Culture Activities

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, visiting a farmers' market was the most popular arts and culture activity among respondents (89%). Attending a special event (80%), attending live theatre (56%), visiting a museum (53%), and drawing or painting (33%) were also among the top five most popular activities. Figure 5 summarizes respondents' participation in arts and cultural opportunities.

Figure 5: Participation in Arts and Cultural Activities and Programs in 2019 (n=552)



63% of respondents indicated that they were able to participate in arts and cultural opportunities as much as they liked prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among those who were not, a lack of desired programs or facilities was the most common participation barrier (43%). Other common barriers were a lack of information (35%), lack of personal time or too busy (35%), and the program not being offered at a convenient time (26%). Figure 6 contains a summary of participation barriers identified by respondents.

Figure 6: Barriers to Participation in Arts and Culture Activities in 2019 (n=221)

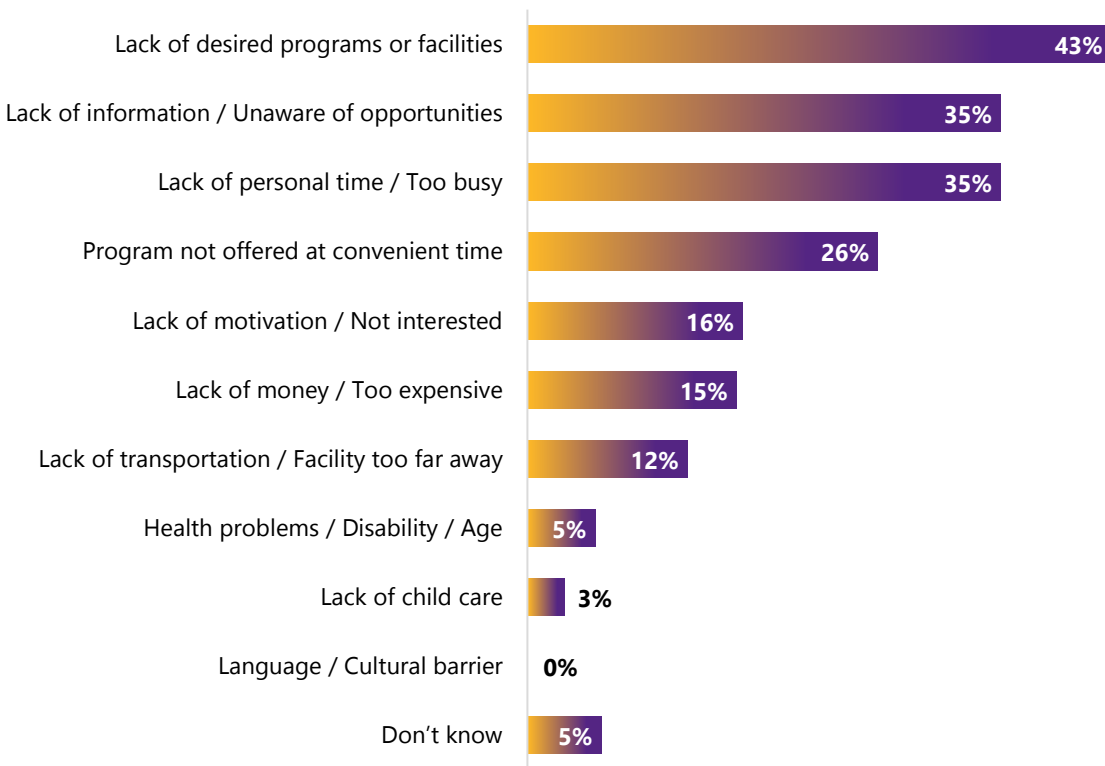


Table 4 summarizes the top 10 most requested arts and cultural opportunities respondents would like to see offered in North Dumfries. The most popular requests were for live theatre and music concerts such as art in the park, creative art programs (e.g., pottery, quilting, crafts, etc.), general art classes, farmers' markets, and performing arts classes (e.g., drama, music, singing, etc.).

Table 4: Top 10 Requested Arts and Cultural Opportunities

Top 10 Requested Arts and Cultural Opportunities	
1. Live theatre and music concerts (e.g., music in the park)	5. Farmers' markets
2. Creative arts classes (e.g., pottery, quilting, crafts)	6. Special events (e.g., Indigenous recognition, food festivals, multi-cultural events)
3. General arts classes	7. Fine art classes (e.g., drawing and painting)
4. Performing arts classes (e.g., drama, music, singing, dance)	8. Art and antique exhibits
	9. Art in the park
	10. Cooking classes

Importance and Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their level of importance and satisfaction with respect to parks, recreation and cultural spaces. Figure 7 summarizes the proportion of respondents who felt that these facilities were “very important” or “somewhat important” to their household. Respondents were then asked if they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the facilities in North Dumfries.

Generally speaking, facilities where importance levels exceeds satisfaction levels suggest that expectations are not being met. As illustrated in the figure below, the largest discrepancy exists for arts and cultural spaces, as well as recreational trails and pathways, although opportunities for improvement exist in all facility areas. Strategies to enhance satisfaction levels are identified in Section 5 and 6 of the Master Plan.

I would love to see more arts brought to our community. The Township is very big on the sports but lack greatly in the arts and culture side.

Survey Respondent Comment

Figure 7: Importance and Satisfaction Levels of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities

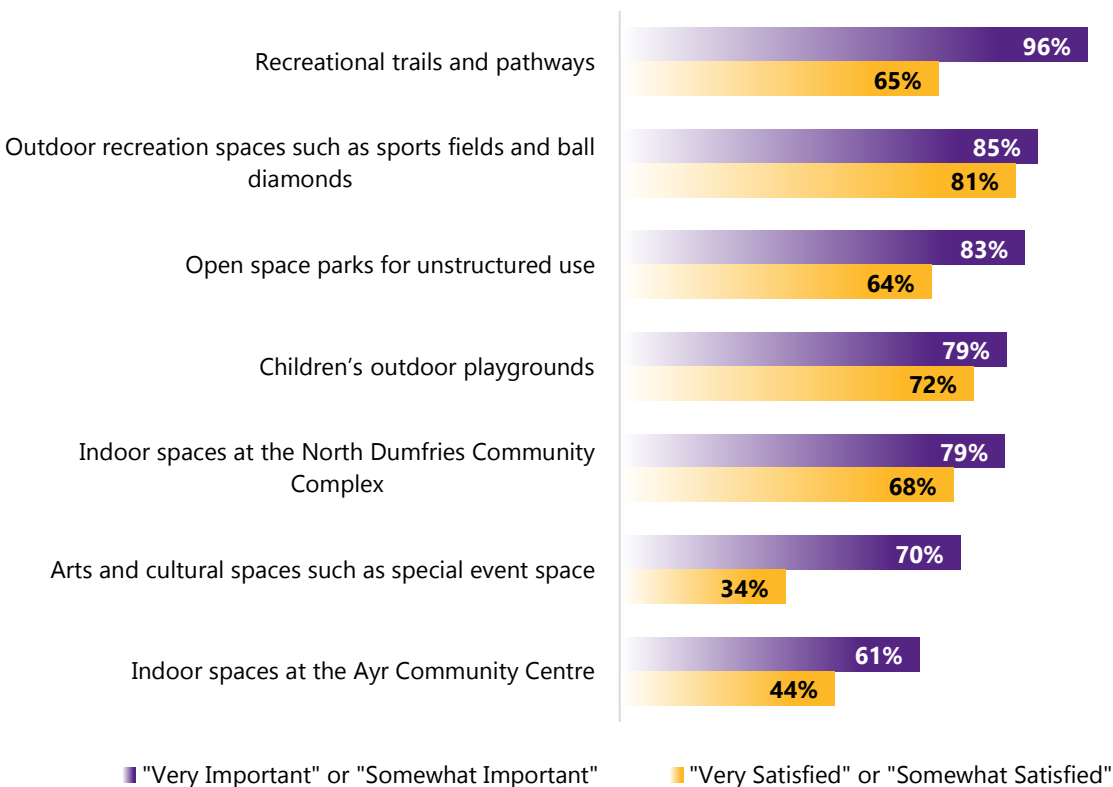
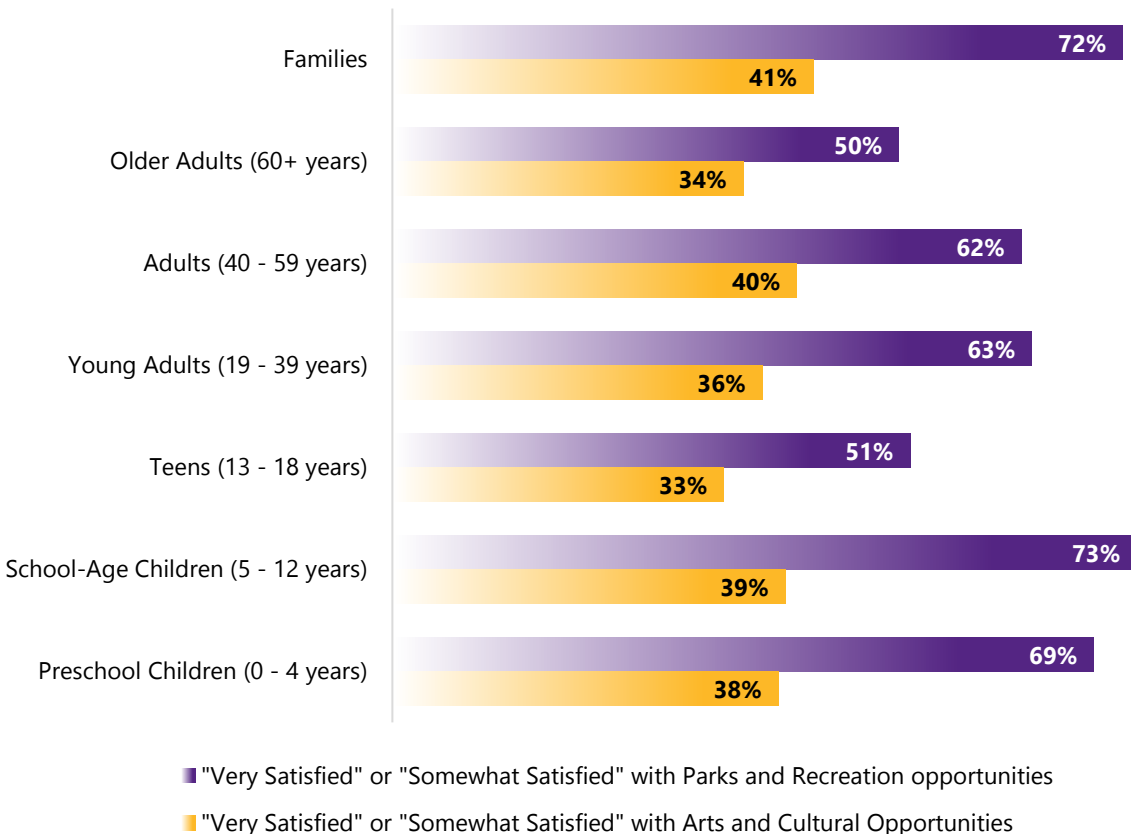


Figure 8 illustrates the proportion of respondents who were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with parks, recreation and cultural opportunities in North Dumfries for each age group. There were generally high levels of satisfaction in parks and recreation opportunities for families, as well as school-age children (ages 5 to 12) and preschool children (ages 0 to 4). Satisfaction levels for arts and cultural opportunities consistently ranged between 33% and 41% across all age groups. These findings suggests that there is opportunity for improvement to increase satisfaction levels for parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for all age groups.

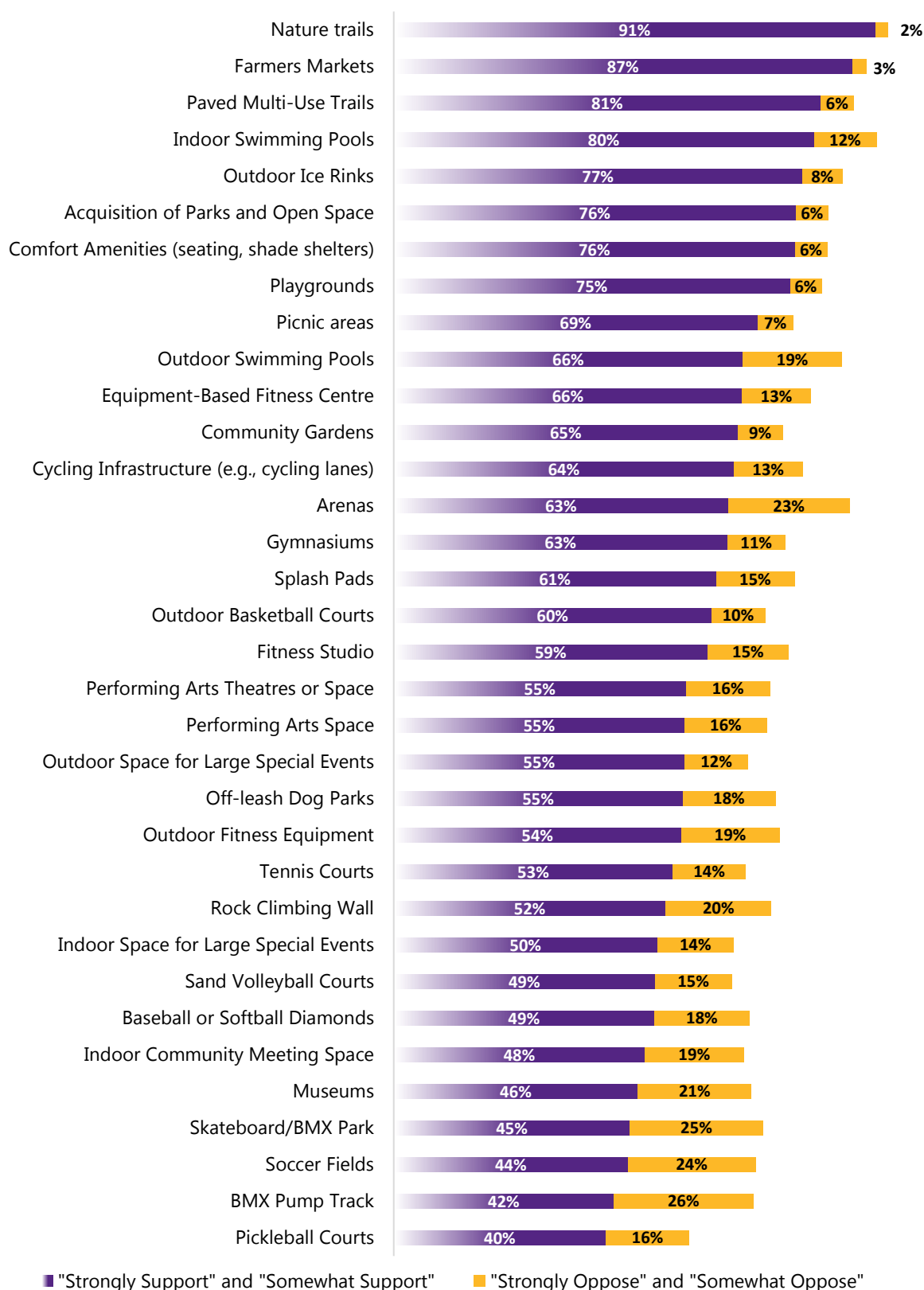
Figure 8: Satisfaction Levels for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities



Support for Additional Investment

Figure 9 illustrate respondents’ level of support for additional spending towards building new or improving existing parks, recreation, and culture facilities. Consistent with trends in the sector, facilities with the highest levels of support were generally ones that facilitated unstructured and self-scheduled activities. The top supported facilities included nature trails (91%), farmers’ markets (87%), paved multi-use trails (81%), indoor swimming pools (80%), and outdoor ice rinks (77%).

Figure 9: Support for Additional Spending Towards Outdoor Facilities



Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Leisure Services

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way that residents participate in parks, recreation, and culture. 41% of respondents indicated that they were less physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic, although 21% of respondents indicated that they were more physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic (36% of respondents said no change). Respondents were asked if there would be any lasting effects on participation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many respondents expressed that there would be no lasting effect, although some expressed that there will be higher participation rates for outdoor events and programs compared to indoor. There has also been an increase in trail usage which is expected to remain popular.

Additional Survey Responses

Respondents had an opportunity to provide additional input to be considered in the development of the Master Plan. One of the main topics observed was to embrace the natural heritage landscape of North Dumfries by enhancing the river trail path and providing better access to the river. In addition to the river trail, it was requested that the trail system be expanded to surrounding communities and through Ayr so residents could access amenities and facilities using active means of movement.

Several comments that were received also supported the development of a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex. Respondents also identified that other recreational opportunities should be considered beyond arenas and sports in general. Many respondents supported an indoor pool, although other respondents were opposed due to the potential financial impact on residents. Requests were made for other facilities and amenities including, but not limited to, basketball courts, pump track, indoor sports field, water activities, and more. The desire for more leisure opportunities outside of Ayr was also put forward.

4.5 Stakeholder Focus Groups

Community organizations were invited to provide their input to help shape the directions in the Master Plan. Table 5 summarizes the stakeholders who were invited to participate in the focus groups. A total of 16 individuals representing 21 organizations participated in one of the four focus groups that were held, representing indoor and outdoor sports organizations, service clubs, and various volunteer groups. The following pages summarize key themes from each focus group.

Table 5: Stakeholder Focus Group Invitations

Stakeholder	Attended	Did Not Attend	Interview
1. Angels Landing Yoga		●	
2. Ayr Adult Soccer		●	
3. Ayr Centennials Jr B Hockey		●	
4. Ayr Community Theatre	●		
5. Ayr Ladies Ringette	●		
6. Ayr Minor Hockey Association		●	
7. Ayr Minor Softball Association	●		
8. Ayr-Paris Band		●	
9. Ayr Pipe Band	●		
10. Ayr Rockets Girls Hockey		●	
11. Ayr Slo-Pitch League		●	
12. Ayr Skating Club	●		
13. Ayr Sportsmen League Hockey		●	
14. Ayr Youth Soccer		●	
15. Ayr/North Dumfries Ladies Ringette		●	
16. Ayr-North Dumfries Lions Club	●		
17. Baha'i Community	●		
18. Centre for Community Group			●
19. EarlyON Waterloo Region	●		
20. Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge & North Dumfries		●	
21. Grand Valley Trails Association	●		
22. Heritage Committee	●		
23. Indoor Pickleball	●		
24. Langs/North Dumfries Community Health Centre	●		
25. Leisure & Lifestyle Committee	●		
26. Masons		●	
27. MCV Fitness		●	
28. North Dumfries Garden Club	●		

Stakeholder	Attended	Did Not Attend	Interview
29. North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society		●	
30. Region of Waterloo Library	●		
31. Scorpions Volleyball		●	
32. Shawna's Yoga		●	
33. Skate Park Committee	●		

Recreation Stakeholder Focus Group

A virtual workshop with recreation stakeholders was held on October 26, 2021. Participating organizations included:

1. Indoor Pickleball
2. Ayr Minor Softball
3. Ayr – North Dumfries Lions Club
4. Ayr Ladies Ringette
5. Ayr Skating Club

Lighting Sports Amenities

Participants expressed that the Township should be utilizing existing sports field lighting. It was mentioned some amenities such as ball diamond lighting exist but they are not in use. Utilizing existing lights or incorporating more lights at sports fields would be beneficial for users. It was noted that there are lights at the baseball diamonds but users don't have access to turn them on so they are often left off. Adding lights to the exterior of NDCC was also requested so people can use the park during the night. Comments on having time slots more spread out or at more convenient times for activities such as pickleball and baseball was mentioned. By adding lights this can extend the usage time for sports facilities which could help the issue of needing more playing time.

Note: Plans are in place to add/replace sports field lighting at Schmidt Park and Victoria Park, as identified in Section 5.8.

Assistance from the Township

Some organizations indicated they are struggling with fundraising abilities and volunteerism. They believe it would be helpful if the Township could oversee all activities to help with organizing, fundraising or attracting volunteers.

Repurposing the ACC

Removing the ice from the ACC and twinning the NDCC arena was supported to centralize the ice, labour and equipment. The ACC has a lot of potential for repurposing to accommodate many sports activities. Some ideas included a turf field for year-round training or sports court such as pickleball, volleyball, badminton, etc. This space should be designed as a multi-purpose facility to accommodate as many sports as possible.

Parks and Trails Stakeholder Focus Group

A workshop was held on October 27, 2021 with representatives from a number of organization and their input is noted below:

1. Ayr Skate Park Committee
2. Grand Valley Trails Association
3. Leisure and Lifestyle Committee.

Focus on Unorganized Recreation

North Dumfries has a good variety of sports and recreation facilities that provide many opportunities for users. The focus for recreation should now be shifted to unorganized recreation areas. After the COVID-19 pandemic, it is apparent that many people feel safer gathering and socializing outside, especially seniors. The Township needs to incorporate more gathering areas with seating, benches, tables and washrooms. This will allow people to join comfortably to play games at tables or socialize outdoors.

In addition, adding easily accessible access points to the water could broaden the range of unstructured recreation activities to water activities such as kayaking, canoeing or fishing. A BMX pump track was also suggested.

Trail Connectivity

Trail usage in the area has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and the popularity still remains. To create a more fluid and useful trail system, connectivity between existing trails and recreation facilities is needed. This will maximize the potential for trails and promote sustainable transportation. This will also allow kids the freedom to visit recreation facilities on their own. A gap that is evident is the education on trail usage etiquette.

Community Services Stakeholder Focus Group

Community, Social and Service Stakeholder groups gathered on October 26, 2021 to discuss the strengths, opportunities and trends of parks, recreation and culture in North Dumfries. The following groups had representation and their comments are summarized below.

1. Langs/North Dumfries Community Health Centre
2. EarlyON Waterloo Region (Ayr location)
3. Baha'i Community
4. North Dumfries Garden Club
5. Region of Waterloo Library

Rentable Space

One of the main issues groups are facing is finding suitable and affordable rentable space or rooms to hosts their activities and gatherings. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations offered activities online but they were not as successful. Users value in person gatherings and the personal connections with staff and the community they receive when attending programs or activities. In addition to indoor space, outdoor space is hard to rent for events. Some of the groups indicated they need washrooms on site to host their event which is a barrier and makes it even more difficult in the winter as many facilities close for the season. The ideal space for groups would include parking, rooms that can be darkened for presentations, fully accessible, small kitchenette, minimum 30 person capacity, and affordable.

Arts and Culture Stakeholder Focus Group

Representatives from the arts and culture community gathered on October 27, 2021 to discuss arts and culture opportunities in North Dumfries. Organizations attending and key topics discussed are below.

1. Ayr Community Theater
2. Ayr Pipe Band
3. Heritage Advisory Committee

Improve Awareness

There are currently many music opportunities offered for the residents of the Township and especially in Ayr to get involved with the Ayr Pipe Band or through their affiliation with the Ayr-Paris band. There is a struggle in raising awareness of arts and culture opportunities so that residents know what is available. One solution discussed was creating a directory on the Township's website to show what is offered and who to contact. It was suggested that this would not only help connect residents to programs but also help program operators know what is being offered so there was no overlap in services provided (e.g., competing events on the same evening).

Show Their Culture

Based on discussion, the Township could improve cultural opportunities. Many artifacts that been donated have no place to be on display for the public. In addition, incorporating art pieces throughout the Township would allow for the culture of the area to be shown and would result in North Dumfries' culture to be more visible.

Repurposing ACC

Repurposing the ACC would create an opportunity for arts and culture stakeholders to have access to more rooms and spaces suitable for arts and culture activities and events.

An ideal space for these groups would have good acoustics, multiple rooms for smaller practices, large space for marching, a backstage, and storage space. Ideally, organizations would be able to serve alcohol during performances and have space for people to sit after the shows to discuss and meet with performers.

4.6 Staff Workshops

Two workshops were held on October 25th, 2021 with Township staff to capture their valuable knowledge, insights and experiences to be considered as part of the master planning process. The sessions were attended by 13 Township staff representing various municipal positions from senior management to customer facing staff. Discussion topics were wide-ranging and key themes are highlighted below:

Departmental Visioning

Staff were asked how the Department should be viewed in the next five years. Descriptors included:

- A variety of choices for everyone
- High participation rates
- Collaborating well with community partners
- Public knows of all the opportunities available
- Providing welcoming and safe spaces
- Maximized use of programs and facilities
- High user satisfaction levels
- Great cohesion and pride within the community

A Variety of Choices

As North Dumfries is known as being a “hockey town”, a common concern that was raised was ensuring that there was a variety of leisure choices for all ages within the community. Many municipalities offer a range of choices including active, creative, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) programs, and general interest opportunities. Taking stock of these opportunities by age group would serve to identify gaps before engaging the public in identifying their more specific needs. Staff felt that there is a gap in opportunities for adults and that the Leisure and Lifestyle Advisory Committee (working in coordination concert with Township staff) may play a role to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate.

Active Spaces and Places

Staff felt that residents enjoy being active outdoors and the use of trails has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic – especially for families. Staff reported that requests have been received for enhancements to the parks and trails system, new active transportation opportunities, and winter access to outdoor parks and spaces. Staff expressed that the Master Plan should determine the need for indoor and outdoor recreation amenities. The lack of leisure opportunities outside of Ayr was also mentioned, as well as how the Township can offer and enable more special events. Additionally, the need for more programming spaces was identified.

Including Underrepresented Residents

Staff identified that leisure services in North Dumfries is not inclusive of all residents such as persons with disabilities and persons experiencing financial barriers. There are, however, mechanisms where youth may receive subsidies for certain activities such as hockey (Community Foundation and the Family Counselling Centre). It was identified that an access policy is scheduled to come to Council in 2023.

Service and Staffing Standards

It is hoped that staff will gain the mandate to provide services directly where community groups or private providers are not providing leisure opportunities. The Township's business plan for the Department recognizes that there will be a staffing implication should programming be an area to expand services. However, there have been challenges obtaining adequate staff numbers to offer services and respond to requirements such as vaccinations checks, etc. The master planning process should assist in identifying where staff resources are needed.

Communications and Promotion of Opportunities

Township staff are often receiving public inquiries about what activities are available in North Dumfries, although there is currently no central repository of this information. Staff felt that it would be helpful for residents to have one central source of information such as an online Leisure Guide that may boost awareness and participation in leisure activities in North Dumfries. There has been a hesitancy to promote the opportunities of private service providers.

Financial and Asset Management

North Dumfries has completed a 10-year capital forecast for facilities and assets and has a reserve fund in place to provide for repairs and replacements. The Township sets aside funding each year to offset these ongoing capital costs; however, major capital projects such as new construction or redevelopment would require financing strategies including, but not limited to, grants, user fees, taxation, etc.

Working Better Together with Other Providers

The Township is one of many providers of leisure services in North Dumfries. Other groups include the Region of Waterloo Library, Langs / Community Health Centre, the Early Years Centre, Family Counselling Service and others who provide leisure opportunities for varying age groups. It would be important to know how many opportunities are being provided and the capacity/registrations numbers for each age group and if there are any gaps. Working together would be a good start in identifying gaps and working together to address community issues where sport and recreation could make a positive impact.

Setting of Fees

The Township's User Fees and Charges By-law is reviewed annually and adjustments are made based on the fees that are set in adjacent municipalities.

Complaints Management

It was mentioned that community concerns are often expressed through social media, without Township staff intervention. This can often lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings, as well as exacerbating issues. It was suggested that complaints get tracked so that staff and Council can be proactive and respond, where possible.

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

The Township has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by offering online programming, although it was mentioned that reliable and high-speed internet access has been a challenge for some residents, particularly for those in rural areas. The Township has reopened some of its public facilities (e.g., ice sports) with limitations (no showers, masks, distancing etc.), although some programming was discontinued due to room capacity limits. Third-party security services have been contracted as staff could not accommodate this requirement.

4.7 Interviews with Key Informants

Interviews were undertaken with key informants including each member of Council to discuss the management, operations and delivery of leisure services in North Dumfries. An interview was also held with the Centre for Community Group to discuss their vision for North Dumfries and potential opportunities to collaborate with the Township on future initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of residents in the community. Input from these interviews were wide-ranging and have been utilized to inform the Master Plan.

4.8 Written Input

A project e-mail address was created to provide the public with an opportunity to provide written input. One submission was received to date with potential program suggestions including painting, dance, guest speakers, and drop-in sports.

A member of the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee undertook a separate community survey with approximately 200 individuals on July 8 and October 7, 2020 and January 6, 2022. The survey posed a question asking respondents what is missing in Ayr and North Dumfries. The top responses was the desire for a swimming pool. Other responses included converting the Ayr Community Centre arena with an artificial turf field for indoor sports, re-purposing the upstairs space for disc golf, and creating space for programs including fitness, arts and crafts, and other indoor activities. Suggestions were also made for a boat launch on the Nith River, bike trails that connect to existing trail systems, including those managed by the Region and the Conservation Authority, escape room, permanent dog park, and more. Transportation services to special events was also expressed.

Residents within the Brown settlement area also submitted comments received from an independent survey conducted on January 22, 2022. Suggestions were expressed for enhanced leisure services in the Township, as well as at the local Browns Park. Including, but not limited to, an indoor pool and gymnasium, multi-purpose courts, trails, and park naturalization.

4.9 Final Public Information Centre

A final public information centre was held virtually from May 3 to May 20, 2022 to collect public feedback on the draft Master Plan. A full and summary version of the draft Master Plan was posted on the Township's website together with an online survey to collect public feedback. Hardcopies were also made available at community facilities and Kirkwood Apartments. Township staff promoted the public information centre through social media, e-mails to community stakeholders, newspaper advertisements, and through Council and the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee. Feedback from 19 respondents were received and reviewed. Where necessary, revisions to the draft Master Plan were undertaken prior to finalization, which are reflected throughout.

4.10 Council Presentations

Presentations to Council were made at key points in the planning process including to introduce the Master Plan project, scope and consulting team, as well as to present and receive feedback on the draft Master Plan. A final presentation was made to Council in June 2022 to seek approval of the Master Plan as a guiding document.



5.0 Recreation Facilities

5.1 Facility Summary

Table 6 summarizes the indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural spaces that are provided by the Township of North Dumfries. These spaces are complementary to the facilities available from non-municipal organizations and private sector providers found in North Dumfries.

Table 6: Township of North Dumfries Facility Summary

Facility Type	Supply	Locations
Arenas	2	Ayr Community Centre, North Dumfries Community Complex
Community Halls*	3	Ayr Community Centre, North Dumfries Community Complex (MacNeil Hall), Roseville Community Centre
Multi-Purpose Spaces*	3	North Dumfries Community Complex (Conference Room, Event Room and Fitness Room)
Seniors' Centre	1	North Dumfries Community Complex
Soccer Fields	9 Total	
Senior	2	<u>Senior:</u> Cowan Park (2)
Intermediate	4	<u>Intermediate:</u> Clyde Park, Cowan Park (2), Piper's Glen Park
Junior	3	<u>Junior:</u> Branchton Park, Browns Park, Roseville Community Centre
Ball Diamonds	8 Total	
Lit	3	<u>Lit:</u> Schmidt Park (2), Victoria Park
Unlit	5	<u>Unlit:</u> Branchton Park, Clyde Park, Piper's Glen Park, Roseville Community Centre, Victoria Park
Playgrounds	9	Branchton Park, Browns Park, Clyde Park, Cowan Park, Douglas Park, Hilltop Drive Park, Piper's Glen Park, Roseville Community Centre, Victoria Park
Skateboard Park	1	Cowan Park
Spray Pad	1	Cowan Park
Basketball Courts	1	Branchton Park
Tennis Courts	2	Victoria Park (2 lit)

*Community halls are considered to be large indoor spaces that can accommodate a variety of community and recreation activities and are generally equipped with supporting amenities such as a kitchen and storage. Multi-purpose spaces are small community rooms that can be used for meetings and programs; associated amenities may vary by location.

5.2 Arenas

There are two single ice pads in North Dumfries. The North Dumfries Community Complex was constructed in 2011 and offers an NHL-size ice pad (200' by 85') with bowl seating for 950 spectators, concession, change rooms, and other supporting amenities such as a walking track and meeting spaces. The Township's most recent Facility Condition Assessment identified this building to be in 'Good' condition.



The Ayr Community Centre was constructed in 1977, although major arena components such as the floor slab and refrigeration lines are older. The arena contains an ice pad (174' by 72') and change rooms, both of which are undersized compared to current standards and expectations, as well as spectator seating. The Township's most recent Facility Condition Assessment identified this building to be in 'Poor' condition.

Ice sports such as hockey and figure skating have long been considered a cornerstone of Canadian pastime activities. Recent data from Hockey Canada, however, indicates that participation in minor hockey is steadily declining. Hockey Canada reported that there were nearly 210,000 affiliated minor players in Ontario for the 2019/20 season, which was a 16% decline from the peak during the 2008/09 season.⁹ This can be linked to several factors such as the high cost of participation, safety concerns, competing interests, aging populations, and competition from leagues/organizations that are not sanctioned by Hockey Canada. Skate Canada reports that participation rates increased marginally by 2% between 2014 and 2020.¹⁰ During the 2020/2021 ice season, many organizations were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and in some cases, were not able to offer regular programming. As a result, participation levels are generally lower compared to historical trends, which is expected to continue over the short term. There is also a concern that some participants will not continue when regular league play resumes.

Contrary to Provincial trends, local arena participation in ice sports is increasing. The Township's 2020 Arena Strategy identified that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 911 youth and adult players registered for the 2019/2020 season, which was a 16% increase from the 2008/2009 season.¹¹ Part of this growth was driven by the popularity of Ayr Rockets Girls Hockey. Provincially, participation in girls' hockey continue to rise due to factors such as minor and international sport opportunities, changing lifestyles and gender equity efforts to minimize sport participation for females. As a result, municipalities including North Dumfries can expect greater competition for ice time from male and female arena organizations.

The Master Plan community survey found that participation in arena activities is high. Nearly half (49%) of respondents identified that at least one member of their household participated in arena activities in 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), which was the fifth most popular leisure pursuit. Nearly two-thirds

⁹ Hockey Canada Annual General Meeting Reports.

¹⁰ Skate Canada Annual General Meeting Reports.

¹¹ Township of North Dumfries. Arena Strategy. 2020.

(63%) of respondents also supported investment in arenas. Several public comments and requests were received for constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex.

Similarly, consultation with community stakeholders also revealed a strong preference for a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex, which was consistent with the input received when the Arena Strategy was prepared. Organizations identified benefits associated with a twin ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex including enhanced program and tournament opportunities and access to modern amenities and design. Groups expressed several limitations associated with the Ayr Community Centre arena including the undersized ice pad and change rooms, as well as limited parking. Due to the age of the building, respondents also indicated that it was not accessible or welcoming to participants and spectators. Additionally, suggestions were made to repurpose the Ayr Community Centre to broaden the variety of indoor facility space. There was a desire for flexible, multi-purpose space for meetings, indoor active recreation activities such as sports and arts and cultural activities (e.g., programs and performances); an indoor turf field was also suggested.

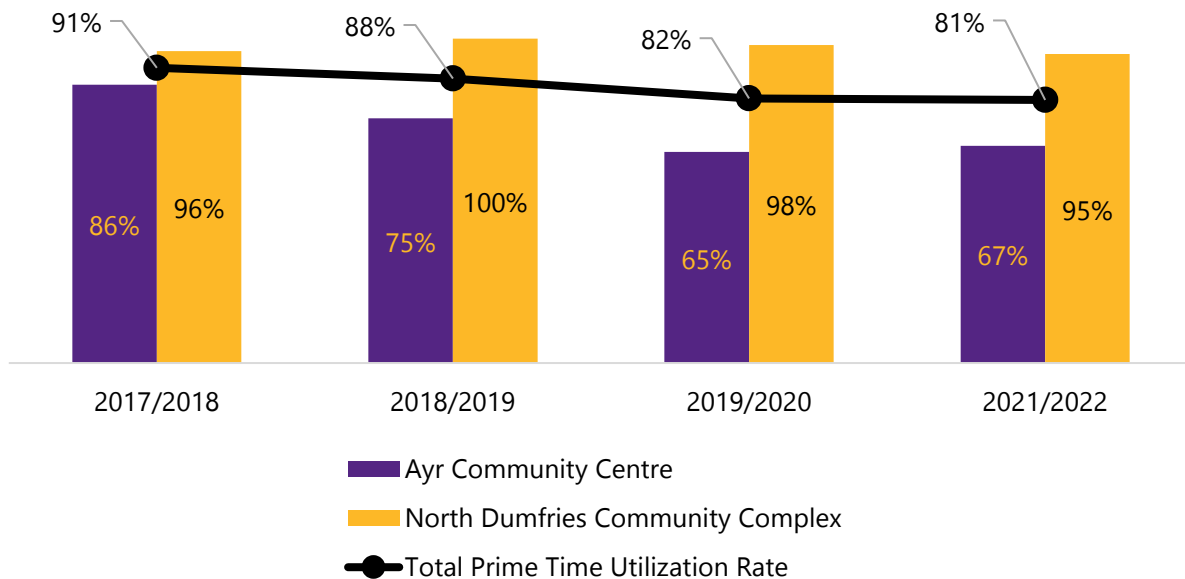


An extensive analysis of ice usage was undertaken as part of the Arena Strategy. It found that between the 2017/2018 and 2019/2020 ice seasons, the Township had a total prime-time usage rate of 82%. On a location basis, the prime-time utilization rate at the Ayr Community Centre declined from 86% to 65%. This trend was reflective of fewer bookings by minor hockey and figure skating groups and the Township's policy to accommodate all games at the North Dumfries Community Complex to offer a higher level of service to users and achieve operating efficiencies as the Ayr Community Centre is closed during certain periods of the week due to low demand, such as weekday mornings and afternoons, as well as some weekend times and late nights.

By contrast, ice usage at the North Dumfries Community Complex increased during the same period. The arena analysis found at the prime-time usage rate at this location was 98% during the 2019/2020 season, an increase of 2% from the 2017/2018 season. This level of use is indicative of an arena that is operating at full capacity. Another notable finding was that non-prime time usage at this location has been increasing, particularly during the early weekend morning and weeknights.

The COVID-19 has had a significant impact on arena use and as a result, municipalities including North Dumfries were not able to offer a regular ice time during the 2020/2021 season due to Province-mandated facility closures. The Township has been able to offer some ice time for the 2021/2022 season and findings suggest that there continues to be pressure for ice time in North Dumfries. On a system-wide basis, the Township continues to maintain a strong prime-time usage rate of 81%. The North Dumfries Community Complex had a prime-time usage rate of 95%, while the Ayr Community Centre had a usage rate of 67% (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Arena Prime-Time Utilization Rate, 2017 to 2022



Source: Township of North Dumfries. Utilization for the 2020/2021 season not shown due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Arena Strategy identified that a market-driven participation target is the preferred approach for identifying arena needs as ice demand is heavily influenced by local participation rates and programming. Key considerations that also formed part of the assessment process included influencing factors such as registration, usage, stakeholder input, and community growth projections. Based on these inputs, the Arena Strategy recommended that the Township adopt a target of one ice pad per 400 youth participants. Based on projected participation rates, the Township is expected to have a deficit of 0.3 ice pads by 2031. However, it is recognized that the impact of Covid-19 on ice sports may impact demand, at least in the short- to medium-term.

The findings support continuing to maintain access to two municipal rinks to preserve long-term access to ice to meet community needs. It is important to note that community stakeholders expressed that a reduction in the current ice supply would have a detrimental impact to their organization's ability to accommodate new participants and to grow their programming. While there may be available ice time in other communities, they are not guaranteed access to suitable ice times. New arenas are also being planned in the region; however, these facilities are intended to replace other aging arenas and to address growth related needs.

The Arena Strategy evaluated two arena provision options:

- a. Renovate the Ayr Community Centre; or
- b. Expand the North Dumfries Community Complex to add a second ice pad and decommission the Ayr Community Centre as an ice venue.

A detailed analysis of the two arena provision options was evaluated that considered current facility conditions, capital and operating costs, and funding and partnership opportunities. The benefits

associated with multi-pad facilities was also an important consideration as they offer efficiencies in construction and operation, further bolsters facilities as community hubs and serves more people as a destination, supports tournaments and events, and more. Based on these factors, it was recommended that the Township proceed with constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex and to decommission the Ayr Community Centre arena. The research and consultation conducted for this Master Plan has found continued support for a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex.

The research and consultation associated with the development of this Master Plan identified opportunities to repurpose the Ayr Community Centre arena to address other indoor space needs including a large, gymnasium-type space for active recreation and community uses, as well as multi-purpose spaces (see Section 5.4). Addressing these indoor space needs could only be achieved if the Township moves forward with constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex. With this in mind, the Arena Strategy recommendation continues to be supported. It should be noted that during the Master Plan consultation process, the Centre for the Community Group reiterated their support for constructing a second ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex and is open to working with the Township to provide financial support towards the development of this expansion project. This contribution should be supplement with other funding sources outlined in the Arena Strategy including development charges, government grants, debt financing, user fees and capital surcharges, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising, and more.

In terms of timing, the Arena Strategy identified that the Township should be in a position to open the new second ice pad by 2025. It is recognized that arena usage and participation levels have been impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While municipal facilities reopen and organizations return to play, historical usage and participation levels may not return within the short-to medium-term; however, it is recognized that the Ayr Community Centre arena is in an advanced lifecycle stage where many major components need replacement in the short-term including arena slab, lighting, interior fixtures and more. Recognizing that the Ayr Community Centre arena has not been in full operation in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that major mechanical components will experience increased wear when it comes back into use, which may accelerate the need to replace aging components. For this reason, it is recommended that the Township continue to maintain the recommended timeline for constructing the new ice pad.

Recommendations – Arenas

1. Proceed with constructing a **second NHL-size ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex**. Once complete, the Ayr Community Centre arena should be decommissioned and repurposed to address other community needs (see Recommendation #5).

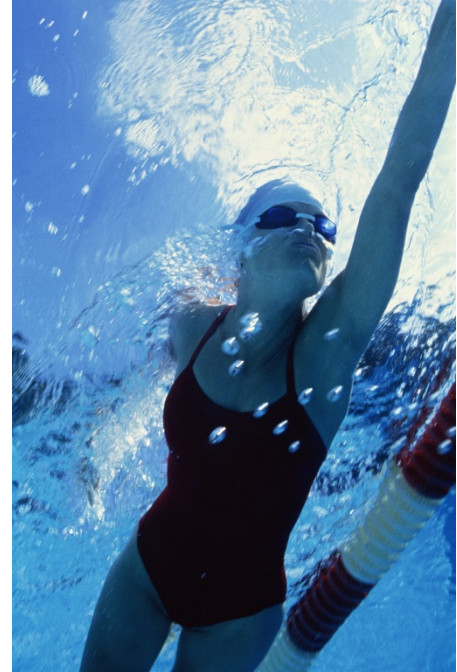
5.3 Aquatics

Indoor Aquatic Centres

Learning to swim is an essential life skill that residents of all ages and abilities can benefit from through structured programming or drop-in opportunities and as a result, indoor aquatic centres are highly sought-after public facilities. The Master Plan consultation process yielded strong support for an indoor aquatic centre in North Dumfries. On a Township-wide basis, four-out-of-five (80%) of respondents in the community survey supported investment in an indoor swimming pool, which was the fourth highest

priority among 34 different facility types; residents in Ayr were more likely to support investment in an indoor swimming pool compared to those who reside in the rural area and hamlets. Several requests for an indoor swimming pool were also made through other Master Plan consultation activities. It was also noted that some residents were opposed to an indoor swimming pool in the Township due to the cost and the fact that there are several swimming opportunities available in adjacent municipalities.

Provincially, indoor pools are generally provided at a rate of anywhere between 30,000 and 50,000 residents, which includes both primary and secondary markets (e.g., non-residents). While communities with a smaller population have provided indoor pools, they have done so recognizing the high annual cost of operating at a significant deficit. It is noteworthy that some Township residents already have good access indoor pools in other communities. The Master Plan community survey revealed that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 47% of respondents participated in recreational swimming and 29% participated in swim lessons. With no pool in the Township, it is expected that many of these residents travelled outside of North Dumfries for swimming (while some may have access to backyard outdoor pools).



The Township's secondary market is also limited given that there is a healthy supply of indoor pools in abutting municipalities including Cambridge, Kitchener and Brant. A regional scan of facilities revealed that there are ten indoor pools within a 17-to-33-kilometre drive (up to 30 minutes) from the centre of Ayr (Table 7). One of these indoor pool locations includes the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre, which features competition level amenities including a 65-metre and 25-metre rectangular pool, warm water pool and hydro-therapy pool. New aquatic centres are also being planned in the south end of Kitchener and Cambridge, the latter one is slated to replace an existing aging pool. In addition to these indoor pools, there are nine outdoor pools that operate in adjacent communities during the summer season.

With indoor swimming pools in the region within a reasonable driving distance of the Township, North Dumfries residents have a range of choices for aquatic opportunities. It is recognized that some of these communities impose non-resident fees on its registered swim programs including Cambridge (20%) and Kitchener (25%), although there is no surcharge on drop-in programs. While this charge applies to North Dumfries residents, it is less than the financial burden on households to support a public indoor pool through user fees and taxation.

Indoor swimming pools are capital intensive projects, although they can be managed with debt financing, fundraising, grants and other funding sources. Annual operational costs can have a significant impact on the municipal tax rate, particularly for small municipalities such as North Dumfries. Indoor swimming pools are provided as a municipal service and are generally operated at a deficit. Generally, most municipal indoor swimming pools carry annual operating deficits in the range of \$200,000 to \$500,000 or more, depending upon the pool design, participation rates and other factors. Staffing indoor pools is also a challenge that many smaller communities face, particularly those without post-secondary institutions. For a community with an existing and projected population as North Dumfries, operating deficits could be in the \$500,000+ range annually, especially with the abundance of indoor swimming opportunities in nearby communities.

Table 7: Regional Supply of Indoor Swimming Pools

Indoor Swimming Pool	Driving Distance*	Pool Type
Brantford		
Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre	25 kilometres (25 minutes)	65-metre and 25-metre rectangular pools, warm water leisure pool and a hydrotherapy pool
Cambridge		
Chaplin Family YMCA Cambridge	19 kilometres (22 minutes)	25-metre rectangular pool, toddler pool, whirlpool
Community Recreation Centre – Southeast Galt (Future)	19 kilometres (21 minutes)	Future 25-metre rectangular pool, warm water leisure pool
John Dolson Indoor Pool**	17 kilometres (18 minutes)	25-metre rectangular pool
W.G. Johnson Indoor Pool	27 kilometres (22 minutes)	25-yard rectangular pool, warm water pool
Fairview Mennonite Home (privately-owned)	22 kilometres (21 minutes)	Warm water leisure pool
Kitchener		
A.R. Kaufman Family YMCA Kitchener	25 kilometres (24 minutes)	Warm water leisure pool
Breithaupt Centre	33 kilometres (27 minutes)	25-yard rectangular pool and a warm water leisure pool
Forest Heights Pool	18 kilometres (20 minutes)	25-meter rectangular pool and a warm water leisure pool
Lyle Hallman Pool	29 kilometres (25 minutes)	25-metre rectangular pool and a warm water leisure pool
RBJ Schlegel Aquatic Centre (Future)	13 kilometres (15 minutes)	25-metre rectangular pool, warm water pool

City of Kitchener note: Cameron Heights Pool is excluded as it is available for sports groups and staff training and does not offer public swimming lessons.

*Driving distance and time derived from Google Maps using the intersection of Northumberland Street and Stanley Street as the approximate centre of Ayr.

**The John Dolson indoor pool is planned to be decommissioned once the indoor swimming pool at the future community recreation centre is completed.

There are municipalities across the Ontario whose populations are below the noted range, although often using alternative operating models (e.g., partnerships with the YMCA); some have found success or accept the implications on the municipal tax rate, while others have struggled financially to sustain their operations. The decision to construct an indoor swimming pool is made from the perspective that intrinsic value (e.g., community benefit that everyone should have the opportunity to learn to swim), will outweigh the financial investment. There may be an opportunity for the Township to leverage external funding

support from one or more partners or secure a third-party operating agreement; however, there are currently no known potential partners at this time.

With consideration given to the factors identified above, an indoor swimming pool in North Dumfries is not recommended over the time horizon of the Master Plan. While there is demand for a local indoor swimming pool in the Township, the regional supply of indoor (and outdoor) swimming pools are expected to meet community needs over the next ten years. During planning period, the Township should encourage the use of these regional pools and engage these communities to seek agreements for reduced or no non-resident fees to ensure affordable access to aquatic programming for residents, which may include providing financial contributions towards the operations of regional aquatic facilities in place of non-resident fees. Negotiating registration slots for North Dumfries residents should also be explored.

As the Township is expected to grow by 65% over the planning period to reach a population of 17,500 residents, there is merit in revisiting indoor pool needs beyond 2031, when the Township approaches a population of 25,000 to 30,000 people. It is known that there is community interest in Brant County to establish an indoor swimming pool; the community is currently served by an outdoor pool. Over the long-term, the Township may wish to engage Brant County to explore the feasibility of a potential partnership in facility provision.

While an indoor aquatic centre is not required during the planning period, the Township should evaluate potential site opportunities in the interim to ensure a suitable location is identified/acquired. Considering potential locations early positions the Township to respond quickly once a future decision is made regarding the provision of an indoor pool. This will be particularly important given the rising cost of land and the expected pace of land development in the Township. As part of the evaluation process, consideration should be given to site criteria including, but not limited to a central location for all residents, existing Township property, opportunities to expand existing facilities or co-locate with other civic uses, site servicing, and other criteria to be identified by Township staff. This Master Plan identifies the need to acquire community-level parkland, which may present co-location opportunities with existing or future community facilities.

Spray Pads

The spray pad at Cowan Park is the Township's only outdoor water installation that was completed in 2013 and consists of spray features and splash buckets. Spray pads are popular among young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot summer day. They have been proven to be more cost effective than outdoor pools and wading pools as they are less expensive to construct and do not require regular staffing (although monitoring filtration equipment may be required). Spray pads also offer flexibility in design as they can be provided in a range of stimulating features to enhance the aquatic experience for users of all ages.



The Master Plan community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 44% of respondents used a spray pad, which was the eighth most popular parks and recreation activity. More than 60% of respondents also supported additional investment in spray pads, which ranked 16th out of 34 facility types, suggesting that this may be a medium priority for respondents.

It is common for small urban and rural communities such as North Dumfries to provide one spray pad in its primary settlement area. Small-scale spray features may be considered in smaller hamlets to ensure that aquatic-based opportunities are available in the rural area. Opportunity exists at the Roseville Community Centre as the integration of a spray feature would further strengthen this location as a community hub for gatherings and support programs and events at this location. One or two basic spray components are recommended to be installed at this location, preferably adjacent to the playground.

Recommendations – Aquatics

2. Engage adjacent municipalities that provide indoor swimming pools to investigate strategies to maintain access to aquatic opportunities for North Dumfries residents such as providing **financial support towards existing pool operations** and **negotiating registration slots**.
3. Re-visit the feasibility of an **indoor aquatic centre** beyond the planning period as the population reaches 25,000 to 30,000 residents. The Township may wish to initiate discussions with Brant County to explore the potential for a joint indoor swimming pool. In the interim, the Township may wish to evaluate potential site opportunities to plan for a potential indoor aquatic centre with consideration given to a central location for all residents, existing Township property, opportunities to expand existing facilities or co-locate with other civic uses (including a future community park), site servicing, and other criteria to be identified by Township staff.
4. Construct a **basic spray feature** adjacent to the playground at the Roseville Community Centre.

5.4 Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Spaces

The Township offers six community halls and multi-purpose spaces. Community halls are found at the North Dumfries Community Complex (MacNeil Hall), Roseville Community Centre and Ayr Community Centre. Three multi-purpose spaces are also found at the North Dumfries Community Complex including the Fitness Room, Event Room and Dumfries Room.

Community halls are considered to be large indoor spaces that can accommodate a variety of community and recreation activities and are generally equipped with supporting amenities such as a kitchen and storage. Multi-purpose spaces are small community rooms that can be used for meetings and programs; associated amenities may vary by location.



In addition to the Township's community halls and multi-purpose spaces, the Seniors' Centre at the North Dumfries Community Complex can also be rented. Leased spaces also exist to groups including the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society at the North Dumfries Community Complex and the Ayr-North Dumfries Lions Club at the Roseville Community Centre. Community meeting spaces are also available through others such as at the Ayr Public Library Branch and space providers in Waterloo Region, many of which are conveniently located within driving distance.

The Township's halls and multi-purpose spaces provide flexible meeting places that accommodate a variety of uses including meetings, birthdays, leisure programs, social events, private rentals, and other indoor gatherings. Amenities vary by location and may include kitchens, seating, tables, storage and more. As a best practice, community halls and multi-purpose spaces are typically incorporated into facility designs as complementary spaces to other facility components such as at the North Dumfries Community Complex. Co-locating these spaces within a multi-use facility achieves benefits in cross-programming opportunities, efficiencies in construction, and maintenance and management. For these reasons, constructing new stand-alone community spaces are generally discouraged in favour of a community hub model.

The MacNeil Hall at the North Dumfries Community Complex is the Township's most popular multi-use space that is supported by a kitchen, bar, dividing walls and storage. MacNeil Hall is used regularly throughout the week for a wide variety of activities including social parties, weddings, fundraising events, active recreation programs such as pickleball and group fitness, summer camp programs, and community rentals, as well as Township-led special events. The popularity of MacNeil Hall suggests that there is demand for large indoor space, which can become a challenge when groups and uses are competing for time. This space is also used by the Township as a polling station during the election season, which tends to displace regular users for a period of time. The lack of a high school gymnasium in the Township further exacerbates pressure at MacNeil Hall.

The Township's other halls and community spaces generally have low to moderate levels of utilization, which is typical compared to other municipalities. In many communities, use of halls and meeting spaces have been declining due to competition from non-municipal providers that may be able to offer a full range of services and amenities. Nevertheless, they are important community facilities ensuring that there are publicly accessible and affordable meeting spaces, as well as venues to deliver vital Community-driven and Township programs and services. They are not typically used intensively or viewed as significant revenue generators.

The consultation process revealed that there is a demand a large, gymnasium-type space for active indoor programs such as fitness, pickleball, volleyball, and basketball, as well as a large space for performances, with supporting amenities such as storage and a large stage with a backstage area. There was also a desire for more multi-purpose spaces to accommodate community rentals and programs.

Section 5.2 recommended that the arena at the Ayr Community Centre be repurposed to another in-demand use once a second ice pad is constructed at the North Dumfries Community Complex. Repurposing the Ayr Community Centre arena to indoor multi-purpose space would represent an excellent opportunity to address needs and strengthen the location as a walkable community hub in Ayr, while alleviating pressure at the MacNeil Hall. The Township should undertake an architectural exercise to develop a creative multi-use facility by repurposing the Ayr Community Centre arena. At a minimum, consideration should be given to a large, gymnasium-type space that can accommodate active recreation and other community uses with a stage and modest backstage area, and other supporting amenities such as storage, kitchen and a dividing wall. Multi-purpose rooms should also be incorporated with storage,

dividing walls, counterspace and sinks. This will create recreation and cultural facility space to accommodate a wide range of activities, special events and community gatherings, in-line with the input heard through the Master Plan's consultations.

During the planning period, the Township should focus on promoting the use of existing spaces and seeking ways to bolster utilization such as working with groups to encourage the use of space and exploring new program opportunities. Strategic capital improvements should also be undertaken, including updates to meet accessibility requirements and address aging components identified in the Facility Condition Assessments. For example, consultation with stakeholders identified the desire to update kitchen and washroom at the Roseville Community Centre. These improvements have the potential to improve the desirability of these space for rentals and community programs. Recognizing the existing outdoor park space and amenities found at this site, enhancements to the Roseville Community Centre strengthens this location as a community hub for a variety of parks, recreation, culture and community events, activities and other opportunities.

From a geographic distribution perspective, it is noted that the Township's facilities are primarily located on the west side of the Township in Ayr and Roseville, which suggests that there is a gap on the east side of North Dumfries. However, indoor recreational and cultural needs for residents in this area of the Township are generally met through amenities located in adjacent municipalities. For example, the Clyde Hamlet is located approximately 10 kilometres (10-minute drive) from the future Cambridge Recreation Centre (completion by 2025), which is expected to offer an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, indoor walking track, multi-purpose program rooms and a library, as well as outdoor recreation space.

Over the next ten years, the Township may require new indoor facilities to address other corporate needs that are beyond the scope of leisure services. It would be prudent for the Township to evaluate potential opportunities to incorporate leisure space as a part of any significant facility design, particularly with multi-purpose space to support program opportunities and to ensure access to affordable public meeting space. As a part of this process, the Township should evaluate its space needs with consideration given to potential program opportunities for the space, community partners seeking space, and corporate space needs that could be accommodated with multi-purpose spaces such as staff meetings and training.

Recommendations – Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Space

5. Undertake an **architectural exercise for the Ayr Community Centre** to creatively repurpose the arena to include a large indoor, gymnasium-type space for active recreation and community uses with a stage and modest backstage area, as well as other supporting amenities such as storage, kitchen and a dividing wall. Multi-purpose rooms should also be incorporated with storage, dividing walls, counterspace and sinks. This exercise would include the second-floor hall space, particularly with respect to accessibility and aging building components noted in the Facility Condition Assessment.
6. Promote the use of existing spaces and seek ways to **bolster utilization** such as working with community groups to increase the use of community halls and multi-purpose spaces and in developing new and expanded program opportunities.
7. Undertake strategic capital improvements at the **Roseville Community Centre** including accessibility updates, kitchen, washrooms and aging building components identified in the Facility Condition Assessment. Improvements should position the Roseville Community Centre as a community hub for indoor and outdoor leisure activities, community programs and events.

Recommendations – Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Space

8. The development of any new and significant Township facilities should consider the integration of **multi-purpose space** that is flexibly designed to accommodate programming and rentals, as well as corporate functions such as staff meetings and training space.

5.5 Indoor Artificial Turf Fields

While the Township does not provide any indoor artificial turf fields, there are many examples of municipalities playing a role in providing these types of facilities to provide enhanced recreation opportunities that complement outdoor activities and respond to demands for year-round play. While the primary use of artificial turf fields is for soccer, they can accommodate other activities that require space for team conditioning, training, fitness, and more.

Requests for indoor artificial turf fields were made through the Master Plan consultation process. It was suggested that the Ayr Community Centre arena could be repurposed to an indoor artificial turf field to accommodate year-round field sports as well as other uses such as fitness and dryland training. However, indoor artificial turf fields are not as flexible in accommodating recreation and non-recreational uses that were heard through the consultation process such as hard surface sports and arts and cultural activities. Due to the unique nature of indoor artificial turf fields, they tend to be regional facilities that serve a wide catchment of residents and non-residents. A regional facility scan revealed that there are currently four indoor artificial turf fields within a 20-minute drive of Ayr in Cambridge, Kitchener and Brant County. Due to the presence of these existing artificial turf fields and projected population of the Township during this Master Plan period, this level of service is not recommended for the Township.

5.6 Age-Based Spaces

Dedicated or priority-based space for youth, older adults and seniors is important in any community as these age groups have specific needs and desires. The availability of space for youth, older adults and seniors provides locations that create a sense of belonging where individuals can gather, participate in activities, share interests, and socialize. Research has shown that spaces for these age groups function as safe spaces that facilitate positive reinforcement to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health, as well as social isolation.



The senior centre at the North Dumfries Community Complex offers many of these benefits. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the senior centre functioned as a gathering space for older adults and seniors to participate in a variety of traditional older adult and senior activities such as cards and other social activities. The space is also used as a multi-purpose meeting space for meetings and programs. The space is well used throughout the week during the daytime and evenings. The Master Plan recognizes that the Township has received past requests for enhanced supporting amenities such as improved seating and tables. These requests have been addressed, as necessary. It will be important for the Township to engage users on an on-going basis to ensure that needs are being met and to identify opportunities to make the North Dumfries Community Complex and other public spaces more age-friendly. Strategies to ensure that

the Township's parks and facilities have been identified throughout the Master Plan including designing parks to be accessible and welcoming, with consideration given to walking pathways and comfort amenities (e.g., seating and shade), outdoor fitness equipment, and moving forward with upgrading park washrooms (including accessibility upgrades).

The Township historically offered a youth space at the North Dumfries Community Complex; however, the space has been re-purposed to administrative office space for some time. The Township has plans to expand the North Dumfries Community Complex to re-locate administration staff, which will provide an opportunity for the Township to return this room to a dedicated youth space. Generally speaking, youth are seeking a variety of casual spaces such as a lounge, study space and access to a computer, although this should be confirmed through further youth input. The Master Plan consultation process found a significant community benefit to having a casual, accessible gathering space for local youth that could also function as a location for programming.

The Master Plan community survey also found that there was a desire for a range of general interest programs such as arts and crafts, coding, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) activities. The Township should continue to explore these and other potential program opportunities with youth. Potential partnership opportunities with the Langs Community Health Centre is encouraged to enhance programming of this proposed youth space, given that the organization currently leases space at the North Dumfries Community Complex and provides youth programming within the Township. Augmenting this space with satellite drop-in space for youth or a "youth pop-up" at locations at the Roseville Community Centre and the Ayr Community Centre (once re-purposed) should also be pursued to enhance access to youth space and associated program opportunities in North Dumfries.

Recommendations –Age-Based Spaces

9. Regularly engage the older adult and senior community to identify and prioritize improvements to encourage use of the **Seniors' Centre** at the North Dumfries Community Complex, as well as to understand how to make Township spaces and facilities more **age-friendly with consideration given to strategies identified in this Master Plan** (e.g., accessible park pathways, outdoor fitness equipment and comfort amenities such as seating, shade etc.).
10. Potentially working with the Langs Community Health Centre, re-establish **youth drop-in space** at the North Dumfries Community Complex to strengthen this location as a youth activity hub, potentially with a lounge, study and computer area, and active space to support future program opportunities (e.g., general interest, STEM, etc.) and complement existing youth-oriented amenities that currently exist on site.
11. Explore opportunities to establish **satellite youth drop-in space or "youth pop-up"** at the Roseville Community Centre and the Ayr Community Centre (once repurposed).

5.7 Cultural Spaces and Resources

Research demonstrates that Ontarians have a wide variety of leisure interests, including a heightened desire for meaningful cultural experiences. There is evidence that there is a desire for more cultural opportunities in North Dumfries as the Master Plan community survey found that expectations for cultural spaces are not being met. Suggestions for cultural spaces and activities were expressed including live theatre and music concerts, arts and cultural programs, farmers' markets and more.

The Township already plays a key role in supporting existing arts and cultural groups in North Dumfries to allow organizations to grow and flourish such as the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society, which has dedicated space at the North Dumfries Community Complex. The Master Plan also highlights strategies to enhance the use of existing Township facilities and spaces for arts and cultural opportunities (e.g., re-purposing space at the Ayr Community Centre to include provision of multi-purpose space, stage and storage areas).

North Dumfries residents are positioned to benefit from existing local and regional cultural spaces and resources that are found within the Township and in adjacent municipalities such as Kitchener, Cambridge, and adjacent rural municipalities such as performing arts theatres, farmers' markets, historical landmarks, libraries, private sector artisans and crafts persons, and more, many of which are within driving distance from Ayr. With key resources are highlighted below, the Township should continue to promote these opportunities to ensure their long-term success. Additional strategies to enhance support for arts and cultural programs and services in North Dumfries are explored in Section 7.5.

Ayr Cenotaph

The Ayr Cenotaph, which has existed for a century. Located on the corner of Northumberland Street and Stanley Street, the Ayr Cenotaph is a memorial for those who fought in World War I and II. As a part of the Downtown Ayr: Strategic Action Plan for Revitalization, the Ayr Cenotaph was enhanced and expanded in 2019 to strengthen the pedestrian scale of the downtown by creating an urban plaza for outdoor gatherings and support special events that take place at this location such as the Remembrance Day Ceremonies. Undertaken in collaboration between the Township and the Region of Waterloo, community organizations, local businesses and others, enhancements included eliminating the traffic island and north lane of Stanley Street to enlarge the pedestrian streetscape, flower beds and planters, flag poles, seating, bicycle racks and electrical outlets.

Region of Waterloo Library

The Region of Waterloo operates a library branch in downtown Ayr, which offers a wide selection of reading material for all ages, as well as computers and casual meeting space. The Library Branch offered in-person programming at this location prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and has since transitioned to a virtual format. A meeting room is available for rent, which is known as the Aileen Gingrich Room. The room is suitable for small gatherings and meetings and is equipped with amenities including tables, chairs, and audio and visual equipment. In addition to the downtown Ayr branch, a satellite library branch is located at the Clyde and Scott's Women's Institute near the Clyde settlement area on the east side of the Township, which is open one day a month.

Performing Arts Theatres and Centres for the Arts

Cultural facilities such as performing arts theatres and centres for the arts are important venues to showcase local talent, learn skills, share interests, and provide entertainment. The Township recognizes that there are several of these cultural spaces found throughout the Region of Waterloo including the Cambridge Centre for the Arts, Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge, Centre in the Square (Kitchener) Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, St. Jacob's County Playhouse, St. Jacob's Schoolhouse Theatre, and more, which are prominently featured on the North Dumfries website.

The Master Plan community survey found that there is support for local performance space in the Township. The Master Plan recognizes that the Ayr Community Centre has tremendous potential and has recommended that the arena space be repurposed for broad community use, which includes space for arts and cultural opportunities that can be used by groups such as the Ayr-Paris Band and others. Common requests were also heard for performing and creative arts classes, which could also be promoted within other Township spaces to ensure a range of opportunities and geographic distribution.

Museum Archives

North Dumfries and Waterloo Region boast a rich history that is celebrated, enjoyed and shared among residents and visitors. The North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society is the Township's local steward that plays an important role in preserving, protecting and promoting local history. The Township recognizes that there is a wealth of historical resources in Waterloo Region that are located within driving distance of the Township. These resources are promoted on the Township's website and include museums such the Woodside National Historic Site, Doon Heritage Village, Joseph Schneider Haus, McDougall Cottage, Waterloo Region Hall of Fame, Waterloo Region Museum and the West Montrose Covered Bridge. These historical locations are complemented by a plethora of electronic and physical archive resources including those highlighted in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of Historical Archive Resources

Historical Archive Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cambridge Archives and Records Centre City of Kitchener, Corporate Records and Archives Services City of Waterloo Museum From Pennsylvania to Waterloo: A Biographical History of Waterloo Township Grand River Rainbow Historical Project Heritage Resource Centre Historical Society of Maryhill and St. Boniface Kitchener Ontario Family History Centre Kitchener Public Library, Grace Schmidt Room of Local History Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies Mennonite Archives of Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Jerom's University Library and Archives The Company of Neighbours Hespeler Township of Wilmot, Castle Kilbride University of Waterloo Library, Special Collections Waterloo Historical Society Waterloo Land Registry Office Waterloo Public Library, Ellis Little Local History Room Waterloo Region Generations Waterloo Region Heritage Foundation Waterloo Region Museum Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society Wilfrid Laurier University, Archives and Special Collections

Public Art and Heritage Features

Incorporating public art and heritage features within municipal parks and facilities is a growing trend to recognize local heritage and artisans, as well as the organizations that are dedicated to promoting and preserving arts and culture. This includes selecting prominent or meaningful locations for public art installations, signage recognizing cultural heritage features, and the provision of permanent or temporary infrastructure to support special events, festivals and farmers' markets including, but not limited to, stages, servicing (electricity, water, etc.), fencing, and more.

Examples of arts and heritage features are found within the Township's parks and facilities, including posters and artifacts displaying the Township's history are prominently showcased at the North Dumfries Community Complex, in addition to the Ayr Cenotaph on the northeast corner of Northumberland Street and Stanley Street. Ongoing coordination with the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society and other organizations to promote arts and culture within the parks system should be a priority, which should include exploring strategic locations to incorporate public art within the Township's parks and facilities.



Recommendations – Cultural Spaces & Resources

12. Continue to **promote existing arts and cultural opportunities** available in North Dumfries and in adjacent municipalities, including the facilities, programs and services using online and print resources, including the Community Services Guide recommended in this Master Plan.
13. Identify opportunities to **incorporate public art and heritage features** in strategic locations within the Township's parks and facilities, such as cultural heritage signage, art installations, and supporting infrastructure to support special events and festivals. This may be explored in partnership with the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society and other community organizations.

5.8 Sports Fields

Soccer Fields

There are nine soccer fields in North Dumfries that come in junior, intermediate and senior sizes. Four soccer fields are located found at Cowan Park, which includes two full size fields, one of which is lit, and two intermediate size fields. Single soccer fields are located at Branchton Park, Browns Park, Clyde Park, Piper's Glen Park, and at the Roseville Community Centre.

Soccer experienced enormous growth in participation and popularity in the 1990s when it overtook baseball and hockey as the most popular organized sport among Canadian youth. Combined with its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient and relatively low-cost to participate, soccer fields are in high demand in many communities.



Cowan Park is the only location that is used by soccer groups. With full size and intermediate soccer fields consolidated at a single site, Cowan Park is an ideal location for hosting games and practices and tournaments, as the users of these fields also benefit from simultaneous programming and access to other site amenities such as parking and washrooms. The soccer fields are used by the Ayr Minor Soccer Club and by adult leagues and during a typical week in the soccer season, the fields are generally in use between Sunday and Thursday. On occasion, there is some use on Friday evenings and soccer tournaments are typically held during the weekends. The current usage profile is indicative of a soccer field supply that's well used. As Fridays and weekends generally have lower usage levels, there is capacity within the current system to accommodate additional usage.

As there are soccer fields in other park locations that are highly underutilized and as a result, they are maintained as open space grass fields (e.g., no sports field lining). Should soccer experience increased participation, the Township can improve one or more existing soccer fields in North Dumfries; the level of field maintenance would need to be revisited at this time. During the planning period, the Township should collect participation numbers in all soccer field activities by age group to better position the Township to assess trends. Continued monitoring of soccer field utilization should also assist in informing future demand.

With non-programmed soccer fields in the Township, opportunities also exist to repurpose underutilized fields to address other recreation demands. For example, the Master Plan revealed the need for hard surface activities including basketball, tennis and pickleball at Browns Park, which would require the removal of the existing soccer field (see Section 5.11 and 5.12 for more details). Opportunities to repurpose other non-programmed soccer fields should be undertaken to create unstructured/non-programmed field space for other activities such as walking paths, picnicking, local community events, farmer's markets, casual sports (area to throw frisbees and footballs, etc.), outdoor skating rinks, and other such activities.

Ball Diamonds

The Township provides eight ball diamonds in six parks, which are located at Branchton Park, Clyde Park, Piper's Glen Park, Roseville Community Centre, Schmidt Park (2), and Victoria Park (2). Lit ball diamonds are generally considered to be equivalent to 1.5 unlit ball diamonds as they can accommodate greater capacity during evening play. With one lit diamond at Victoria Park and two lit diamonds at Schmidt Park, the Township is providing an unlit equivalent supply of 9.5 ball diamonds.



After a period of declining participation, interest in organized minor baseball (and its variations) have been experiencing a resurgence in recent years. While growth in the sport has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Baseball Canada reported that the growing popularity of the sport is attributed to a greater focus on grassroots programs to encourage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport, and a greater focus on skill development. The popularity of the Toronto Blue Jays is also a factor.

While there are a number of ball diamonds located across the Township, the diamonds at Schmidt Park and Victoria Park are regularly programmed by user groups. Other ball diamonds in the Township are generally maintained for neighbourhood-level play (e.g., no sports field lining). Schmidt Park and Victoria Park both offer two diamonds and supporting amenities that make these locations desirable for games, practices and tournaments. The ball diamonds at Schmidt Park are well used during the week and are booked between four to five nights per week, as well as during the weekends for ball tournaments. The Ayr Minor Softball Association uses the ball diamonds at Victoria Park. During a typical ball season, the ball diamonds are used six days a week.

Consultation with the minor organization revealed that there is a desire to improve ball diamond quality to enhance the user experience. In this regard, the Township has recognized the need to undertake ball diamond improvements as capital plans are in place to replace the field lighting at Diamond 1 and install lighting at Diamond 2 at Victoria Park, which will be partly funded by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. This project is intended to improve the user experience and enhance the playing capacity given that field lighting offers extended playing periods during the evening, thereby allowing the Ayr Minor Softball Association to grow their programming and accommodate new participants. The Township also has plans to work in partnership with the ball organization to replace the batting cage and outfield fencing at Diamond 2.

Plans are also in place to reinvest in the ball diamonds at Schmidt Park. In 2021, the Township received funding through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to undertake various park projects in Schmidt Park which include replacing ball diamond field lighting, netting and fencing.

The planned improvements to the Victoria Park and Schmidt Park ball diamonds will position the Township to meet the needs of user groups over the planning period. There is currently no evidence to suggest that additional ball diamonds are required, particularly given the number of non-programmed diamonds available in the Township. As with the surplus of soccer fields, the Master Plan supports the repurposing of some existing under-utilized ball diamonds to accommodate other recreational and

cultural uses. However, there is also merit in maintaining some low-use diamonds for non-programmed community use. During the planning period, the Township should collect participation numbers from all ball diamond user groups by age group in order to better position the Township to assess trends. Continued monitoring of ball diamond utilization should also assist in informing future demand.

Recommendations – Sports Fields

14. In order to continue to meet the ball diamond needs of user groups, the Master Plan supports the Township's planned **ball diamond improvements**:
 - a. Update fencing, lighting and netting at Schmidt Park.
 - b. Replace sports lighting at Diamond 1 at Victoria Park and undertake enhancements at Diamond 2, including installing lighting and work in partnership with the Ayr Minor Softball Association to install a new batting cage and outfield fencing.
15. Regularly engage sports field users to **collect annual registration** to inform future needs and **identify and prioritize improvements** to sports fields to continue providing high quality user experiences.
16. Strategically **promote and program underutilized soccer fields** for unstructured/non-programmed open space for activities such as walking paths, picnicking, local community events, farmer's markets, casual sports (area to throw frisbees and footballs, etc.), outdoor programming, outdoor skating rinks, and other such activities.

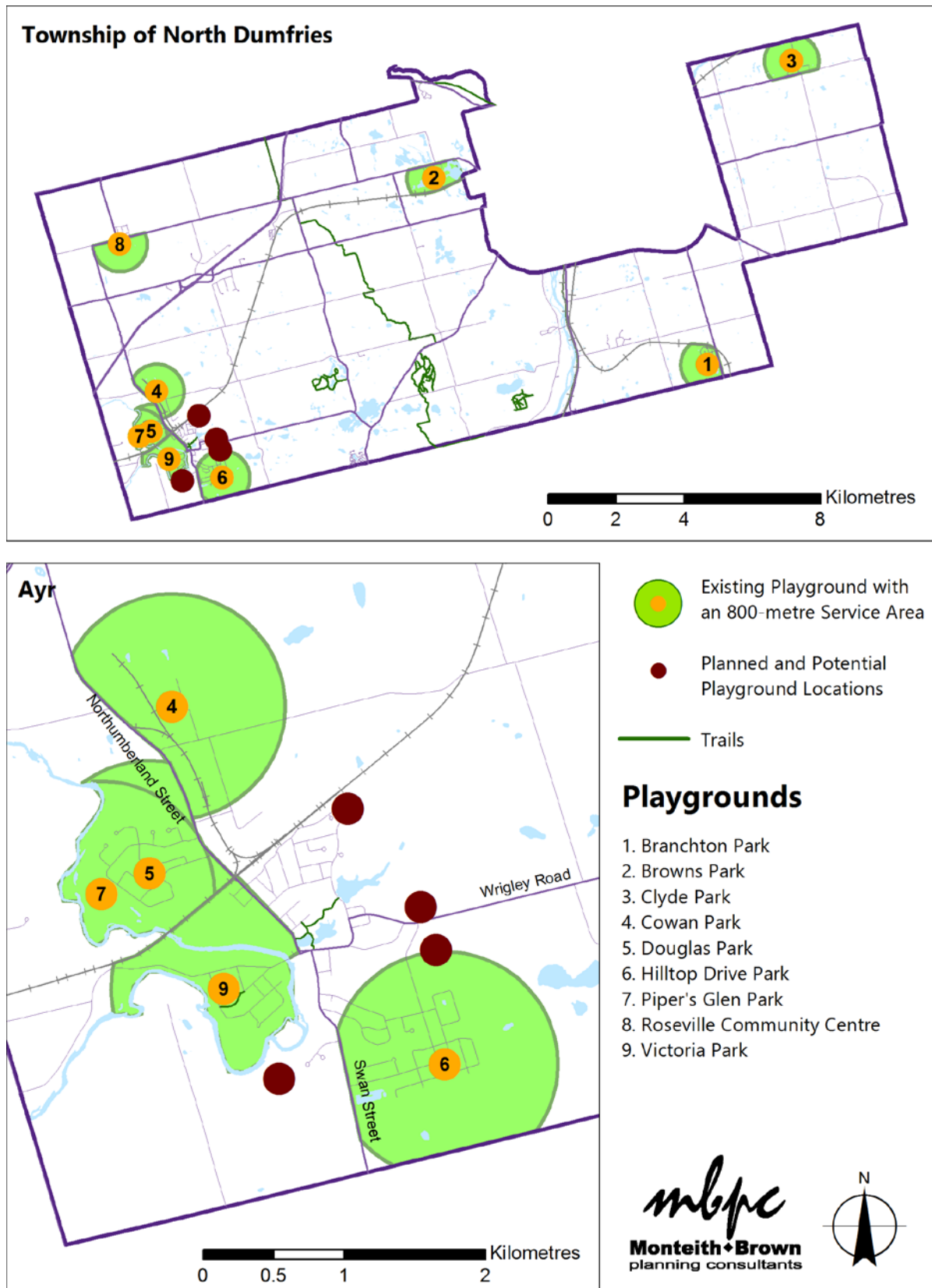
5.9 Playgrounds

North Dumfries provides nine playgrounds across the Township that come in a variety of designs and sizes that engage users in creative play. Playgrounds are found at Branchton Park, Browns Park Clyde Park, Cowan Park, Douglas Park, Hilltop Drive Park, Piper's Glen Park, Roseville Community Centre, and Victoria Park (Figure 11). In addition, playgrounds are found at school sites.

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. While traditional playground equipment generally consists of swings, slides and an array of climbing structures, modern play structures are designed to offer more creative and unique play experiences and often integrates accessible features.



Figure 11: Distribution of Playgrounds



Best practices suggest that playgrounds should be located between 500 to 800 metres of residential areas within urban settlement areas, without crossing major barriers such as County roads and waterbodies. Applying the higher end of this range to the Township's playgrounds reveals gap areas on the east and south side of the Ayr settlement area. Future parks are planned in these areas and given that these emerging residential areas are expected to attract families with young children, playgrounds should be provided at these locations. A playground is also planned for Schmidt Park, which will further strengthen the distribution of the Township's play structures. While gap areas were also identified in some of the Township's rural hamlets, there are no viable locations for a playground due to the absence of parkland, although they should be considered as park acquisition and development opportunities become available.

The Township should continue to ensure that its existing playground supply meets the needs of users through regular inspections and replacement. The Township plays a proactive role in renewing aging playgrounds once structures reach 12 years old. This is generally considered to be a short lifecycle period as other municipalities target playground replacement at a minimum of 15 years or more, subject to regular playground inspections. The Township may benefit from extending the lifecycle replacement period of its playgrounds, which would provide better value over the life of the asset.

From a design perspective, all new playgrounds should incorporate barrier-free components such as firm and stable surfaces to meet accessibility requirements. Higher-order parks such as Community Parks should also feature a higher level of design given that they draw from a wider catchment of users including regional visitors. For example, Cowan Park functions as the premiere outdoor destination for active recreation, an opportunity exists to create a unique and exciting play structure that features a theme with colours and unique components. Key design considerations include, but not be limited to, musical elements, games using a mobile application, natural features, barrier-free components, and more. As a higher-order playground, incorporating a rubber surface may also be considered to further enhanced the playing experience, albeit at a higher cost than alternative materials. Opportunities may also exist to tie in other amenities oriented to children and caregivers. Similar higher-order playground features may also be considered at Schmidt Park given that it is also considered to be a community-level park.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

17. Strive to provide playgrounds within **500 metres** (for parkettes) **to 800 metres** (for neighbourhood and community parks) of residential areas in Ayr, unobstructed by major barriers. On this basis, address playground gaps on the east and south side of Ayr at future neighbourhood parks and parkettes. Playgrounds at parks to serve the Cambridge West subdivision residents is also recommended.
18. Subject to regular safety inspections, **target playground replacement** after a lifecycle period of 15 years. The development or redevelopment of playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Creative playground designs are encouraged with consideration given to natural and adventure play components at strategic locations (e.g., Community Parks).

5.10 Skateboard Parks

The skateboard park at Cowan Park was completed in 2020. Known as the MacNeil & Dodd Skate Park, it consists of a concrete skating area complete with bowls, ramps, rails, elevation changes, and other features that provide users with an exciting and challenging experience.

Research has found that skateboarding and other wheeled action sports have been increasing in popularity as more youth and young adults gravitate towards more unstructured, unscheduled and low-cost activities. While it was once considered a fad, it has demonstrated sustained longevity and as a result many municipalities, including North Dumfries, have adopted the activity as a core level of service. Skateboard parks have been found to function as a positive space for users to gather and socialize with others who share common interests, while having a safe location to engage in physical activity. The prominence of skateboarding is further bolstered on an internationally level following its recent introduction in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.



Since its completion, the skateboard park has positively received by the community, which was also heard through the Master Plan consultation process. Suggestions were made for lighting to allow the skateboard park to be used later in the evening. These amenities are generally unlit, although examples exist in municipalities at locations that have a high degree of use. However, given the relative newness of the facility and a need to be aware of late-night use and noise, the provision of lighting is not recommended at this time.

It is important to ensure that youth-oriented recreation facilities are accessible to their primary market. The skateboard park at Cowan Park may not be accessible for all youth and young adults in Ayr, particularly in the south end of the settlement area, which is expected to accommodate the majority of future population growth. During the planning period, population forecasts that youth between the ages of 10 and 19 are expected to grow by 63% to reach 2,400 people. This level of growth will drive demand for more youth opportunities. On this basis, the provision of a small-scale skateboard zone or "skate spot" is recommended, which would feature a concrete pad with ramps and rails. It is envisioned that this location would be suitable for beginner and intermediate users to learn and hone their skills in the neighbourhood, before transitioning to the larger, more advanced location at the North Dumfries Community Complex.

Opportunities may also exist to incorporate skate-spots at rural parks on the basis of enhancing the distribution of youth opportunities in the Township. These skate-spots would feature one or two basic components for skateboarding and wheeled action sports. This could be incorporated as a part of the design of the proposed multi-use basketball and ball hockey court at the Roseville Community Centre, Branchton Park and Clyde Park. Skate components (e.g., rails) may be modular and be removed to facilitate other activities such as outdoor skating during the winter.

Figure 12: Example Skate-spot at Orono Park in Clarington



Recommendations – Skateboard Park

19. Construct a **small-scale skateboard zone or “skate spot”** at the future neighbourhood park in the south end of Ayr. This location should feature a concrete pad with ramps and rails suitable for beginner and intermediate users.
20. Investigate opportunities to **create small “skate spots”** at the Roseville Community Centre, Branchton Park and Clyde Park. These could be designed in coordination with the proposed multi-use basketball and ball hockey courts and include modular components that can be removed to support other potential activities (e.g., outdoor skating).

5.11 Outdoor Basketball Courts & Ball Hockey Courts

The Township provides one basketball shooting pad at Branchton Park. Basketball courts can also be found at schools in Ayr such as at St. Brigid Catholic School, Ayr Public School and Cedar Creek Public School.

While outdoor hard surface pads are primarily used for basketball, there are ideally designed as multi-purpose courts that accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities such as ball hockey, winter ice pad, and basic wheeled action sports practise. Basketball continues to be a popular pastime activity for youth and young adults in many communities due to its national appeal and the popularity of the Toronto Raptors. Basketball is relatively affordable compared to other sports, easy to learn, and can be played individually or in small groups.



As a best practice, municipalities target a service level of one municipal basketball court per 800 youth between the ages of 10 and 19. However, a higher level of service is often preferred in urban and rural municipalities such as North Dumfries on the basis on achieving a strong geographic distribution of courts, particularly given that basketball courts are neighbourhood-level amenities and its primary user base is limited in the distance that they can travel. The Master Plan community survey also found that there is a desire for more basketball courts and youth activities, particularly given that satisfaction levels for this age group was low.

To achieve a balanced distribution of basketball courts in North Dumfries, a scan of the Township's parks revealed that opportunities exist at Cowan Park, Schmidt Park, Roseville Community Centre, Clyde Park, and at future neighbourhood parks in the south end of Ayr and Cambridge West subdivision. Browns Park is another candidate, although site visits suggest that accommodating this amenity would require the removal of the underutilized soccer field.

Best practices in design indicate that courts are best provided as full-size courts with paint markings to support basketball and other activities such as ball hockey; the hard surface may also be used for outdoor skating (see Section 5.16). It is noted that the small shooting pad at Branchton Park is in poor condition as there is no backboard or netting, presenting a renewal opportunity with consideration given to a full-size court. Re-locating the court away from the abutting residential dwelling will assist with noise attenuation.

Recommendations – Outdoor Basketball Courts & Ball Hockey Courts

21. **Construct full-size multi-use courts** for basketball and ball hockey at Cowan Park, Schmidt Park, Roseville Community Centre, Clyde Park and the future neighbourhood parks in Ayr and Cambridge West subdivision.
22. **Repurpose the underutilized soccer field at Browns Park** with a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.
23. Replace the shooting pad at **Branchton Park** with a full-size multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.

5.12 Outdoor Tennis & Pickleball Courts

The Township provides two lit outdoor tennis courts at Victoria Park. Across the Province, recreation trends point towards a resurgence in the popularity of tennis as a result the international success of Canadian professionals, a growing segment of baby boomers that are returning or taking up the sport, and a greater emphasis on grassroots programming to attract younger players.



A growing segment of older adults seeking low impact leisure activities are also generating strong interest in pickleball. 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 bolster by being played at the Ontario Senior Games.

Municipalities are addressing renewed and continued demand for these activities through new court development and renewal of existing locations. The Township is aligned with this trend as planned capital reinvestment has been identified for the tennis courts at Victoria Park to update existing lighting infrastructure to reduce glare and improve energy efficiency. The Township is also moving forward with constructing three lit tennis courts at Schmidt Park, which is made possible by grant funding received through the Investing in Canadian Infrastructure Program.

With five tennis courts at Victoria Park and Schmidt Park, the Township will be providing a service level of one court per 3,500 residents by 2031, which is consistent with industry standards that generally target one court per 4,000 to 5,000 residents. However, the geographic distribution should be considered given there are no tennis courts available in the rural area. The consultation process yielded requests for a tennis at Browns Park and an opportunity exists to establish a new tennis court at this location to complement the basketball court recommended at this park, through repurposing the underutilized soccer field.

As a best practice, municipalities are adding pickleball court lines to new and redeveloped tennis courts, which is an efficient and effective strategy to accommodate the needs of both court users. The popularity of pickleball is being felt in North Dumfries and the Master Plan consultation process revealed that there is a desire for outdoor pickleball courts to complete the existing indoor courts at the North Dumfries Community Complex. This design practice is recommended for the Township's existing and future tennis courts to address this need.

Recommendations – Outdoor Tennis & Pickleball Courts

24. Continue with constructing **three lit tennis courts** at Schmidt Park and add playing lines for **pickleball**.
25. Move forward with replacing the **tennis court lighting** at Victoria Park and add playing lines for **pickleball** to the court surface.
26. Construct **one court for tennis and pickleball** at Browns Park.

5.13 Community Gardens

Community gardening at Cowan Park has been available since 2012. The garden first launched with 20 plots but was later expanded to 36 plots to respond to growing demand for gardening opportunities. The Township constructed the gardens and a supporting shed structure for community tools, and provides servicing support such as water, while community volunteers and those renting plots are responsible for the daily operations.



Community gardening is a popular activity in many communities as it supports important values such as food security, healthy eating, and physical activity, as well as provides a sustainable food source. Community gardens are common in urban communities where residential dwellings may have limited gardening opportunities. Community gardens can also be found in rural municipalities, such as North Dumfries, as it is a natural complement to local agricultural roots.

Consultation through the Master Plan found that there is public support for the community garden, although there were limited requests for adding additional garden plots. The Township reports that use of the community garden varies annually, although the general trend has been that they are well used each year. With the growing demand for casual outdoor activities, the Township should continue to promote the use of the community gardens and monitor demand to inform future community gardening needs. One strategy that could be considered to boost interest in community gardening is by establishing programs to education residents on the importance of healthy eating and agriculture.

Recommendations – Community Gardens

27. Working with community volunteers and organizations, **promote the use of the community garden** at the North Dumfries Community Complex and explore potential program opportunities that recognize the benefits of community agriculture, food security and cooking.

5.14 Pump Tracks

The Township has received requests for a pump track and suggestions were heard through the Master Plan consultation process. Pump tracks are unique amenities that feature a course with varying topography that can be paved or unpaved. These features provide enthusiasts with a venue to gather and participate in a variety of wheeled action sports such as BMX, mountain biking, skateboarding, roller blading, and scootering. While pump track users typically make up a small segment of communities, they are often older youth and young adults who are recognized as an important age group to engage in physical activities through positive spaces. It is on that basis that some municipalities have rationalized investment in pump tracks.

A common approach to the provision of pump tracks is to incorporate the design with skateboard parks. However, integrating pump track components at the Township's existing skateboard park at the North Dumfries Community Complex was determined not to be feasible due to the lack of space. The Township

has identified Schmidt Park as a potential location given that it is a community park that draws from a large geographic area and there is available space to accommodate this type of amenity. Locating the pump track at Schmidt Park also ensures that youth and young adults in the growing south end of Ayr are located within walking distance of this amenity.

As an emerging level of service in other communities, it is common for pump tracks to be developed with the support of external funding sources. For example, the Rotary Bike Park in Brantford was constructed with fundraising and expertise of community partners including the Brant Cycling Club and the Rotary Club of Brantford, as well as the Ontario Trillium Foundation and private businesses. The Riverside BMX Park in Cambridge was also made possible with financial support from the Province's Healthy Communities Initiative.

With noted best practices and local public demand, the Township should support the development of a pump track at Schmidt Park contingent upon securing grant funding and establishing willing partners to assist with fundraising efforts. It is important to note that the municipal provision of pump tracks is generally designed to meet community-level needs and not for competition purposes. The Master Plan supports a community-level facility that primarily targets users from within North Dumfries. While the pump track shape and layout may vary, an asphalt surface is recommended to support a wide variety of wheeled action sports and minimize operational responsibilities (compared to unpaved pump tracks that would require regular maintenance).

Recommendations –Pump Track

28. Support the development of a community-level asphalt pump track at **Schmidt Park**, contingent upon securing **external funding** through grants and willing partners to assist with fundraising efforts.

5.15 Sand Volleyball Courts

The three sand volleyball courts at Cowan Park were constructed in 2021 and was made possible through a partnership between the Township, the Scorpion Youth Volleyball Club and supporting funding provided by the Province through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and donations from the Centre for Community Group. The Scorpion Youth Volleyball Club is an organization that provides indoor and outdoor volleyball activities to youth and adults in many communities across Waterloo Region and beyond. Prior to the construction of the sand volleyball courts, the organization provided their programs on the grass, which were lined for volleyball.



There is a demand for outdoor sand volleyball courts in many communities as there is a growing desire for social activities that youth and young adults can engage in a flexible and non-structured environment. It's low cost to participate in also adds to its appeal. The demand for sand volleyball courts is also driven by organized groups that promote and deliver programs, as is the case in North Dumfries. There is also a community desire for this activity in the Township, which was heard through the consultation process.

While the volleyball courts at Cowan Park were completed during the pandemic, the organization's programs were considered to be a success as their eight-week summer programs in 2021 were sold out. Part of the interest may have been driven by the fact that there was an overall increase in the demand for outdoor programming opportunities as a result of the pandemic. Normalized participation levels in sand volleyball will be unknown until the Township emerges from the pandemic. The Township should continue to work closely with the Scorpion Youth Volleyball Club to promote their programs among youth in North Dumfries and monitor participation levels.

Recommendations – Sand Volleyball Courts

29. Continue to support the Scorpion Youth Volleyball Club, promote the use of the sand volleyball courts and **monitor demand** to inform future needs and improvements as the Township emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.16 Outdoor Skating Rinks

While the Township does not currently provide any outdoor skating rinks, a number of public requests were made for outdoor skating opportunities. The Master Plan's community survey found that 77% of respondents supported investment in outdoor skating rinks, which was the fifth highest priority among 34 leisure amenities.

Recreational outdoor skating has been a Canadian tradition for many generations, although the ability to maintain outdoor rinks has become increasingly difficult due to climate change. Natural ice rinks are the most affordable method to build and maintain given that expenses are largely relegated to water and operational time. Maintenance, however, can be cumbersome when temperatures are near or above the freezing mark during warmer days or weeks. As an alternative, municipalities may construct refrigerated outdoor rinks (potentially with a roof), although this is more costly to build, maintain and operate.

As a best practice, communities such as North Dumfries utilize a community development approach to providing outdoor skating rinks whereby the Township is typically responsible for providing materials, initial set-up and removal services, while community organizations and/or volunteers are reliable upon for day-to-day maintenance such as flooding and snow clearing. The Township is supportive of this approach and has applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund grant for the purchase of equipment and supplies to establish three outdoor skating rinks at Schmidt Park, Victoria Park and Roseville Community Centre. As identified in staff report REC-04-2022, this initiative seeks to leverage local volunteers to maintain the rink during the skating season. Should the grant application not be successful, the Township should continue to explore outdoor skating opportunities in partnership with willing community volunteers.

Recommendations – Outdoor Skating Rinks

30. Move forward with an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund grant for the purchase of equipment and supplies to establish **three outdoor skating rinks** at Schmidt Park, Victoria Park and Roseville Community Centre and seek volunteers for general maintenance during the skating season. If the grant application is not successful, continue to explore outdoor skating opportunities in partnership with willing community volunteers.

5.17 Off-Leash Dog Parks

The off-leash dog park at Cowan Park is the Township's only leash free area, which features a large fence enclosure with designated sections for large and small dogs. With municipal by-laws regulating the use of leashes, off-leash dog parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs within a controlled area. That said, dog parks should not be viewed strictly for pets, as observations in locations across Ontario suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction and help to engage residents living in isolation.



The Township's off-leash dog park was designed to be temporary as its current location is planned to form part an expansion to the North Dumfries Community Complex. The Master Plan has recommended that the Township move forward with the expansion to this facility to alleviate arena pressures and the demand for a modernized arena to replace the aging ice pad at the Ayr Community Centre. As a result, an alternative location for the off-leash dog park will be needed as the consultation process revealed that there continues to be support for this outdoor amenity.

A scan of Township parks suggests that Cowan Park continues to be an optimum location as it already exists at this site, and it is the Township's primary recreation hub. Potential locations within the park are limited; however available open space exists on the west side of the North Dumfries Community Complex, adjacent to the sand volleyball courts, community garden and parking lot. It is recognized, however, that this space may be utilized as a future expansion of the North Dumfries Community Complex. There are currently no other park locations that would be suitable for an off-leash dog park as best practices suggests that these facilities should be located at community parks with supporting amenities such as parking, shade, seating, trails, etc., particularly as these types of amenities tend to generate high levels of traffic and noise. They are not appropriate within neighbourhood parks. As an alternative, consideration may be given to establishing a permanent off-leash dog park at a future community park.

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Park

31. **Re-locate** the off-leash dog park at Cowan Park to the west side of the North Dumfries Community Complex as a temporary measure until the Township completes a future expansion to the North Dumfries Community Complex. At this time, the re-located off-leash dog park can be made permanent or potentially relocated to a future community park location. The provision of future off-leash dog parks should consider supporting amenities such as shade, seating, water, landscaping and other comfort features.

5.18 Outdoor Fitness Equipment

The Township is in the initial stages of planning outdoor fitness equipment along the Eby Trail in Cowan Park, as well as at Clyde Park. The integration of outdoor fitness opportunities within parks, open spaces and trails has been a growing interest in group fitness activities and to encourage no-cost physical activity outdoors, which was also heard locally through the Master Plan's consultation process. The desire for low-impact fitness activities has been further heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic when indoor fitness services have been temporarily closed.

The provision of outdoor fitness equipment at Cowan Park is a natural fit as they are well-suited in high traffic spaces and complement the indoor fitness activities offered at the North Dumfries Community Complex. As a best practice, outdoor fitness equipment can be consolidated to provide a similar experience compared to indoor fitness centres where users can engage in workout circuits in a small group or alone. Grouping outdoor fitness equipment together at a single location also allows for potential program opportunities and the ability to offer other amenities such as WIFI can allow users to download or view online instructional fitness exercises. Outdoor fitness equipment can also be provided in single stations along a trail to allow for interval training and a mix of cardio and strength training, while other approaches involve the use of existing terrain (e.g., berm or hill) to run on or landscaped open space to participate in outdoor fitness programs.

Other opportunities for outdoor fitness equipment should be considered by the Township to bolster the geographic distribution and access to physical activities. Preference should be given to high traffic locations within parks or near community facilities such as the Roseville Community Centre and Schmidt Park, as well as along trails routes. More basic-level fitness stations should also be contemplated within smaller parks including Douglas Park, as well as in rural areas such as at Browns Park, which requests were made by residents residing in this neighbourhood.

Recommendations – Outdoor Fitness Equipment

32. Research and consultation for the Master Plan supports the Township's planned installation of **outdoor fitness equipment** at Cowan Park and Clyde Park. Based upon a review of the success of these initial fitness equipment installations, the Township should pursue other strategic locations including high traffic locations, community parks and facilities such as the Roseville Community Centre and Schmidt Park, as well as along trails. Basic outdoor fitness equipment should also be considered in other parks, such as at Douglas Park and Browns Park.

5.19 Water-Based Facilities

The Nith River and Grand River are two of the many natural features found in North Dumfries. Use of these amenities are largely untapped as it is currently not used for any leisure purpose, with the exception of passive enjoyment. The consultation process revealed that there was a desire for improved water access to engage in activities such as canoeing and kayaking. An opportunity exists to respond to these requests, which would also further the Township's goal of expanding local leisure opportunities that appeal to broad interests and abilities. The Township is encouraged to identify a site(s) to establish appropriate areas along the Nith River and Grand River for casual viewing and enjoyment, including opportunities to launch personal, non-motorized watercrafts (e.g., canoes, kayaks, etc.).

The Township currently has two park properties along the Nith River including Piper's Glen Park; however, this location would not be suitable for public water access due to environmentally sensitive features in the area and dense vegetation. Ice House Park in downtown Ayr may serve as a suitable site, although it is recognized that the Township is currently undertaken a separate study to evaluate adaptive reuses of the indoor and outdoor space at this location. The Township should initiate a site selection process to select a preferred site for public water access. Ideally, the preferred site should give consideration to factors including (but not limited to), parking, visibility, compatibility with adjacent land uses, connections to active transportation infrastructure, safety, and more. This investigation may be undertaken in consultation with others including the Grand River Conservation Authority and the public.

Recommendations – Water-Based Facilities

33. Initiate a site selection process to establish appropriate locations along the Nith River and Grand River for casual viewing and enjoyment, including opportunities to launch personal, non-motorized watercrafts (e.g., canoes, kayaks, etc.) Potential site selection criteria should include, but not be limited to, parking, visibility, compatibility with adjacent land uses, connections to active transportation infrastructure, safety, and more.

5.20 Disc Golf Course

Disc golf is a sport in which players throw a flying disc on a course consisting of between nine and 18 targets (or baskets). Disc golf is a century old game that originated in Canada in the early 1900s that is now played across the world. It has been gaining in popularity in recent times as an increasing number of young adults have been taking up the sport. The governing body for the sport is the Professional Disc Golf Association, which reported a total of 150,000 professional and amateur members in 2021.¹² Interest in the sport continues to grow as people continue to seek casual and active outdoor physical activities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. While North Dumfries does not currently have an outdoor disc golf course, the consultation process yielded a number of requests for this type of amenity. As the Township does not currently provide this level of service, opportunities to introduce this activity should be pursued if there is a willing partner to come forward with a proposal to establish a disc golf course. This proposal should speak to potential locations, size, design, program opportunities, and other key considerations including the factors identified in Section 5.21.

Recommendations – Disc Golf Course

34. Explore the development of a **disc golf course** if there is a willing community partner coming forward with a proposal to establish this new level of service. The proposal should speak to potential locations, site size and design, potential program opportunities to be led by the community partner, and other key considerations.

¹² Sports Illustrated. 2021. Paige Pierce Is Taking Disc Golf To the Moon. Retrieved from <https://www.si.com/>

5.21 Other Recreation and Cultural Facilities

North Dumfries may receive requests for recreation and cultural facilities that are not currently provided through its core service mandate or there is presently insufficient demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the Master Plan. However, the Township must be prepared to respond appropriately to requests pending future market characteristics related to population growth, emerging sports and activities, future recreational and cultural trends and preferences, and other demands that may arise for existing activities and facilities.

When public requests are brought forward for investment in new, non-traditional, emerging and non-core municipal facilities, the Township should evaluate these recreational and cultural needs 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 and/or facility;
- Examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- Local demand for the activity and/or facility;
- The ability of existing Township facilities to accommodate the new level of service;
- The feasibility for the Township to provide the service and/or facility as a core service with consideration given to resources (e.g., staffing), and be able to do so in a cost-effective manner; and
- The willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the service and/or facility if provided with appropriate municipal supports.

Recommendations – Other Recreation and Culture Facilities

35. Evaluate requests for **new indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural facilities** on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of utilizing existing public space, the willingness of an organization to partner in providing the facility or space, and other factors.

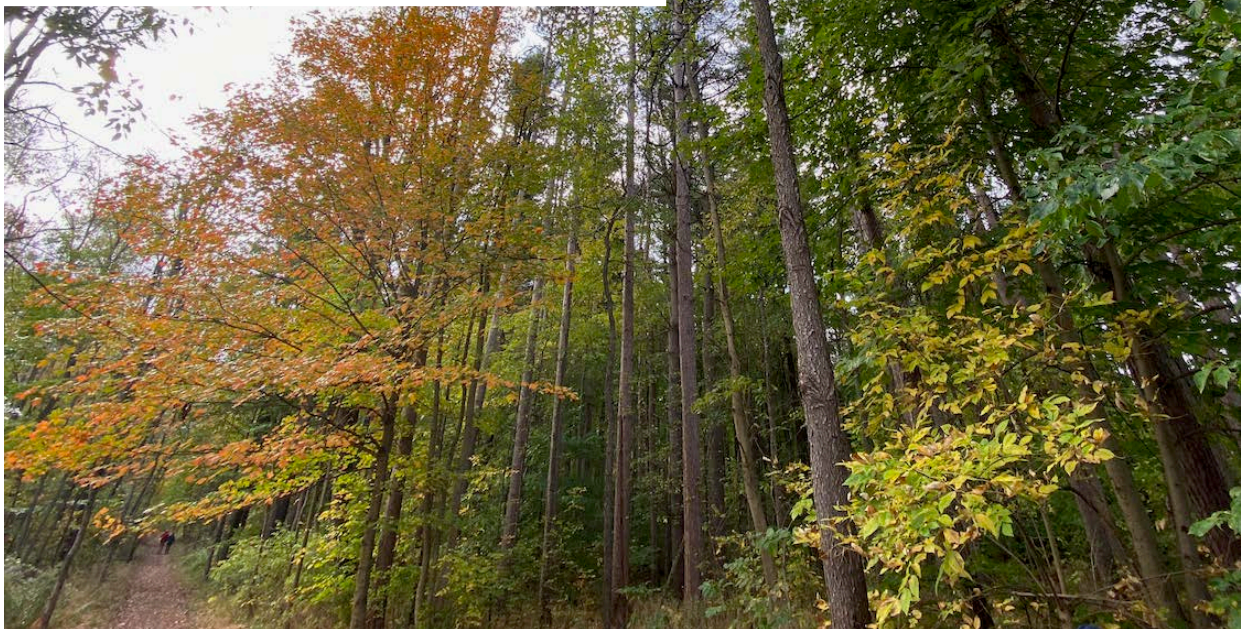
6.0 Parkland, Open Space & Trails

6.1 Parkland & Natural Areas

North Dumfries has an extensive open space system that is comprised of active parkland and natural areas. **“Active parkland”** refers to Township-owned lands that are suitable for the development or installation of built recreational amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, etc.) and may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate open space and natural features. Active parkland is the focus of parkland dedication under the *Planning Act*.



“Natural areas” refer to sites with no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as provincially significant wetlands, environmentally significant and sensitive natural areas, watercourses and floodplains. Due to their important ecological functions and the lack of development potential of these lands, they primarily facilitate passive recreation activities only. While open spaces and natural areas are not a direct focus of the Master Plan, their important contributions to supporting the open space system are recognized.



6.2 Parkland Hierarchy

A parkland hierarchy defines the function, permitted uses, catchment area and size of each type of park. While the Township does not currently have a parkland hierarchy system, it is viewed as highly beneficial in guiding the planning and development of current and future parks to ensure that they function appropriately, respond to the needs of the community and are compatible with adjacent land uses, as well as to allow the public to understand what they may expect to see at different types of parks.

A recommended active parkland hierarchy for the Township of North Dumfries is contained in Table 9. This hierarchy system should be used by the Township in the planning of new and redevelopment of existing parks over the planning period. The hierarchy is based on the existing parkland system found in North Dumfries and incorporates trends and best practices found in similar municipalities. Consideration should be given to embedding this hierarchy into the Township's Official Plan to ensure that parks planning forms part of the municipal land use decision-making process.

Recommendations – Parkland Hierarchy

36. The **parkland hierarchy** contained in the Leisure Services Master Plan should be used to guide the development and redevelopment of active parks according to park type, form, function, size, and the features and amenities that they provide. Parkland categories include:
- a. Community Parks are designed for active and passive recreation and leisure activities for all residents and/or the broader regional population, including special events.
 - b. Neighbourhood Parks are designed for the recreation and leisure activities of residents in a specific residential neighbourhood.
 - c. Parkettes are in highly visible and accessible locations that support spontaneous gatherings and public rest areas.



Table 9: Recommended Active Parkland Hierarchy

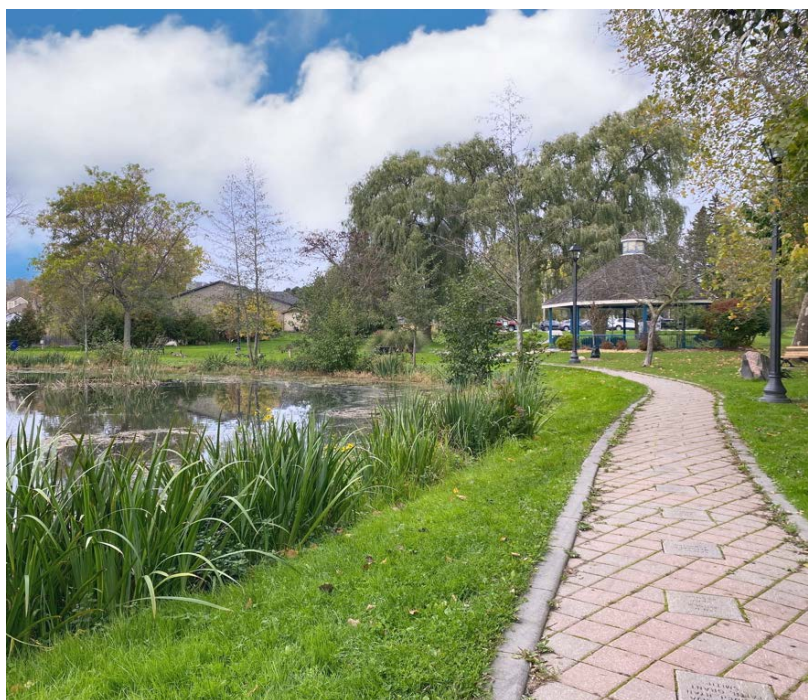
Active Parkland Type	Description
Community Park	<p>Community Parks are designed for active and passive recreation and leisure activities for all residents and/or the boarder regional population, including special events and festivals. Community Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of active and passive leisure activities, including special events and festivals; • May contain lit and unlit sports fields, playgrounds, hard surface courts, splash pads, skateboard parks, event spaces, trails, arts and cultural features, specialized facilities, and supporting amenities to meet community needs such as washrooms, on-site parking, utilities, and comfort features; • Ideally co-located with an indoor leisure facility along major roads that are accessible by car and active transportation; • Vary in size depending on the nature and extent of the facilities being provided and the purpose of the park; and • May also contain naturalized areas, woodlots and open spaces. <p><i>Examples: Cowan Park, Centennial Park, Roseville Community Centre</i></p>
Neighbourhood Park	<p>Neighbourhood Parks are designed for the recreation and leisure activities of residents in a specific residential neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contain unlit sports fields for casual play, playgrounds, trails, hard surface courts, and other local-level amenities to meet neighbourhood needs such as seating and shade; • Should be visibly located in the Neighbourhood and accessible by active transportation. • Should not be less than 0.8 hectares in size, although the size may vary depending on the nature and extent of the facilities being provided; and • May contain naturalized areas and open spaces. <p><i>Examples: Branchton Park, Browns Park, Clyde Park</i></p>
Parkette	<p>Parkettes are located in highly visible and accessible locations that support spontaneous gatherings and public rest areas. Parkettes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contain a limited range of features including a playground, trails, arts and cultural features, and other amenities such as seating, shade, landscaping, and other features that support informal public gatherings; and • Should generally not be less than 0.5 hectares in size. <p><i>Examples: Douglas Park, Hilltop Drive Park</i></p>

6.3 Active Parkland Supply & Future Needs

The Township owns 25.6 hectares of active parkland across 13 sites. These parks offer outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds, with supporting amenities including walking pathways and seating. The parkland system also includes open greenspaces that can support unstructured activities and gatherings. An inventory of the Township's parkland supply is summarized in Table 10.

Table 10: Active Parkland Supply

Park Name	Active Parkland Area (ha)
Branchton Park	0.9
Browns Park	1.8
Centennial Park	0.8
Clyde Park	2.2
Cowan Park	6.0
Douglas Park	0.6
Hilltop Drive Park	0.2
Ice House Park	0.02
Piper's Glen Park	1.7
Riverside Park	0.8
Roseville Community Centre	1.2
Schmidt Park	5.7
Victoria Park	3.7
Total Area	25.6



Exclusive of natural areas found in North Dumfries, **the Township is currently providing a service level of 2.4 hectares of active parkland per 1,000 residents.** The active parkland supply is complemented by natural areas owned by the Township and others such as conservation areas owned by the Grand River Conservation Authority and other lands owned by the Region of Waterloo.

The Township's 10-year capital forecast identifies that over the planning period, nine new public parks will be developed on the east and south side of the Ayr settlement areas (Table 11). This will increase the active parkland supply by 7.9 hectares, resulting in a total active parkland supply of 33.5 hectares by 2031. The distribution of existing and planned active parkland is illustrated in Figure 13. In addition to these planned public parks, it should be noted that the Township recently issued site plan approvals for several townhouse developments that have associated open greenspaces to serve residents within these locations.

Table 11: Summary of Future Parks

Subdivision or Park Name	Location	Area (ha)
Broos P1/Hilltop S4P3 Subdivision Parkette (2022)	Freer/Challenger neighbourhood	0.3
Legacy P1/Broos P2 Neighbourhood Park (2022)	North of Brant-Waterloo Road, east of Swan Street	2.4
Isley Subdivision Parkette (2025)	Opposite the intersection of Scott Street and Hilltop Drive	0.5
Legacy Linear Park	Legacy Subdivision	0.2
Rox'Shire Subdivision Parkette (2027)	East limits of Inglis Street, South of CP Corridor	0.9
Southwest Ayr Neighbourhood Park	West of Swan Street, North of Brant-Waterloo Road	1.7
Southwest Ayr Parkette (2030)	West of Swan Street, North of Brant-Waterloo Road	0.4
Westwood Village Phase 2 Neighbourhood Park	Cambridge West subdivision	1.2
Westwood Village Phase 2 Parkette	Cambridge West subdivision	0.3
Total		7.9

Municipalities in Ontario generally provide parkland in the range of 2.0 to 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents. The Township is currently within this range, providing a service level of 2.4 hectares per 1,000 residents. This service level would be a challenge for the Township to maintain during the planning period. By 2031, North Dumfries is expected to grow by 6,900 people to 17,500 residents. This suggests that the Township would require a total of 42 hectares of active parkland to maintain the current service level. Taking into account the nine future parks, the Township would need to require an additional 8.5 hectares of active parkland.

This is a large quantum of additional parkland for any municipality to provide and it will be particularly challenging in North Dumfries given that the Township is not expected to receive any additional parks through parkland dedication over the next ten years, beyond what is currently being planned. The Master Plan also did not identify the need for any new major outdoor recreation facilities (e.g., sports fields) that would be require additional parkland. Due to the Township's unique geography and distribution of residents, it is also recognized that some leisure needs are met through adjacent municipalities.

On this basis, it is recommended that the Township seek to provide parkland at a rate of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents; which is consistent with the Township's current practice. Utilizing the recommended target would suggest that the Township would require 1.7 hectares of active parkland by 2031. It is recognized that the open greenspaces that will be located within planned townhouse developments in Ayr will minimize this deficit. Noting that the Township is not expected to receive any additional new parks through the development process, the Township will need to augment its parkland dedication practices with other land acquisition strategies (see Section 6.4) to secure future parks as opportunities become available.

To understand where new active parks should be provided, a distributional analysis was undertaken by applying an 800-metre service area to each active park, which equates to a five to ten-minute walk within settlement areas, unobstructed by physical barriers such as major roads or waterbodies. This analysis revealed that there is a strong distribution of existing and planned active parkland in Ayr. However, it is known that most of the Township's planned parks are parkettes that may not meet all the needs of residents in these growth areas due to their small size and the fact that they support a narrow range of outdoor amenities. Recognizing that the Township is expected to attract new residents from more urban municipalities, it can be expected that they will have high expectations for quality park spaces and may have a variety of park needs that may not be accommodated within parkettes. With this in mind, future parks should be directed to these growth areas in Ayr.

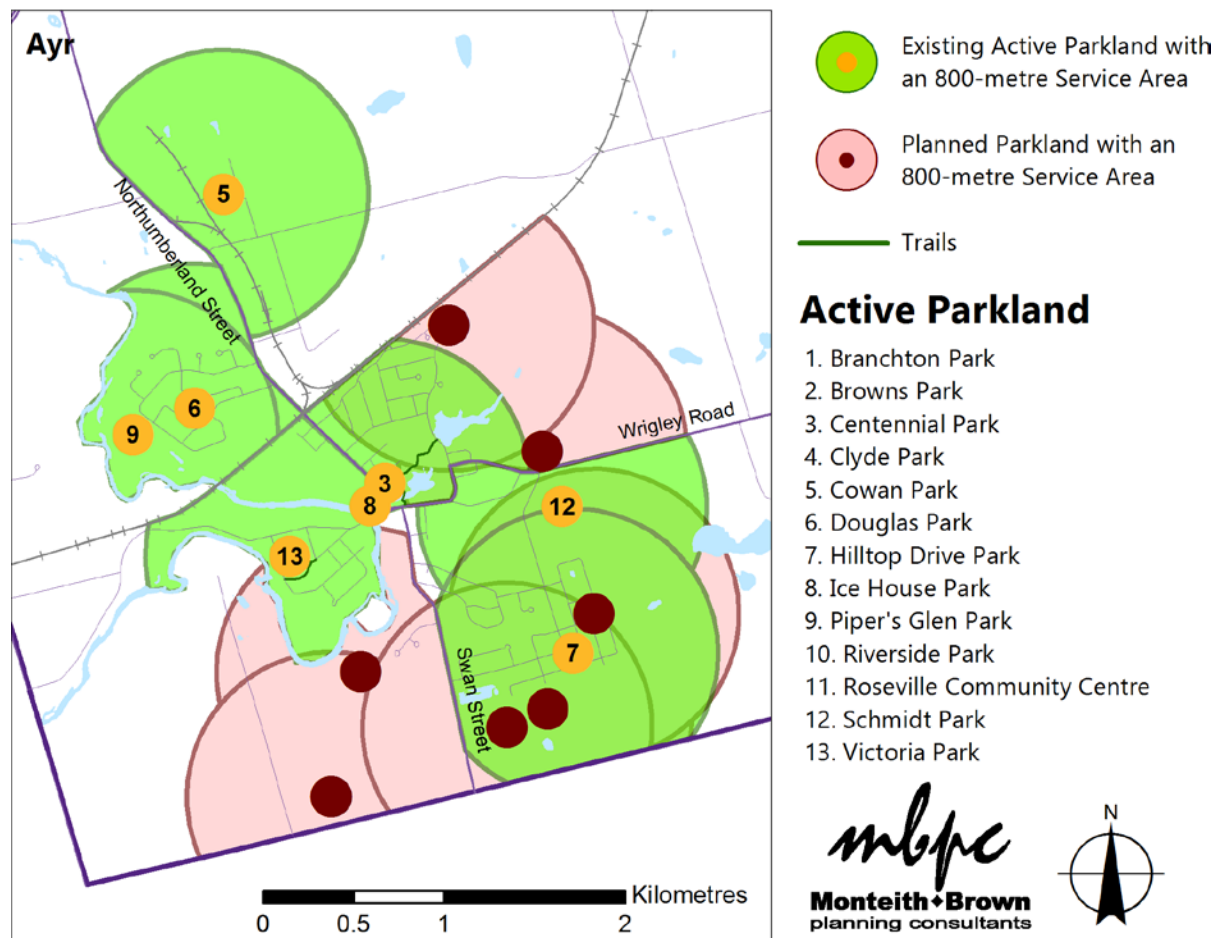
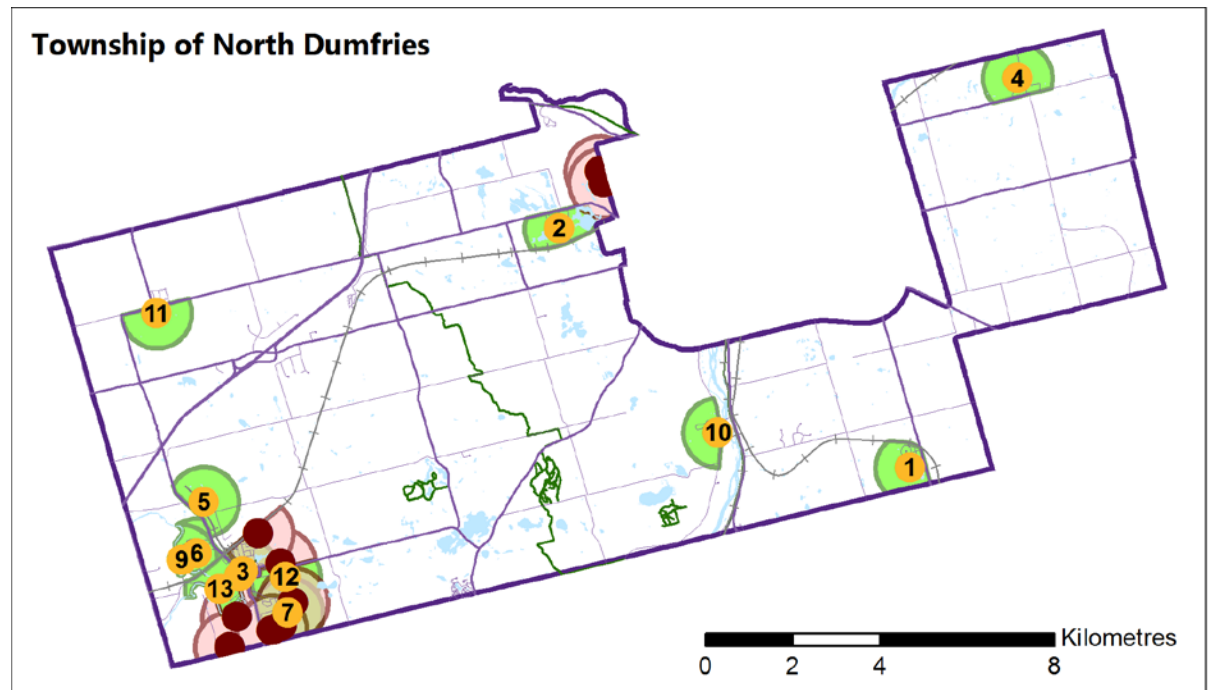
While parkland dedication practices are generally sufficient for acquiring neighbourhood parks and parkettes, the Township may face long-term needs to provide additional community-level parkland beyond the planning period, which will require alternative land acquisition strategies (e.g., land purchase). The Township should evaluate long-term opportunities to acquire land to establish a future community park (2031+). This process, known as land banking, would provide the Township with an opportunity to strategically seek and acquire land to meet future needs to respond to emerging recreation needs in areas of expected future residential growth. Future community-level parkland could potentially be co-located with an existing or future indoor leisure facility.

It is recognized that there are some rural settlement areas that are not currently served with a park. Limited to no population growth is expected to occur within these areas over the planning period; however, opportunities to establish small parks to serve these rural settlement areas should be pursued when opportunity presents itself.

Recommendations – Active Parkland Supply & Needs

37. Maintain an active parkland provision target of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents. This would require the Township to **acquire 1.7 hectares of active parkland** over and above what is currently planned. Emphasis should be placed on securing new parkland within residential growth areas of Ayr. New active parks within rural settlement areas should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
38. As a long-term goal, explore opportunities to acquire land for the purposes of establishing a **future community park (2031+)** to accommodate future recreation needs, which could be co-located with an existing or future indoor leisure facility.

Figure 13: Distribution of Active Township Parkland



6.4 Parkland Policy & Acquisition

The Township of North Dumfries Official Plan was adopted in 2013 and contains policies for parks, open space and recreation facilities. Section 3.5.1 of the Official Plan identifies general policies, which encourages the Township to promote the development of a connected parks and open space system, including working jointly with partners such as the Grand River Conservation Authority, Region of Waterloo, school boards and others.

Section 3.5.2 of the Official Plan contains the Township's parkland acquisition policies. Parkland dedication as permitted by the *Planning Act* is the primary acquisition tool available to the Township. The Official Plan identifies that the Township may require up to 2% of land for commercial or industrial development or 5% for all other forms of development (e.g., residential). The Township permits that an alternative rate of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units may be required. Environmental constraint areas are not accepted as part of parkland dedication. These tools have been useful to the Township in acquiring future parkland to address growth-related needs. Given the nature of development, the Township has generally been able to secure neighbourhood-level parks and parkettes.

The Official Plan identifies that cash-in-lieu of parkland may be required if certain criteria are met including:

- a. The required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development of public parkland;
- b. The required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development;
- c. It is determined that existing park and recreational facilities in the immediate area of the proposed development are adequate to serve the projected increase in population; or
- d. Funds are required to acquire, upgrade or expand land, parks or recreational facilities elsewhere in the Township to meet the needs of the projected population.

In 2019, the Province passed Bill 108 (*More Homes, More Choices Act*), introducing changes to key pieces of legislation including the *Planning Act*. Several provisions of this Act were subsequently repealed in 2020 through the passing of Bill 197 (*COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act*). Bill 197 allows municipalities to continue to require parkland dedication provisions as per Section 42 and 51.1 of the *Planning Act*. Additional provisions relating to a Community Benefits Charge (CBC) have been enacted for medium to high density development, although this change is unlikely to apply to North Dumfries' context. An alternative rate for cash-in-lieu to one hectare per 500 dwelling units was also introduced, with this Master Plan serving as the parks plan requirement under the *Planning Act*. At the time of undertaking an Official Plan Review, The Township should undertake a policy review to ensure that it is consistent with the *Planning Act*.

Other policy amendments that the Township may wish to consider as a part of a future Official Plan review is site criteria to ensure that the Township receives parcels of land that are appropriate for park development. The Township's currently parkland inventory includes parkettes that are generally undersize to support meaningful park experiences. As a best practice, park parcels smaller than 0.5 hectares are discouraged, unless there is a need to reconcile a gap area. Other site requirements that should be

considered include street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, potential locations with opportunities for expansion, and other criteria to be determined by the Township.

Recognizing that the planning development process may not provide sufficient active parkland for the Township to meet its longer-term requirements, particularly in acquiring community-level parkland, a full range of methods for acquiring land for active park purposes will need to be used. In addition to the parkland conveyance and cash-in-lieu tools permitted by the *Planning Act* (as identified in the Township's Official Plan), other methods for acquiring parkland include:

- Land purchase;
- Donation or bequest;
- Expropriation;
- Land lease or public access agreements;
- Land exchanges or swaps, as well as off-site conveyance of parkland;
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands for park use; and/or
- Partnerships with local partners to provide parkland.

The Township has already employed some of these tools to supplement the parkland mechanisms permitted by the *Planning Act* and it will be important to utilize a full range of acquisition tools over the planning period to maximize public access to parkland, as well as natural areas.

Recommendations – Parkland Policy & Acquisition

39. At the time of an Official Plan review, undertake necessary **policy updates** with the following in mind:
 - a) Legislative changes to the *Planning Act* such as the alternative rate for cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 dwelling units (as opposed to the previous rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units).
 - b) The dedication of land for park purposes less than 0.5 hectares should be discouraged, unless it is necessary to reconcile gap areas.
 - c) Criteria for accepting suitable land for developing active parkland should consider street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, opportunities for future expansion, drainage, grading, and other site conditions.
40. Augment parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu practices with a range of **land acquisition tools** to maximize public access to parkland and natural areas (e.g., land purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.).

6.5 Parkland, Open Space & Trail Design

The Township's system of parkland, open space and trails are evolving to respond to community interests, participation, and priorities. Parks that enhance unstructured use, comfort as well as incorporate other thoughtful design can encourage use from picnics and community events to simply meeting with friends and family. Well-designed trails that are accessible and offer supporting amenities can also heighten active transportation traffic. The following are industry best practices in designing parkland, open space and trails that the Township should be consider in creating more inviting public spaces.

Accessibility & Inclusivity

Designing parks that are accessible and inclusive is an important objective to encourage use. Parks are a place for all, emphasizing the need to provide access for persons of all ages, abilities, orientation and background. Not all parks or areas within them are appropriate for universally accessible infrastructure (such as ecologically sensitive or naturalized areas); however, community focused spaces should consider the ability for all residents to access them, in keeping with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and the Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This also includes continuing to consult with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and persons with disabilities.



The Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan identifies several initiatives to remove barriers from its parks and trails system. Projects include reviewing playground equipment annually and replacing structures as needed; new and replaced playgrounds should feature inclusive components such as ramps and a firm and stable surface. Additionally, trail construction projects are identified to improve mobility and accessibility enhancements are planned for washrooms at Victoria Park, Cowan Park and Schmidt Park, funded in part by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Building upon current accessibility initiatives, establishing designated circulation routes within the Townships parks should be investigated to ensure that the outdoor amenities are accessible to users, such as walkways connecting to playgrounds, tennis courts, pavilions, and other features, as discussed in Section 6.7.

Recommendations – Accessibility & Inclusivity

41. Parks, open space and trails should be designed in a manner that considers **universal accessibility**, with consideration given to establishing designated circulation areas and pathways. Consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, persons with disabilities, and others should form part of all park design processes.

Designing for Comfort

Comfort amenities can position the Township's parks to be more inviting for everyday users. As a best practice, well-designed parks that invoke a feeling of comfort tend to be used frequently. Comfort amenities that are typically desired by users include, shade, paved pathways, picnic tables, seating, washrooms, and other features that attract people and encourage use.

The Township recognizes the importance of comfort amenities and is currently in the process of renewing washroom facilities at Cowan Park, Schmidt Park, and Victoria Park, which includes accessibility enhancements. The Township has also planned to revitalize the aging gazebo at Victoria Park, although the project was deferred due to unsatisfactory bid results. Moving forward with updating to this structure should be considered within the short-term given that a Facility Condition Assessment completed in 2018 identified that it is in poor condition. While an emphasis should be placed on replacing various lifecycle elements, removing physical barriers should also be considered to ensure that it is accessible to persons

with disabilities. Undertaking safety enhancements should also be considered, which may include, but not be limited to improving sightlines and lighting. Future amenities at other park locations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as consideration needs to be given to placement, safety, construction and maintenance costs, partnerships, fundraising and other factors.

Recommendations – Parkland, Open Space & Trail Design

42. The design of Township parks, open spaces and trails should have regard for **safety and comfort amenities** to encourage use. On a case-by-case basis, evaluate opportunities to incorporate features including, but not limited to, seating, shade, pathways, picnic tables, washrooms and other amenities that attract people and encourage use.
43. Continue with plans to renew the **Victoria Park pavilion** to replace elements that have reached the end of its lifespan. Emphasis should be placed ensuring that the pavilion is barrier-free to accommodate persons with disabilities. Safety enhancements should be considered, which may include improving sightlines and lighting.

Signage and Wayfinding

Signage is an essential park amenity that plays a role in establishing a visual identity and communicating vital information such as the park name, address, amenities, hours of operation, contact information and other key details. A standard signage template is displayed at each Township park entrance to denote the public space; signage also exists within parks, although the designs and information presented may vary. Different signs also exist at some parks such as regulatory and memorial plaques. An inventory and review of park signage should be undertaken to ensure that corporate branding is applied consistently across Township parks, as well as facilities.



As the Township continues to develop its recreational trail system, it will be important to establish wayfinding signage to assist trail users with movement throughout the Township. Wayfinding signage should include information signage trail names, distance, difficulty, amenities, location of key destinations in the community, connections to Township and non-municipal trails, and other key information. Ensuring that the Township's parks and trail sign designs and the information being conveyed clear, concise, and consistent is important to promote awareness and create civic pride, while avoiding potential confusion.

Recommendations – Parkland, Open Space & Trail Design

44. Undertake a review of all Township's **park signage** to ensure that the corporate brand and information are conveyed consistently.
45. As the Township continues to develop its recreational trail system, establish **wayfinding signage** to raise awareness about trails and to encourage their use. Wayfinding information should include the trail route, distance, amenities, difficulty, destinations in the community,

Recommendations – Parkland, Open Space & Trail Design

connections to Township and non-municipal trails, and other key information. Wayfinding signage should be erected in prominent locations in North Dumfries and published on the Township’s website.

Environmental Sustainability

The protection and preservation of the environment is a top-of-mind issue for many Ontarians. Locally, the Township recognizes the importance of the environment and sustainability as they are key pillars identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan. To reduce the Township’s environmental impact, the Corporate Strategic Plan identifies initiatives including developing a Conservation & Environment Strategy, raising awareness on climate change, and more.

As a best practice, municipalities have made efforts to design parks to be more environmentally-friendly and sustainable by reducing grass cutting in strategic locations, planting native species, establishing tree canopy targets, creating pollinator and community gardens, establishing programs to raise awareness and educate the public about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms, stewardship, interpretive signage, etc.), and strategies to be more resilient to climate change.



Opportunities to promote environmental sustainability within the Township should be explored in strategic locations. For example, swaths of open greenspace are located at Riverside Park and Douglas Park. While these locations support passive outdoor activities, opportunities exist to establish low-cost and low-maintenance landscaping with native plantings and pollinator gardens. Supporting signage can be erected to educate visitors on the importance of the Township’s environmental initiatives. There may be a role for community organizations to assist with leading the implementation of these projects such as the North Dumfries Garden Club.

Additionally, reducing the level of maintenance in certain portions of the Township’s parks should be considered in areas that are not used to support leisure activities. This approach allows sections of parks to return to a naturalized state, while providing the Township with the ability to conserve vital resources that can be directed to other priority areas. For example, Riverside Park is a large open greenspace where a portion could be suitable for naturalization, particularly given that it currently abuts a mature woodlot.

Recommendations – Environmental Sustainability

46. In partnership with other organizations, explore initiatives to be more **resilient to climate change and protect and enhance the natural environment**. Initiatives include establishing pollinator gardens, planting native species, setting tree canopy targets, establishing outdoor educational programs, strategically naturalizing open space, and other strategies determined by the Township. Opportunities may exist at Douglas Park, Riverside Park and other locations.

6.6 Parkland Development Strategy

User experience within the parkland system is influenced by design, intended function, and the quality of the facilities and amenities found within them. These factors are often informed by the era of original construction. Parks can evoke positive feelings of history, sentiment, and pride; however, older parks may need rejuvenation if deterioration is apparent or if the intended function no longer responds to modern and/or local area needs and changing area demographics.

Parkland renewal and improvements is an important part of attracting continued use over time. This can be major in scale, ranging from complete park development to a review of minor amenities or adding new facility components to respond to evolving needs and trends, where space permits. Developing future parks with consideration given to anticipated residents within the service area is also important.

The Master Plan advances several recommendations to improve existing parks and to provide guidance on the developing future parkland to respond to community needs over the planning period. This section highlights the development strategy for each Township Park. These improvements are based upon earlier assessments and recommendations contained in this Master Plan.

Branchton Park

Branchton Park is located in the Branchton settlement area. Access to the park is available through Mary Street and Jenkins Court. This park offers a number of neighbourhood-level amenities including a soccer field, ball diamond, playground, swing set, basketball net with a small shooting pad and a pavilion. As Branchton's only public park serving the area, efforts should be made to ensure that it continues to offer the neighbourhood-level amenities to continue meeting the needs of surrounding residents.



Considerations for Branchton Park

- Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey and a **small skate spot** for wheeled action sports (e.g., skateboarding). The multi-use court and skate spot should be located within the park to ensure that there is an adequate separation distance with adjacent land uses.
- Undertake **park enhancements** including a walking pathway that connects park users to existing amenities, seating, and signage.

Browns Park

Browns Park is located in the Brown settlement area with limited frontage on the south side of Oakwood Drive. A soccer field is found at this location, as well as a playground, which was recently replaced as a part of the Township's 2021 capital budget. A portion of the park also consists of a woodlot. Similar to Branchton Park, Browns Park is the only park serving the neighbourhood and as a result, the Township should ensure that it is designed to meet local-level needs.

Considerations for Browns Park

- Repurpose the **underutilized soccer field** to address other in-demand needs including one multi-use court for **tennis and pickleball** and one multi-use court for **basketball and ball hockey**.
- **Park amenities** should include a walking pathway, seating, and outdoor fitness equipment.
- Suggestions were made for an **outdoor skating rink**. This should only be pursued as a volunteer-led initiative, with support from the Township in providing materials, setup and removal.

Centennial Park

Centennial Park is located in the northeast corner of Northumberland Street and Stanley Street in Ayr. This park is dominated by a mature woodlot with features including Watson Pond, walking pathways – known as Campbell's Trail and Wilma's Walk – and the Ayr Bandshell. Park amenities include on-site parking, seating, and landscaping.

Centennial Park is the Township's signature outdoor destination for nature enjoyment and social gatherings, as well as cultural events such as the Concert at the Pavilion Summer Concert Series, which is presented by the Ayr-Paris Band. It also offers a positive impression on tourists visiting downtown Ayr. Future improvements at Centennial Park should continue to strengthen the park's intended function as a welcoming and comfortable public space for nature enjoyment, as well as a place where people can connect and enjoy events.



Considerations for Centennial Park

- Explore opportunities to offer **outdoor program opportunities** such as group fitness activities and arts and cultural programs to respond to community requests for more outdoor activities.

Clyde Park

Clyde Park is located on the north side of the Clyde settlement area, on the west side of Village Road, north of Langford Drive. Amenities found at this park include a soccer field, playground and ball diamond backstop, as well as a parking lot and pavilion. Much like Branchton Park and Browns Park, Clyde Park is the only public park in the settlement area, thus efforts should be made to ensure that the park continues to meet the needs of residents within the vicinity.

Considerations for Clyde Park

- Move forward with installing **outdoor fitness equipment**.
- Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey.
- Develop a **small-scale skate spot** for wheeled actions sports (e.g., skateboarding).
- Establish a **walking loop**.

Cowan Park

Cowan Park is located north of Ayr on the west side of Sanger Lane, north of Greenfield Road. Co-located with the North Dumfries Community Complex, this park is the primary destination for active outdoor leisure activities and contains the broadest range of facilities including soccer fields, a playground and splash pad, skateboard park, community garden, off-leash dog park, and supporting amenities such as a walking trail, parking, and washroom building with a covered seating area.



Considerations for Cowan Park

- Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey.
- Relocate the **off-leash dog park** to the west side of the North Dumfries Community Complex (or seek a permanent location at a future community park); consideration should be given to supporting amenities such as shade, seating, water, landscaping and other comfort features.
- Promote the use of the **sand volleyball courts** and community gardens and monitoring these amenities to inform future needs and improvements.
- Evaluate strategic opportunities to provide **park amenities** including trail linkages, pathway surfacing enhancements, outdoor fitness equipment, seating, and other design best practices identified in this Master Plan.

Douglas Park

Douglas Park is a linear-style park found in Ayr. There are three access points to the park, which can be found on Douglas Drive, Robson Street and Broom Street. A walking pathway connects park users from the streets through the park, as well as to a playground.

Considerations for Douglas Park

- Establish new **park amenities** such as outdoor fitness equipment.
- Undertake efforts to **beautify** the park to create visual interest with additional landscaping, potentially through the creation of pollinator gardens. Leveraging the expertise of the North Dumfries Garden Club is encouraged to support this project.

Hilltop Drive Park

Hilltop Drive Park is located on the west side of Patterson Drive in Ayr, with access points available from Hilltop Drive and Vincent Drive. This small park space features a pathway connecting users through the park, as well as a playground.

Considerations for Hilltop Drive Park

- Extend the existing **pathway** to connect to the playground to enhance accessibility.
- Erect a **park entrance signage** that is more in keeping with welcome signs found at other Township parks.

Ice House Park

Ice House Park is located on the west side of Tannery Street, east of the Nith River and north of Stanley Street. This property is part of the former Ayr Ice House and Creamery, which is a designated heritage building. The outdoor park space consists of a former bowling green and associated clubhouse. The Township is currently undertaking a separate Master Plan for the site (Ayr Ice House Precinct) to evaluate adaptive indoor and outdoor reuse of this site, which is one of the key initiatives identified in the North Dumfries Corporate Strategic Plan. The Master Plan will create a vision for the site that considers opportunities to enhance public space in downtown Ayr that will complement existing amenities including the Ayr Cenotaph, Centennial Park, as well as existing trails and pathways and Nith River access.

Considerations for Ice House Park

- Complete the **Ayr Ice House Precinct Master Plan** to create a vision for the adaptive indoor and outdoor reuse of the site to strengthen public spaces in downtown Ayr and explore potential access to Nith River.

Piper's Glen Park

Piper's Glen Park is located behind residential dwellings along Nith River Way in Ayr. The Nith River runs along the park to the west. The majority of the park consists of a mature woodlot. Active park amenities include a ball diamond, soccer field and playground, which is supported by a parking lot and a trail. The Township has plans in place to formalize this trail route and extend the pathway towards Greenfield Road, with the intention to establish a trail to the North Dumfries Community Complex.

Considerations for Piper's Glen Park

- Continue to formalize **trail routes** in Piper's Glen Park to connect to Greenfield Road, with the intention of connecting to the North Dumfries Community Complex.

Riverside Park

Riverside Park is a small park parcel located at the rear of the West River Road Reformed Church. This park is greenspace and does not have any recreational amenities. With limited street frontage, Riverside Park is generally underutilized. There continues to be value in maintaining this park to ensure that residents in the area have a public outdoor gathering space. Members of the adjacent church may also be users of the park before and after services.

Considerations for Riverside Park

- Promote the park for **passive use and outdoor gatherings** to ensure that residents are aware that it exists and its location.
- Establish **low-cost and low-maintenance improvements** such as installing entrance signage, walking pathway, comfort amenities (e.g., seating, tree plantings, picnic tables, etc.), and a pollinator garden (provided in partnership with the North Dumfries Garden Club).
- **Reduce the level of maintenance** in strategic areas or returning sections of the park to a naturalized state should also be considered to reduce operational requirements at this park.

Roseville Community Centre

The Roseville Community Centre is located on the southeast corner of Roseville Road and Fischer-Hallman Road. This site features an indoor multi-purpose space, which is supported by a kitchen and washrooms, as well as dedicated space for the Ayr-North Dumfries Lions Club. Outdoor amenities include a ball diamond and soccer field for neighbourhood use, as well as a playground.

Considerations for Roseville Community Centre

- Position the Roseville Community Centre as a **community hub** for rural residents for programs, events and rentals through the following strategies
 - Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey.
 - Establish a **small-scale skate spot** for wheeled actions sports (e.g., skateboarding).
 - Develop **small-scale spray features** adjacent to the playground.
 - Install **outdoor fitness equipment**.
 - Proceed with establishing an **outdoor skating rink**.
 - Undertake necessary capital improvements to the **indoor space** to address aging components and accessibility requirements.

Schmidt Park

Schmidt Park is located on the east side of Ayr behind residential dwellings in the southeast corner of Wrigley Road and Hilltop Drive. The park contains two lit ball diamonds, washroom, pavilion and open greenspace.

The Township has been taking steps towards developing Schmidt Park to respond to growing community needs. A conceptual plan for the park has been developed by the Township to establish a vision for the site (Figure 14), which is supported by the Master Plan. The Township has been successful in receiving grant funding to implement various aspects of the park concept. Planned outdoor recreation amenities and enhancements include improvements to the ball diamonds and washrooms, constructing three lit courts for tennis and pickleball, playground, greenspace for passive use gatherings, and other amenities such as walking pathways, shade structures and tree plantings.

Figure 14: Schmidt Park Concept Plan



Considerations for Schmidt Park

- Move forward with developing a **community-level BMX pump track** subject to external funding through grants and/or a willing community partner to assist with fundraising.
- Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey.
- Install **outdoor fitness equipment**.
- Establish an **outdoor skating rink**.

Victoria Park

Victoria Park is located on the northeast corner of Rose Street and Church Street in Ayr. The park features one lit and unlit ball diamond, batting cage, two lit tennis courts, playground, and a pavilion.

Considerations for Victoria Park

- Replace the sports lighting at **Diamond 1** and undertake enhancements at **Diamond 2**, including installing lighting and work with the Ayr Minor Softball Association to install a new batting cage and outfield fencing.
- Replace the **tennis court lighting** and add playing lines for **pickleball** to the court surface.
- Establish an **outdoor skating rink**.
- Continue with plans to renew the **pavilion**.

Future Parkettes

Parkettes are planned to serve the growing areas of Ayr and the Cambridge West subdivision. The purpose of parkettes is to support spontaneous outdoor gatherings and rest areas. Due to the small size of the planned parkettes (between 0.3 and 0.9 hectares), these spaces can only be designed to accommodate a limited range of uses. Nevertheless, the Township should seek to ensure that the most basic level of park amenities should be provided at these parkettes to serve its intended purpose.

Considerations for Future Parkettes

- Construct a **playground**.
- Establish **park features and amenities** such as signage, pathways, seating, and open space.

Future Ayr Neighbourhood Park

A future neighbourhood park is planned in the emerging Legacy P1/Broos P2 subdivision, north of Brant-Waterloo Road and east of Swan Street. The proposed subdivision development is largely characterized by single family dwellings and it is anticipated that this area will attract families with children and youth.

Considerations for Future Ayr Neighbourhood Park

- Construct a **multi-use court** for basketball and ball hockey.
- Develop a **small-scale skateboard park**.
- Establish **park features and amenities** such as signage, pathways, seating, and open space.

6.7 Recreational Trails

An active transportation network is found in North Dumfries that facilitates walking and cycling for residents and visitors. The Township's trails are situated at key locations within the parkland system including at the North Dumfries Community Complex, Centennial Park, Douglas Park, and Piper's Glen Park. These trails feature paved and unpaved surfaces that are suitable for walking. These trails are also complemented by the Township's extensive sidewalk system, in addition to natural unpaved trails found throughout the Township in forest tracts managed by the Region of Waterloo and the Grand River Conservation Authority. Portions of the Trans Canada Trail traverse through the Township. On-road cycling opportunities are also available in North Dumfries.

The development of the Township's active transportation network is advanced through North Dumfries' 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan. During the time the report was prepared, there were approximately 95 kilometres of municipal and non-municipal trails and cycling linkages. This included 51 kilometres of walking and cycling trails, three kilometres of bike lanes and 40 kilometres of paved shoulders. Approximately 166 kilometres of trails and cycling routes were recommended, which would create an active transportation network spanning over 260 kilometres. Proposed routes included building upon the trails in Piper's Glen Park and pedestrian connections through new residential areas. The balance of proposed routes consists of cycling infrastructure such as bike lanes, paved shoulders and signed routes.



Continuing to build upon the Township's recreational trail system is an important initiative for Council as the Corporate Strategic Plan identifies that need to update the 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan. Other Corporate initiatives that have been identified included promoting Township and non-Township trails in North Dumfries and assessing opportunities to facilitate access to non-Township owned lands for trail access. The Township's continued commitment to improving the trail network is demonstrated through the 10-year capital forecast, which identifies new trail projects within the Ayr settlement area that will add approximately five kilometres to the active transportation network. Certain sections of the Township's trail system are also maintained during the winter season to facilitate year-round walking activities. It is noted through staff report REC-08-2022, staff have recommended that the winter sidewalk maintenance program be extended to include the Victoria Park ring road.

Recreational trails tend to be one of the most highly desirable amenities in any municipality. They facilitate low-cost outdoor physical activities and can be used by residents of all ages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities across Ontario experienced a strong upsurge in trail usage, highlighting the importance of providing a connected trail network. The popularity of trail usage was also found in North Dumfries. The Master Plan community survey found that 86% of respondents participated in walking or hiking in 2019, which was the most popular activity. More than nine-out-of-ten respondents (91%) also felt that investment in nature trails should be a priority, while four-out-of-five (81%) of respondents felt that paved trails should be a priority.

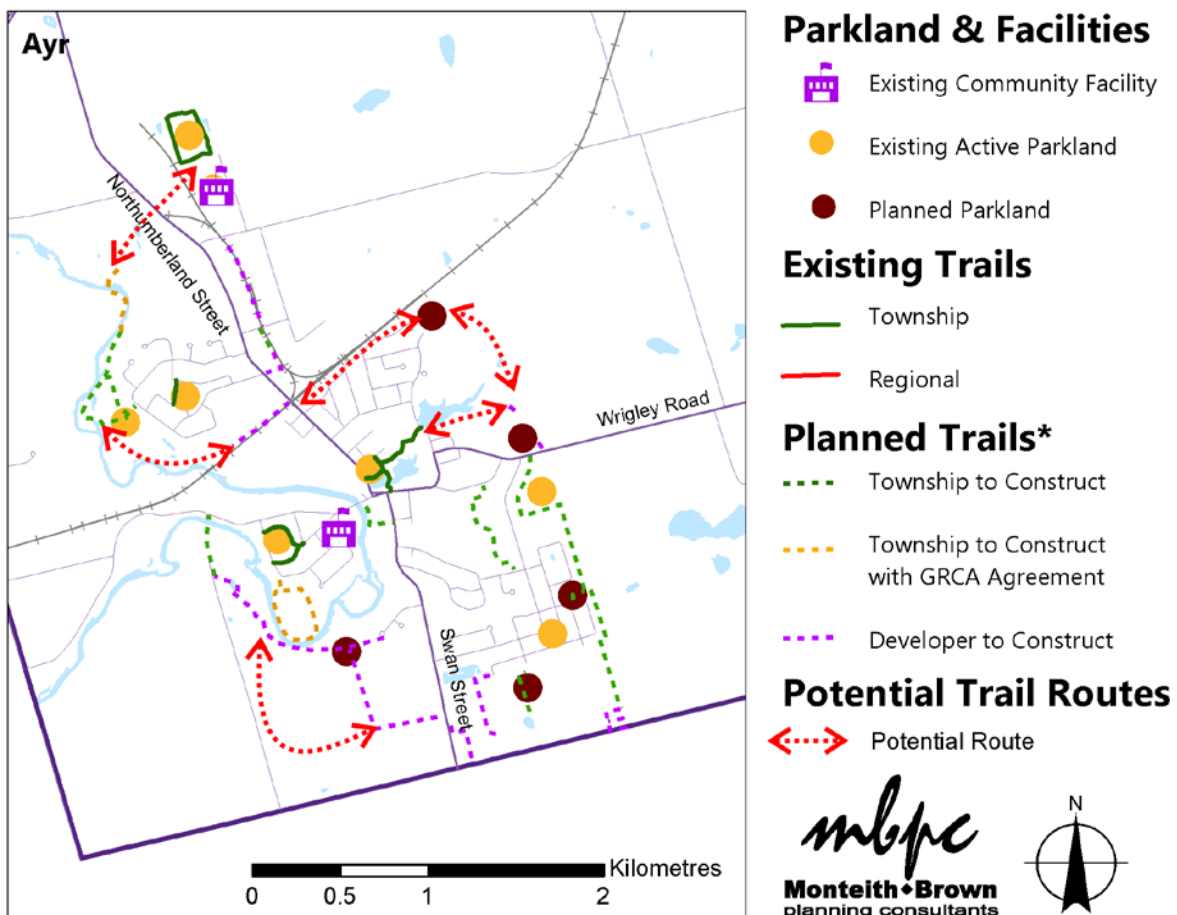
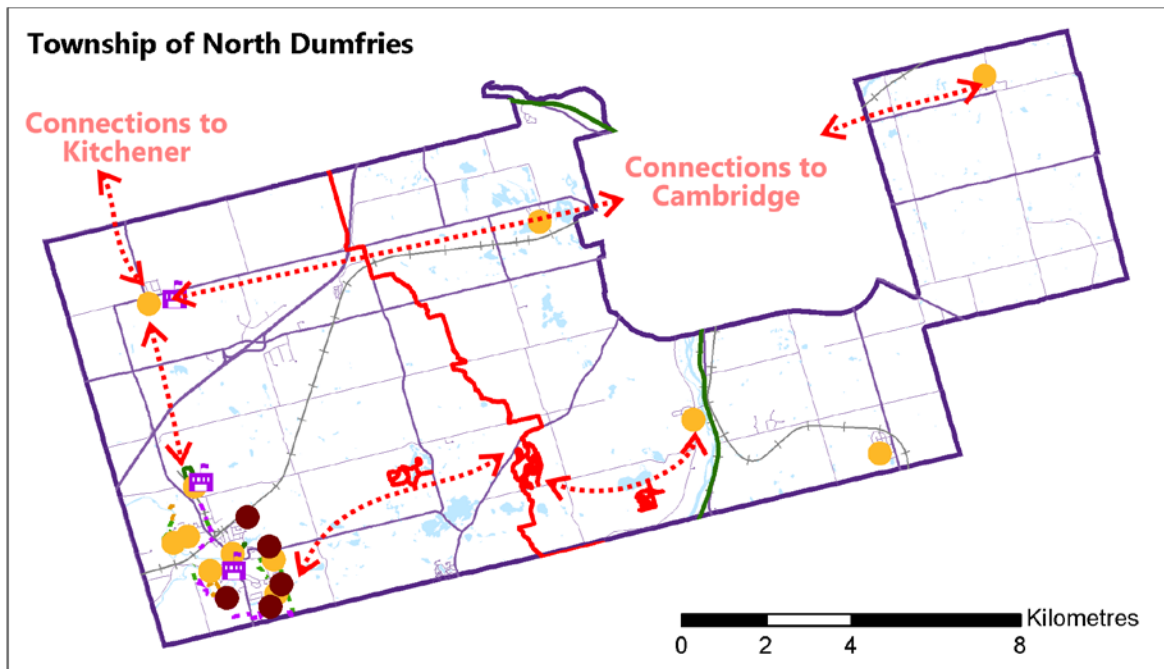
At a conceptual level, the Master Plan investigated potential trail routes and linkages to supplement the existing network and planned trail projects (Figure 15). Consideration was given to underutilized open spaces, connecting destinations, and developing linkages through future residential areas. A conceptual trail network developed for this Master Plan is intended to be used as a guide as the Township undertakes its update to the 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan. Refinements and consultation with the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee, the public, and others are encouraged prior to developing any new trail routes.

The key to the continued development of a connected trail network is to ensure that safe, accessible and convenient linkages exist between users and key destinations (e.g., parks, recreation and community facilities, schools, commercial areas, etc.). While the Township provides a strong sidewalk system, off-road trail linkages are limited. The conceptual network identifies connections throughout Ayr to establish a walking loop throughout the settlement area, which should be achieved through a combination of off-road trails and sidewalks. While trail development within established areas is often a challenge, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that there are walking pathways within the Township's parks to provide accessible circulation areas and linkages to internal amenities (e.g., playgrounds). As future residential development occurs, particularly on the east and south side of Ayr, the provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure should be planned to facilitate active transportation movement, which is supported by the Official Plan. Trail design features and comfort amenities should also be considered in appropriate areas, as discussed in Section 6.5.

Within the Township's rural area, the conceptual network identifies connections to existing trails owned by the Region of Waterloo and Grand River Conservation Authority, as well as trail systems in adjacent municipalities. These are long-term projects that will require partnerships and discussions with others such as landowners, Region of Waterloo, Conservation Authority, and Grand River Trails Network to identify routing, public access, coordinate projects, and other opportunities to work together.

Promoting active transportation opportunities in North Dumfries is supported by the Master Plan to encourage outdoor physical activities, which is consistent with the Corporate Strategic Plan. Initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan include publishing an online map of trails in the Township, as well as through a mobile application. Other potential opportunities include erecting wayfinding signage within the community such as at trailheads and in downtown Ayr (see Recommendation #45), closing traffic in downtown Ayr to create a pedestrian street, or working with others to promote active transportation (e.g., creating walking groups).

Figure 15: Recommended Conceptual Trail Network



*Planned trails identified by the Township of North Dumfries

Recommendations – Recreational Trails

47. Update to the **2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan** to provide a renewed vision and detailed investigation for active transportation development opportunities. The update should incorporate and build upon the Township's efforts to strengthen the trail network, as well as the **conceptual trail network** contained in this Master Plan. Key trail initiatives include:
 - a) Creating a walking loop within the Ayr settlement area utilizing a combination of sidewalks and off-road linkages;
 - b) Establishing pedestrian circulation areas within existing parks (e.g., pathways to playgrounds, sports fields, pavilions, etc.);
 - c) Identifying active transportation routes within future residential areas as permitted by the Official Plan;
 - d) Strengthening connections to non-Township owned trails and trail systems in adjacent municipalities, including working with land owners to establish public access; and
 - e) Either alone or in partnership with others, promote active transportation opportunities including publishing trail routes (e.g., online and print map, mobile application, etc.), establishing walking groups, create pedestrian days in downtown Ayr, raise awareness for non-Township owned trails, and other strategies identified by the Township.



7.0 Leisure Service Delivery

7.1 The Role of Municipal Leisure Service Delivery

The role of a municipality in delivering/enabling leisure services centres on proactive planning and efficient execution - always in concert with community and stakeholders/partners. In North Dumfries, facilities are primarily provided by the Township while leisure services – including recreation, sport and culture – are predominantly delivered through community groups and partners with the support of the Township. Still, much is required to take an overall view of the range of services being delivered and ensure that leisure opportunities are inclusive of all interests and age groups. There is a continued focus required as conditions and interests change and specific issues emerge such as physical inactivity levels and engaging underrepresented populations. Programs and services are enabled and provided with a view to being cost efficient, providing quality opportunities and in safe environments. These tactics typically result in high levels of public and user satisfaction levels, as well as healthy community outcomes.

Township and its community partners need to be current with national trends and standards, as well as local and service expectations to be informed of the leisure needs within the community. An **emphasis should be placed on increasing participation year over year** and engage more community members in healthy pursuits. It is important to articulate the role of Township whether it is providing services directly or through a community partner. The following must be considered jointly (at a minimum):

- **Understand the growth of the Township** and plan for any change in service provision based on changes to demographics, income levels, social issues, including persons experiencing low income, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups;
- **Promote the importance** of being engaged in active lifestyles as a lifelong pursuit;
- Incorporate program, service, community-driven approaches that **address social development issues** within the community such as youth engagement, isolation among older adults, improving physical activity levels, in the delivery of service etc.;
- **Ensure that infrastructure and amenities** are highly utilized, meet a community need, are in a state of good repair, and are multi-purpose in terms of their use;
- **Provide and enable a full range of recreation and sport activities** based on the needs of the general population, families and within specific age groupings;
- **Support partners and other providers** to excel and play their part in providing a full range of services including joint planning, assistance with training and governance supports, development of common policies and practises etc.;
- **Promote and communicate** all the available opportunities and the benefits of participating in leisure opportunities;
- **Work collectively to understand participation rates** by age group and set targets to increase participation;

- **Comply with legislative requirements and incorporate quality assurance measures**, while adhering to industry standards and assist community providers meet these requirements.
- **Support and recognize the importance of volunteerism** in the provision of leisure opportunities such as providing centralized recruitment software;
- **Work collectively** with community partners and stakeholders, share knowledge, and new developments in addressing needed improvements such as inclusion and accessibility approaches;
- **Ensure that the financial implications** of having joint responsibility for leisure services is fair-minded and provides for a sustainable and proactive recreation system such as facility and sport field fees for volunteer groups supporting children and youth; and
- **Measure the satisfaction levels**, efficiencies and effectiveness of the service delivery system and address needed improvements.

7.2 Leisure Service Delivery Model in North Dumfries

The role of every Leisure Services Division in Canada is to continually strive **to increase participation in recreation, culture, outdoor and sport pursuits**. The benefits to individuals, families and the community are the key drivers in creating a sustainable quality of life. Increasing participation year over year and demonstrating high satisfaction rates requires staff and community partners to provide and enable meaningful, safe, and quality programs and services with an understanding of the key interests of each age cohort. Measuring participation and satisfaction levels demonstrates to the public that the Township is utilizing public funding effectively toward the overall public good.

The Township's leisure service delivery is primarily a Community Development Model – this model relies on the community and businesses to provide opportunities, leagues, events, and camps as a first line of response. The primary role of the Township is to provide supports to these community organizations through central promotions and communications, grants to promote certain priorities, the fair-minded allocation of public spaces, assistance with volunteer recruitment, training opportunities, grant submission opportunities from other funders and levels of government and assistance with governance. Further the role of the Township is to ensure that each age cohort has equitable access to a range of programs and services including active, sport, creative, STEM (Science, Technology, Environmental and Technology), as well as addressing trends and general interests. Municipalities typically develop an inventory of available opportunities for each age group and assesses participation in each in the categories listed above. The question should be posed – is there capacity within the system to provide enough and varied opportunities for each age group? If not, then the Township should provide programs and services directly if there are gaps and no group or organization is able to deliver them. This blended approach provides a well-rounded and balanced approach to leisure service delivery. Importantly and with the approach in mind, it is inherent on all the community partners work together to provide a seamless delivery system to the public.

The Township's Leisure & Community Services Department assists with special events or leads Council approved special events that prompt residents and visitors to gather and celebrate annual milestones and days of significance. Special events benefit the community in terms of strengthening community pride and cohesion. Often enough there is an economic spin off within the community in terms of local spending.

Figure 16 illustrates how the Leisure & Community Services Department provides and enables a meaningful variety of programs and services in North Dumfries. The success of this service delivery model relies upon on the strength and commitment of the parties to serve residents as a collective. The Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee will be a strong participant in strengthening the ability of the Township to serve all age cohorts with a range of choices and as well strengthen the commitment of all providers.

Step 1: The Township identifies the range of leisure service providers and opportunities –

understanding the current suppliers of leisure opportunities whether they are not-for-profit or private providers and their range of services will assist the Township in understanding what is available for each age group. A range of choices is paramount to meet varying needs and would include arts, creative, active, sport, outdoor, general interest, and STEM related opportunities.

Step 2: The Township and other providers work together to assess community needs –

Ideally the Township would facilitate ongoing discussions with all service providers to understand their services, who they serve and summarize annual participation numbers by age group.

Step 3: The Township provide space, assists with communications/promotions and other supports (space allocation, grants, volunteer recruitment etc.) –

The work to summarize all opportunities by age group would fall under the responsibility of the Township. The Township would also promote all opportunities by age group both online and through a Community Services Guide.

Step 4: The Township provides programs and services directly where there are gaps for certain age groups and partners could not be found –

Where there are critical gaps and no organization to provide these services, the Township would develop and oversee these programs and services directly until a likely community partner is prepared to do so. The Township should also anticipate the resources needed to respond to community-wide social issues such as access and inclusion, inactivity, females in sport, etc., and facilitating community plans and discussions in concert with the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee.

Step 5: The Township and other service providers monitor participation and satisfaction levels –


To continually increase participation and service levels, the Township would work with community partners and participants to better understand how to improve service provision as a collective.

Step 6: The Township makes improvements based on community feedback –

Based upon participation rates and satisfaction levels, improvements are made to programs and services to address deficiencies to provide an improved user experience.

Figure 16: Township of North Dumfries Leisure & Community Services Department - Service Delivery Model

Township of North Dumfries Leisure & Community Services Department Service Delivery Model

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- Step 1.** The Township identifies the range of community service providers and services for each age cohort.
 - Step 2.** The Township and other providers work together to assess community needs.
 - Step 3.** The Township works with all providers to promote all opportunities. The Township provides space and other supports.
 - Step 4.** The Township provides programs / services directly if there are significant gaps.
 - Step 5.** The Township and other providers monitor participation rates and satisfaction levels for all.
 - Step 6.** The Township makes improvements based on community feedback.

Opportunities to Strengthen North Dumfries Community Development Model

The Township has a very definitive and proactive role to play in adopting a community development model in enabling and providing leisure opportunities. The specific supports that the Township plays in enabling quality and safe programs to the community is a significant undertaking. Best practises include the provision of a blend of supports, each to meet the needs of the provider and include:

- a. **Understanding Community Needs by Working Together with Groups** – The Township must be vigilant in understanding the current menu of services, trends, addressing the needs of each age group through partnerships and providing services directly where there are evident gaps or the inability of groups and organizations to provide the programs and services.
- b. **Promotions and Communications** – A summary of all leisure opportunities both provided by the Township and other providers is a public service. The promotion of all opportunities will enable ease of access, lists all programs and services and contacts in one central access point and promotes the plethora of opportunities available within the community. This is to promote a seamless delivery system and provide full access to residents. This was a point heard throughout the Master Plan's consultation.
- c. **Allocation of Space** - The Township offers the equitable allocation of spaces based on a fair-minded allocation formula and serves affiliated community groups on a priority basis. Current Affiliation and Allocation Policies are required and should be developed and reviewed with community input.

- d. **Ongoing Engagement** – The Township should be offering ongoing engagement opportunities to all providers on an annual basis. Discussions will include annual and seasonal utilization/participation, improvements to service suggestions, policy development/review inputs, Provincial legislation and Industry Standard requirements, quality assurance models and training opportunities, volunteer recruitment, succession and recognition, new trends, including underrepresented populations and future plans at a minimum.
- e. **Communications Regarding Grant Opportunities** – Many government, sport and support organization grants become available from time to time and may address specific issues (females in sport for example). The Township and service providers should share these opportunities to ensure that alternate funding is maximized by the community.
- f. **Municipal Grants** – Structured Community Grants are often offered to not-for-profit groups to assist groups in aligning with community priorities. Often grants are offered as initial start-up funds and declining funding for groups over three years or so help with long-term sustainability. Start-up funds or funds to assist with training, special events, or address gaps such as including persons with disabilities. While the grants are in place a further enhancement would be to determine the program gaps and fund these priorities to encourage groups to form or expand, strengthen their capacity and/or respond to ongoing program and service needs.
- g. **Alignment with Legislated Requirements, Provincial Organizations and Quality Assurance Models** – The Township receives through national and provincial organizations ongoing training and professional development opportunities to keep up with issues within the field, upcoming trends in participation, Pandemic management etc. In a Community Development service delivery model, this information must be shared to ensure that other service providers are offering quality and safe experiences for the community
- h. **Governance Assistance Where Needed** – Many community stakeholder groups may need assistance as they form to align themselves with provincial and national organizations, apply for non-profit group or charitable status, develop a constitution, and oversee their operations in accordance with provincial requirements. Municipal staff will keep abreast of these requirements and assist groups as required. Many training opportunities exist, and central resources are provided by Volunteer Canada. A shared file of these resources could readily support community groups.
- i. **Assistance with Volunteer Recruitment** – The ability to recruit, train, supervise, retain, and recognize volunteers is an ongoing requirement to the success of most community stakeholder groups. Operations depend to a great extent on having a volunteer corps and community groups indicated that they are currently having difficulty attracting and retaining volunteers. North Dumfries in its role to assist community groups in the delivery of their leisure services could play a central role in promoting all volunteer postings. There are online applications that match applicants with the skill sets needed and forward potential volunteer applicants to the respective community group for their review. Basic online training can be provided on health and safety, basic guidance on facility regulations etc. The programs can also track hours for recognition purposes. User group consultations suggested that this is a critical role for Township to play.
- j. **Access & Inclusion** – The Canadian Human Rights Code dictates that all residents have equal access to services. This legislation requires providers to understand who is underrepresented and

to take intentional steps to reduce barriers to better include them. The Township would assist groups in addressing the diversity in the community and ways of being more inclusive.

Key Observations of the Current Delivery Model

Ongoing Engagement – The Township does well to understand needs and to allocate facility and outdoor spaces fairly to all ages and genders. Ongoing efforts are made to consult the community on the development of policies and procedural developments and changes to reflect community concerns and preferences.

Communications and Promotions – The Master Plan consultation process found that the lack of information or not knowing what opportunities are available was a participation barrier. It would be beneficial to have a central listing and a guide that would list opportunities for each age group by activity type (physical activity/fitness, science, technology, environmental, and mathematics (STEM), creative, general interest, and sport).

The Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee – The continued engagement of the Committee is a clear benefit to the Community Development Service Delivery Model. Committee members should represent various segments and age cohorts of the community to provide meaningful and rounded advice to staff and Council.

Volunteer Recruitment – Many of the community groups indicated that it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain volunteers. Municipalities in Ontario are acquiring software applications that assist in the recruitment by listing volunteer opportunities, matching skills and competencies, some training, and tracking of volunteer hours. This central resource augments groups abilities to reach out and recruit volunteers within their own organizations.

Recommendations – Leisure Service Delivery in North Dumfries

48. At minimum, bi-annually develop a summary of all leisure by age group offered within North Dumfries and within proximity for the purpose of **communicating and promoting** these opportunities to the public. Start dates, prerequisites, cost, location, and contact information should all be included to promote a seamless delivery system.
49. Develop a **Community Services Guide** to list and promote all leisure programs and services. List all aligned and available services within the community. Subsections should be broken down by age group as well as by oriented family activities.
50. Refine the **Municipal Grants** program to provide start up and special event funding to encourage community groups to assist in the provision of a robust spectrum of services. Grants could be offered where there are identified gaps and could also be offered over 3 years on a declining basis to assist with sustainability.
51. Develop **Shared Files** for all groups to access and share information on funding and grant opportunities from other levels of government and philanthropic organizations to promote recreation and active living opportunities in North Dumfries. Any additional information to groups on trends in recreation and culture, initiatives and plans by other levels of government and key agencies and links to key studies and best practises that could assist groups in the delivery of services should be included.

Recommendations – Leisure Service Delivery in North Dumfries

52. Provide central resources on **governance** and the formation and ongoing requirements of not-for-profit groups in the delivery of leisure opportunities to keep community groups and agencies abreast of any changes and best practises.
53. Strengthen the ability to **recruit volunteers** to include the use of technology to match volunteer skills with opportunities, provide basic training on policies and track volunteer hours. Work with community stakeholder groups to understand their difficulties in obtaining and retaining volunteers. Utilize the resources and standards as provided by **Volunteer Canada**.

7.3 Active Living

It is well recognized that community partners deliver leisure services in North Dumfries. The overall role of the Township is strengthened by having an exceptional knowledge of trends, local needs, and the ability to work with partners to deliver a well-rounded menu of opportunities. There is a significant support role in ensuring that there is a range of choices for each age cohort and that all residents can be heard and engaged. Staff must be poised to respond to gaps in provision of service and to address key social issues such as inactivity and a lack of females in sport and recreation. The following objectives will outline the range of work required to contribute to the sustainability of a healthy and cohesive community.

Foster Active Living through physical recreation and a range of recreational opportunities for all ages.

Active Living Objectives

- To **increase** residents' frequency, duration, and intensity of physically activity.
- To **maximize** program opportunities, participation and utilization in all public facilities and spaces.
- To **increase** the number of children, youth, adults, and older adults who are active and engaged in pursuing recreational activities.
- To **address current trends** and pent-up demands.
- To increase **community pride and cohesion** through hosting and supporting a range of special events.

Active Living – Increasing Physical Activity Levels in North Dumfries

Canada continues to focus on ways to increase physical activity levels to reduce chronic health issues. Our country has made very little progress over the last few decades. The Master Plan community survey found that 77% of respondents indicated either that there had been no change to their level of activity during the COVID-19 pandemic or that they were less physically active. Leisure & Community Services staff will need to continue to work with health promoters, education, and other partners to address this critical health issue that if continued can lead to chronic health issues earlier in the lifecycle in the Township.

North Dumfries staff played a role to support physical activity for all age groups during the pandemic. A full listing of online resources was provided to the public through the Township's website. Active, creative, science related, general interest opportunities and links were provided to encourage residents to be active at a time when facilities were closed, and clubs and programs cancelled. As communities ease out of the pandemic, attitudes toward community safety will need to be addressed as residents are prompted to become more physically active through the provision of active opportunities.

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines have replaced Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. The new guidelines were introduced in 2020 and depict the amount of time various age groups should "Sweat, Step, Sleep and Sit" in a 24-hour timeframe. This is viewed as more a helpful tool for Canadians as the new guidelines speak to the amount of recreational screen time that is appropriate from a health perspective each day. For example, Table 12 highlights the daily movement guidelines for children and youth between the ages of 7 and 17.

Table 12: Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Activity	Time / Day
Sweat	60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity
Step	Several hours of moderate physical activity
Sleep	9-11 hours for 5 – 13-year-olds
	8-10 hours for 14 – 17-year-olds
Sit	Limit sitting for extended periods
	No more than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day

These new guidelines have been developed for all age cohorts and should be communicated and promoted to the public within facilities and online. Discussions with community partners to introduce Physical Literacy, increase active opportunities and promote and track community progress are a good starting point in increasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of physical activity. Discussions with the EarlyON program administrators, Langa, sport clubs and other organizations will be a good starting point to discuss increasing physical activity levels. Guidance from the Waterloo Region Public Health Unit in terms of ongoing local and effective interventions would assist staff and the community in developing a simple but longer-term plan.

Physical Literacy

One approach to increasing physical activity is to ensure that community members have the basic physical skills to participate in active opportunities. The Canadian Sport for Life Movement has developed a Physical Literacy program for all age groups to ensure that they can run, throw, catch, etc. Physical literacy can be taught in existing programs and environments such as in daycares, seniors centres, schools, sport clubs etc. Once people are comfortable with the skills to be more active, it is hoped that some barriers to participation in physical activities will be alleviated.

ParticipACTION Active APP

ParticipACTION has developed and released a free App that serves to motivate and incentivize Canadians to be more active. The Leisure & Community Services Department, as an initial approach, could make efforts to promote its use. The App includes daily quick tips, articles, videos, can connect to tracking devices and provides weekly, monthly, and yearly rewards. The App will also remind you to be active at pre-set times and continues to include upgrades. This is another opportunity for North Dumfries to continue promote physical activity without utilizing significant staff and other resources.

The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge – Top Prize \$100,000

ParticipACTION hosts an annual Community Better Challenge to encourage Canadian communities to get more active. It is open to all communities and residents are encouraged to track minutes of activity on the ParticipACTION App or website during the month of June. Total minutes achieved per capita count toward the national winner and a top winning community is identified within each province and territory. The fifty finalist communities are asked to apply explaining why they deserve to be Canada's Most Active Community. This initiative has helped community groups and organizations join in and improve activity levels. The prize of \$100,000 often helps to improve infrastructure, program, and equipment levels. With a population of 16,000 residents, the eastern Ontario community of North Grenville was the recipient of this prize and was recognized as Canada's Most Active Community in 2021. The community achieved over nine million physical activity minutes. Some events included a 12-hour tennis marathon and a cartwheel contest lead by the mayor.

Communities and organizations can apply for grants and event tool kits at the beginning of each year to assist with events and challenges. This could be a way to galvanize community groups and organizations in North Dumfries to improve fitness levels for all age groups and abilities and become an annual event. It is recommended that the newly constituted Community Events & Festivals Committee consider this a meaningful opportunity.

Recommendations – Increasing Physical Activity Levels in North Dumfries

54. Work with community partners and interested parties to introduce **Physical Literacy** to all age groups in North Dumfries to better enable participation in active pursuits.
55. **Promote the benefits** of being active on an ongoing basis and the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines to all North Dumfries residents.
56. Seek Council's approval to enter the **Community Better Challenge** through ParticipACTION in 2023 or 2024 to become Canada's Most Active Community.

Programs and Activities for All Age Groups

The Township provides a limited range of direct programs such as drop-in opportunities, which is augmented by providing space to local organizations to deliver activities or another community-related purpose. The role of the Township is to ensure that there is a blend of quality and safe experiences available to all citizens.

Programs and Service Provision

The Community Development Model looks to community stakeholder groups first to provide well rounded opportunities for all age groups. Best practises dictate that municipalities should either enable or provide opportunities that are active, sport related, creative, STEM (science, technology, environmental and technology), and general interest opportunities.

North Dumfries has a strong reputation as being a “hockey town” as heard through the consultation process. A common concern was raised that there was not a variety of leisure choices for all ages within the community. Particularly, adults felt that there was not a menu of leisure opportunities for them. Taking stock of these opportunities and participation (post Pandemic) by age group would better serve to identify gaps before engaging the public in identifying their more specific needs. Staff also felt that there is a gap in opportunities for adults and that the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee (working in concert with Township staff) may play a role to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to participate.

The current service providers in North Dumfries include sport groups, Langs/North Dumfries, the Community Health Centre, EarlyON, Region of Waterloo Library in Ayr, Family Counselling Service, community sport groups and private providers. These organizations are an example of the breadth of service providers and offer a range of services. A preliminary assessment of opportunities by age group was difficult to complete given program/club closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, some opportunities were offered online during the Pandemic and a normal year’s programming has not been experienced in almost 2 years. Based on available information, Table 13 and Table 14 summarize in-person and online leisure opportunities by age group. This overall community-wide assessment should be completed on a bi-annual basis to ensure that there are no gaps within each age group.

Table 13: Summary of In-Person Leisure Opportunities in North Dumfries by Age Group

Age Cohort	STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)	Physical Activity	Cultural (Visual & Performing Arts)	General Interest	Sports
Pre-School (Ages 1 to 5)		Light Exercise Public Skate Playgrounds	Dance 2-year-olds Circle Time - Singing	Games Play & Story Time	Soccer
Children (Grades 1 to 5 or Ages 6 to 10)		Open Gym Outdoor Sports Martial Arts Dance Public Skate Playgrounds Skateboarding	Music Studio	Kitchen Kreations Virtual Cooking	Tennis Minor Softball Hockey Ringette Skating Club Soccer
Youth (Grades 6 to 12 or Ages 11 to 18)	STEAM at Home Tech Centre Coding Club	Hoops Running Club Still Yoga Youth Drop In Martial Arts Dance Public Skate	Maker Space	Food & Mood	Curling Tennis Minor Softball Hockey Ringette Skating Club Soccer
Adults (Ages 19 to 54)		Public Skate Shinny Skateboarding		Cooking Healthy Together Night Out Live & Laugh	Slo-Pitch Tennis Curling Volleyball Pickleball Lawn Bowling
Older Adults (Ages 55+)	Computers Technology Classes	Public Skate Shinny Tai Chi Fitness/Wellness Golf	Watercolours Crafting Choir	Take A Break Travel Club Games	Slo-Pitch Tennis Curling Pickleball Lawnbowling Pickleball
Families		Open Gym Public Skate Walking Trails			Tennis

Key: Lungs, EarlyON, Private Providers, North Dumfries Community Sports Clubs, Directly Provided by North Dumfries, Seniors Centres in Cambridge.

Note: Program availability may vary annually.

Table 14: Summary of Online Leisure Opportunities in North Dumfries by Age Group

Age Cohort	STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)	Physical Activity	Cultural (Visual & Performing Arts)	General Interest	Sports
Pre-School (Ages 1 to 5)	Fairy Tale Adventures	Movement – Cosmic Kids		Discovery Time	
Children (Grades 1 to 5 or Ages 6 to 10)	STEM Activities Science Videos	Cosmic Kids GoNoodle Kids Workouts Kids Yoga	Kidsability (for children with special needs) arts and craft activities	Story Time Card games Forts and Floor Mazes Charades Making Time Capsules	
Youth (Grades 6 to 12 or Ages 11 to 18)	Chemistry for Teens Make a Stop Motion Video			Tween Space	
Adults (Ages 19 to 54)				Virtual Tours of Cities, Museums, Farms etc.	
Older Adults (Ages 55+)				Virtual Tours of Cities, Museums, Farms etc.	
Families					

Key: [Region of Waterloo Library – Ayr Branch](#), Opportunities from various providers as promoted on the Township's website.

Gaps in Providing a Range of Choice in Recreation and Cultural Programs

From the analysis of available data, the following gaps are identified. The caution is that there has not been a "normal" year of programming in two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, participation rates will take time to return to pre-pandemic levels. Further, initial research indicated that people will enjoy a mix of online and in-person experiences until there is full confidence with in-person participation. It will be important for the continuance of online and in-person experiences into the near future as capacity and participation rates can be determined.

Apparent gaps (at the time of writing) are identified (including a lack of):

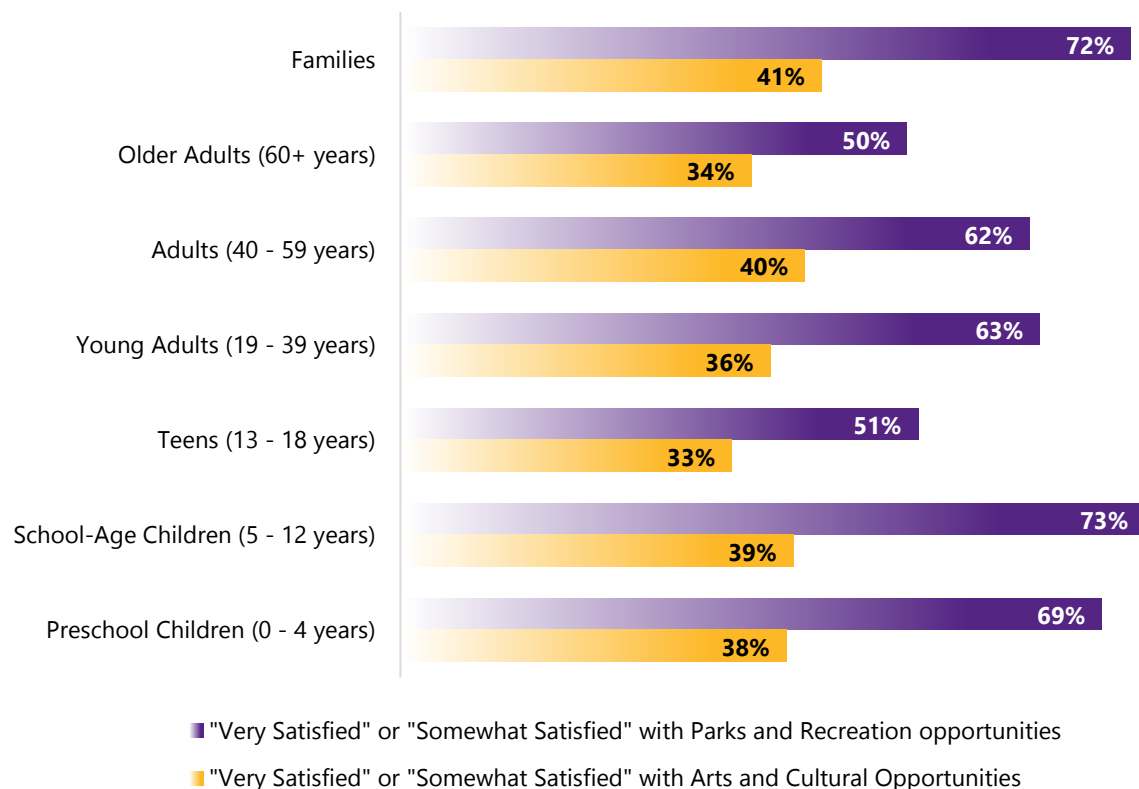
- STEM programs and opportunities for pre-school, children, adults, older adults, and families;
- Physical activity and fitness opportunities for adults;
- Creative (visual and performing arts) programming for all age groups except for older adults;

- General interest programming for children, youth, adults, and families; and
- A range of programs to meet the needs of a growing older adult population.

Satisfaction Levels Require Focus

The Master Plan community survey asked respondents to rate their current satisfaction levels with departmental services. This data provides a current benchmark and baseline data on which to build strategies and plans to improve service delivery. The current satisfaction levels by age grouping are listed to better understand the areas of high and lower satisfaction levels. Staff and partners need to aim to have an 80% satisfaction rating at a minimum in each age group.

Figure 17: Satisfaction Levels with Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities



The rationale cited for these satisfaction ratings included:

- 61% of respondents felt that there is a lack of desired programs and facilities;
- 28% of respondents felt that there was a lack of information and awareness; and
- 33% felt that programs and services were not offered at a convenient time or not offered at all.

Many of the recommended actions in the Master Plan centre on these inputs to increase levels of satisfaction in the provision/enabling of programs and services.

Children

The number of children in North Dumfries from ages one to nine will increase by 62% or by over 700 children by 2031 for a total of over 2,000 children. Staff must be prepared to increase the current number of participants and prepare for additional activities in the next five years.

Fulsome information is not available at this time with respect to the capacity (number of spaces available) of programs and camps and registration numbers given the program and camp cancellations over the last two years. This information is important for the Township to understand if the current system and opportunities can accommodate the current number of children and future growth projections in each age group. This will also serve to identify any pent-up demands through waiting lists. This data will identify where additional courses could be offered and low registered programs decreased. There is a current lack of programs for children in STEM, cultural (visual and performing arts) and general interest opportunities.

It is highly recommended that Council approves the direction that staff provide needed programs and services directly if a community partner cannot be found. There is a strong indication that the community would like a broader range of programs and services.

HIGHFIVE – Principles of Healthy Childhood Development

It is inherent on the Township to ensure that any providers using municipal spaces to offer programs are compliant with quality assurance frameworks and legislated requirements such as Parks and Recreation Ontario HIGH FIVE Principles of Healthy Child Development. HIGH FIVE is a quality assurance standard in the provision of recreation programs and camps. HIGHFIVE also addresses physical literacy training to address strengthening a child's capacity to be physically active. The standards emphasize five principles that ensure that a quality and safe experience is enjoyed by all participants and include:

- A caring leader;
- An opportunity to make friends;
- An opportunity to play;
- An opportunity to develop new skills; and
- An opportunity to participate.

Certification in HIGHFIVE involves training, assessing existing programs and addressing any identified gaps. Certification is an industry standard and should be achieved whether a program is offered by community partners or the municipality directly – especially within municipally owned places and spaces.

Youth

The growth in the youth population is projected to increase by approximately 900 people by the year 2031, representing an increase of 63%. Youth opportunities at the Langs North Dumfries Community Health Centre provide a variety of choices between drop-in and formalized programs. Leadership opportunities are offered to youth to enable them to be employment ready within the recreation and sport system. The Youth Together Council Connecting Youth to Community (YTCCYC) provides youth with the opportunity to have input into recreational activities and be self-governing to a certain extent within Langs spaces. Future relocation of municipal offices at the North Dumfries Community Complex will allow the former youth space to re-open and significantly assist with meeting youth leisure needs.

Ontario's Playworks Partnership for Active and Engaged Youth is a group of youth serving organizations including Parks and Recreation Ontario, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada – Central Region, 4-H Ontario, Ontario Physical and Health Educators Association (OPHEA), Arts Network for Children and Youth, and the YMCA Ontario. This community of youth serving organizations has researched, defined, and promoted a well-recognized quality assurance framework. It articulates what must exist in a community to demonstrate support for youth. Youth Friendly Communities work to increase the commitment and interest in enabling recreation services for youth. Communities work with partners to address ten criteria within the community to establish and validate a real commitment toward youth. Communities are awarded Youth Friendly status at varying levels by demonstrating their provision of services and youth engagement efforts. Using these criteria in North Dumfries will ensure quality experiences for youth and promote its dedication to youth engagement and positive life chances.

The ten criteria include:

- Youth have options for play.
- Youth are formally connected community wide.
- It is easy for youth to find information about activities in the community.
- The community recognizes and celebrates youth.
- The community formally commits funding for youth play.
- The community supports positive youth development.
- Youth feel valued by their community; and
- Schools and school boards support the youth friendly application.

Undertaking the Youth Friendly application would engage all organizations that support youth development to identify gaps and strengthen North Dumfries commitment toward youth development. This is an industry standard within the recreation and municipal field.

Adults

Adults (ages 20 to 34) and mature adults (ages 35 to 54) are projected to increase by approximately 7,600 residents by 2031. The consultation indicated that there is a lack of programs for this segment of the community – or not the range of choices expected. While adults typically self-organize and use municipal spaces, there may be a need to consult to a greater extent with this population to understand any pent-up interests and the opportunity to assist groups in developing to organize more recreational opportunities. A lack of available space and a high school gymnasium are currently limiting factors that the Master Plan addresses (e.g., re-purposing the Ayr Community Centre).

Older Adults and Seniors

Older Adults and Seniors will make up 30% of the North Dumfries population. During the planning period, the population of older adults (ages 55 to 69) is expected to grow by 13% to 2,400 residents, while seniors (ages 70+) will double to 2,900 people. Every effort must be taken to engage and empower older adults in program development and provision. Currently, some older adults and seniors utilize the Seniors' Centre

at the North Dumfries Community Complex, while others may seek recreation and leisure opportunities in Cambridge, at Langs and at the Roseville Centre. Interest in older adult and senior activities can be expected to grow as the population of this segment of the community increases. There is a trend for older adults to join adult programs and services and for elders to self-organize their own social, creative, and physical activities. Ensuring that there are adequate opportunities for this growing population will require working in partnership with older adult serving organizations. Older adults do exemplary work to self-govern and the municipality should only look to provide and enable programs and services where there are gaps, and the community is unable to respond through volunteerism.

Parks and Recreation Ontario has developed a quality assurance framework in the offering of recreation programs and services to older adults and seniors. The course and assessment tools offer staff and volunteers insight into the unique requirements of service delivery and engagement with the older population. It builds on the Principles of Healthy Child Development and strengthens an organization's ability to plan programs, respect what elders face with ageism, physical literacy, social connectedness, and overall enhancements to the quality of life for older adults. This is a suggested requirement for any organization or staff working with older adults and seniors.

Trends in Leisure Programs and Services

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians were demonstrating a trend toward certain program methodologies. These trends will serve to inform staff as they address program gaps and begin to provide opportunities where there are no community partners to expand program provision.

Mandate for Introductory Classes – Typically, municipalities have a mandate to provide/enable introductory opportunities for residents so that residents can try a range of leisure opportunities and extend their interest through other agencies and organizations past an introductory level of experience.

A Wide Range of Choice – Residents would like to see a wide range of choices for all age groups to respond to interests and preferences. Opportunities that promote physical activities, sports, fitness, science, technology, environment, and technology (STEM), cultural and general interest program cover a wide range of choices.

Drop-in & Casual Opportunities – There is a strong preference for regularly scheduled drop-in opportunities and this is witnessed in lower registration levels for highly structured programs and greater take up in casual drop-in opportunities throughout Ontario. With busy schedules, people enjoy a drop-in gym time where the gym is scheduled for a particular type of activity such as volleyball, pickleball, floor hockey etc. In the case of pre-school children, equipment is laid out in gyms for parents and caregivers to utilize and peek their child's interest. Casual and drop in opportunities are becoming more popular and keeping the schedule regularized allows people to schedule their time.

A Blend of In-Person and Online Opportunities – There will be a gradual shift back into facilities for sports and activities as people feel safe and as we recover from the pandemic. Preliminary research shows that there has been 700,000 fitness Apps developed worldwide to respond to the in-home fitness trend and that there is a current 60/40 split in the percentage of people who will continue to work out at home and those who will want to participate indoors. These trends will continue to shift in response to the current pandemic recovery efforts. It will be

important for municipalities to continue to offer and enable both online and indoor opportunities for the foreseeable future.

Shorter Program Lengths/ Introductory Workshops – Canadians are finding it increasingly difficult to commit to longer program lengths and there is a growing preference for ½ day workshops and shorter number of weeks that programs and services are offered.

Maker Spaces and Tool Libraries – Municipalities and partners are responding to a trend for creating maker spaces which are flexible spaces that people can construct or create. Tool Libraries are often managed by volunteers to respond to persons living in smaller spaces with no storage for tools etc.

Family Program Opportunities – The pandemic has served to strengthen the sense of family as isolation lead to increased family time in parks and trails. Families are being engaged as children recreate and family recreation opportunities are becoming more popular.

The Addition of Larger Toys in Playgrounds – There is a trend to encourage Canadians to stay outdoors longer and especially children. Many municipalities are adding larger toys in playgrounds to appeal to children’s sense of play and imagination. Children and caregivers tend to stay longer in playgrounds when these toy kitchens, tricycles, wheelbarrows, workshops, playhouses are added to enhance the playground experience. Many people donate their sets as their children grow out of using them. The benefits occur when children use their imagination and physical abilities for longer periods of time and in turn reduce sedentary behaviours.

Recommendations – Increasing Physical Activity Levels in North Dumfries

57. Approve staff **providing programs and services** directly on the condition that there is a quantifiable need for a program/service and a community partner does not have the capacity to deliver it.
58. Staff and community partners should aim to have a collective **satisfaction level of 80%** for programs and services.
59. Determine the **capacity and participation rates** of recreation and sport opportunities (once greater recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is experienced) for each age cohort in North Dumfries and confirm any pent-up demands and current participation rates.
60. At a minimum, strive to **engage 25% of any given age cohort** in programs, services, and sports within North Dumfries
61. Based on current participation rates identify **additional program and camp opportunities** that may be required because of projected population growth in each age group.
62. Work with community partners to implement **quality assurance frameworks** in the provision of service including HIGH FIVE – Principles of Healthy Childhood Development, Youth Friendly Community Criteria, and the Principles of Healthy Aging.

7.4 Access & Inclusion

Municipalities in Ontario are increasing their efforts to include underrepresented residents in all activities. Intentional efforts to identify who might be marginalized and arranging open discussions about barriers and preferred activities are being undertaken. The development of an access policy to articulate North Dumfries beliefs with respect to inclusion and what efforts the Township and partners will take to include marginalized residents is the first undertaking. The work only begins at this point – it is no longer acceptable to develop an access policy and hope that marginalized residents will participate. Staff and volunteers must be trained to assist in creating welcoming environments and services. Ongoing discussions to work together to reflect the community within leisure programs and services is a continued requirement.

The Role of the Community Service Department in Providing “Access for All.”

Access & Inclusion Objectives

- Develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion **Policy** to identify the Township’s Commitment to inclusion and what actions will be taken.
- Enhance communications and **ongoing discussions** with populations that may be marginalized within the community.
- Take **intentional actions** to improve access to increase participation among marginalized and underrepresented populations.
- Assess **affordable access** to programs and services.
- Nurture ongoing relationships with **diverse groups** within the community.
- Develop opportunities with **Indigenous Peoples**, including those that promote Truth and Reconciliation efforts through the recreation and parks system.
- Develop or adhere to **legislation, policies and promising practices** that speak to including marginalized residents within services.
- Form **partnerships** in providing/enabling leisure programs and services.
- Ensure that staff are **trained** to reach out and welcome marginalized/underrepresented populations.
- Create a **sense of belonging, safe, and welcoming** community spaces.
- Increase participation of persons identifying as **female** in recreational pursuits.
- Create welcoming and safe environments for the **LGBTQI2S** community.
- Work to ensure that **staff and volunteers** reflect the makeup of the community.

The makeup of each municipality in Ontario is unique and different from each other, and the provision of services must respect and celebrate these differences. Leisure programs and services become more meaningful by knowing the makeup of the community and by engaging residents in the determining their needs and addressing barriers. Governments and businesses have embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion to a greater extent to expand their reach and respect that everyone has a right to service provision. Formerly, municipalities made accommodations for persons with disabilities and residents experiencing low income and that was the extent of reducing barriers for underrepresented populations. Human Rights legislation ensures that services are open to everyone.

Canada and North Dumfries Diverse Population Profile

Table 15 highlights what is known about the diversity in North Dumfries. The data demonstrates that specific efforts need to be made to reach out and include marginalized populations in leisure services.

Table 15: Diversity in Canada and North Dumfries

Canadians who identify as....	Canada	North Dumfries
Female	50%	50%
Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) – Visible Minority	22.3%	3%
LGBTQI2S	13%	Data not available*
Persons with Disabilities (15 years and older)	22%	Data not available*
Persons with Disabilities (over 75 years)	47%	Data not available*
Persons Experiencing Low Income	12%	4%
Indigenous – North American Aboriginal Origin	5%	1.6%

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

*There is no specific data to identify the proportion of North Dumfries residents who identify as LGBTQI2S or persons with disabilities. Applying the national proportion to the Township's population may be used as a general guide.

Inclusion and access are key goals for municipal leisure departments in Canada. There is greater migration from larger cities to more rural municipalities especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. There are expectations around full and robust recreation and culture systems and opportunities as families embrace more balanced lifestyles. To ensure access and reduce barriers for all, staff must understand the makeup of their community and reach out to underrepresented populations to address the obstacles that they face. Barriers might centre on cost of fees and equipment, physical access to space, non-welcoming facilities and public spaces, lack of supports for persons with disabilities etc. Reaching out to diverse populations in North Dumfries will require more intentional efforts to ensure that all recreation programs, services, and spaces are truly inclusive, addressed the barriers that are experienced and respect one's background.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Best Practices within Municipal Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments:

Policy Development and Refinement – A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy recognises that residents come from different backgrounds and may have differing needs. A policy will articulate this in its purpose

and will indicate what the Township staff and partners will do to be more inclusive individually and jointly. A review of all existing policies as to their language and intent will also apply an equity lens.

Collective Impact – North Dumfries, along with community providers, is proud to enable and offer a range of leisure programs for all residents typically through other community-based groups. The Township has a responsibility to identify underrepresented groups, discuss barriers and work with community partners on joint approaches and solutions.

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan – The development of specific approaches to include all residents for a community the size of North Dumfries is appropriate given that residents by nature of their backgrounds some residents are being excluded. A fulsome approach to engagement, to determine strengths and gaps will provide the department with a targeted and more thoughtful approach could be the work of the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee.

Listen – Many municipalities have Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plans that engage and listen to underrepresented people and the organizations that support them. The key purpose is to best understand what policy and practise approaches will increase participation. The development of a community-based panel that is made up of underrepresented peoples/support organizations would assist in understanding differing needs, and work toward creating a stronger sense of belonging by all residents.

Audit the Use of Public Spaces – it is most important to the success of diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts to fully understand who is using public spaces, who feels safe, and what supports, and amenities are needed to enhance this use. It is more important to understand who is not utilizing public spaces in identifying and addressing barriers to participation.

An Equity Lens – As leisure programs and services are developed/enabled and reviewed, it is important to ask three questions to address equity principles in a highly diverse community. These queries include:

- What underrepresented groups were consulted as the program/service/policy was under development or under review?
- What were the results of this engagement effort and how did it change the implementation and delivery?
- What underrepresented residents were attracted to the program and what did the evaluations indicate?

Respecting Intersectionality – Intersectionality speaks to the way that people identify which is often as many different identities. One person might identify as two-spirited, experiencing low income and Indigenous while another person might identify as a transgender person with a disability. Respecting the notion of intersectionality prompts staff to better understand language, terms, varying needs, that one size does not fit all and most importantly to create/enable welcoming and safe spaces and programs for all.

Committee, Staff and Volunteer Representation – Ensuring that committees represent the residents they serve lends to employing diverse and enriched opinions in decision making through staff, volunteers, and advisory committees. This should be a policy at the corporate level to blend with the skills and competencies needed to provide services and bring diverse opinions to the table.

Go Where People Are – Government offices can often be intimidating to certain segments of the population. An effective approach to engaging diverse populations is to go where they are in terms of places of faith, and support organizations etc. This may be considered a safer space and may garner more meaningful inputs into policy, plan, and program development.

Staff Development and Training – The effort to train and develop staff around the concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion will result in the skills and competencies needed to enable, refine, and create programs and services that serve a broader population.

Measure Success – Understanding more in-depth North Dumfries's baseline participation data and information will help to identify gaps and specific diversity, inclusion, and equity goals. Comparing the number of persons with disabilities to general recreation participation numbers will be telling as well as the number of persons experiencing low income in the Township as compared to the number of residents currently receiving subsidies. All efforts should be made to achieve similar participation percentages as the general population. The future release of Statistics Canada 2021 Census results will benefit in this exercise.

Female Participation in Sport and Recreation

Participation in sport and recreation by girls and women is on a downward trend in Canada. Canadian Women in Sport in concert with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities released a report in a national study entitled The Rally Report in June of 2020 regarding sport participation for girls aged six to eighteen. The findings noted that girl's participation in sport is much lower than boys the same age and that girls experience a significant drop out rate by late adolescence. One in three girls leave sport as compared to one in ten boys.

Among the barriers cited, girls stated low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills and feeling unwelcomed in a sport environment. In 1992, over half of females over fifteen participated in sport. By 2019, 28% of females participate in sport, while 62% do not. Current studies are demonstrating that 25% of girls are not committed to returning to sport after the Pandemic. This declining participation rate is alarming, and the Federal government has declared that we will achieve gender equity in sport by 2035 in Canada.

The Canadian Women in Sport (CWS) supports and enables girls, women and gender diverse people in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and keeps women actively engaged in building community capacity. CWS priority and focus is to develop and support welcoming environments and sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. They have many resources that are readily available to audit policies and practices and help to build capacity within community organizations. Female participation in community-driven sport and leisure has not been identified as a priority in North Dumfries at this time but warrants and assessment and follow up actions.

Persons Experiencing Low Income

North Dumfries understands that 4% (approximately 430 residents) of its population are experiencing low-income and face barriers to participation. North Dumfries does not have a defined access policy for persons experiencing low income and are encouraged to develop a policy, implementation, and funding options with and amongst existing service providers. Langs has an existing approach to fund residents who cannot afford programs and services, as well as the Community Foundation and this will be a good

starting point to assess how many residents participate through subsidized mechanisms. Leading edge work in this area measures participation rates and targets participation to be at the same rate as the general population. Further, universally free or low-cost programming is offered to all residents to reduce any stigmas attached to participation. Staff have projected developing an Access to Recreation Policy in 2023 – it is recommended that this work develop a mechanism for funding for all leisure opportunities in North Dumfries including sport, recreation, and cultural activities.

Leading approaches in Ontario offer persons living at the Lower Income Measure an annual allowance to access programs and services seamlessly (typically 5% to 15% of this population applies for access). This allows freedom of choice and reduces barriers to requesting approval each time a participant experiencing low income wishes to participate.

Persons with Disabilities

North Dumfries staff work with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure that physical access and customer service standards meets the legislative requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Caregivers are welcomed to assist participants in accessing programs and drop in opportunities in North Dumfries. The national average of persons with disabilities is 20% and as applied to North Dumfries – over 2,000 people over the age of 15 years could be experiencing barriers to participation due to a disability. Staff has indicated that there is no current policy or practises in place to support persons with disabilities in municipally provided services. More discussions amongst the leisure and sport providers are required to address potential supports for persons with disabilities to participate in programs and services.

Safe Spaces/ Positive Spaces - Including the LGBTQI2S Community

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning, Intersexed and Two-Spirited Plus (LGBTQI2S+) community often experience exclusionary behaviours. With the recognition that 13% of the Canadian population identifies as LGBTQI2S, more intentional efforts are needed to provide welcoming leisure and sport environments. The introduction of “Safe Spaces” is one way of welcoming this community to public places. Safe Spaces was developed by Safe Spaces Canada whereby signage on the entrance to community centres and public space indicates that staff have been trained in reducing homophobic and transphobic gestures and slurs and in creating welcoming environments. Langs trained staff in 2013 and their spaces are considered welcoming and safe to the LGBTQI2S community. Further discussions with this community and local support groups as well as training of staff and volunteers in public spaces is recommended will serve to reduce barriers to participation.

Indigenous Peoples

All communities have a role to play in recognizing the land that Indigenous Peoples lived on before land settlements and in being inclusive of this populations. North Dumfries is located on the traditional territories of the Neutral, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee Peoples. According to 2016 Census, there are over 165 residents who identify as having North American Aboriginal origins and/or identify as Indigenous within North Dumfries.

The Truth and Reconciliation Report (2015) and the Parks for All Report (2017) speak to the role that Canadians have in reconciling with Indigenous Peoples over history. The following excerpt from the Truth and Reconciliation Report articulates the call to action through sport.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2015) – Sports and Reconciliation (all levels of government):

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

Communities and especially leisure organizations are emphasizing the role of Indigenous Peoples through education, arts, sports, parks amenities and interpretation. With greater awareness being raised regarding Indigenous Peoples and the Federal government's focus towards Truth and Reconciliation, municipalities are first and foremost listening to the needs of Indigenous Peoples locally. Some communities are teaching Indigenous sports, providing public spaces, showcasing Indigenous history through public art in community centres and parks along with exploring programs reflective of First Nations sports and culture.

North Dumfries promotes opportunities to recognise and celebrate certain days of significance within the Indigenous culture including National Indigenous Peoples Day, Mohawk Institute Residential School (virtual tour), Red Dress Day, National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and other local celebrations and opportunities to learn. North Dumfries has initiated a Reconciliation Action Plan committee to work with the Indigenous community and a staff person from the Leisure and Community Services Department is active on this committee.

Engaging and listening to diverse and underrepresented populations is the initial and most important step in understanding what exists and what can exist to increase representation and participation. Initial discussions centre on understanding leisure and sport program and service needs, how to improve access, and navigate municipal government. Working collectively with all related organization can serve to strengthen participation in leisure and sport activities in North Dumfries.

Recommendations – Increasing Access & Inclusion to Leisure Services

63. Develop an **Inclusion and Access Policy** with community partners to identify what actions the Township of North Dumfries and partners are committed to in including underrepresented residents within Leisure and Community services.
64. Provide and enable **training and professional development** opportunities for staff, partners, and volunteers with respect to equity and inclusion of all underrepresented populations in the delivery of services.
65. Organize and **meet with underrepresented residents and organizations** as well as leisure/sport service providers to determine what the Township is doing well and what could be done to be more intentionally inclusive of all residents facing barriers.
66. Complete **visual audits** of facilities and public spaces to ensure that leisure use reflects the full citizenry of North Dumfries. Identify the people who are not regularly utilizing public spaces and engage them to understand any barriers.
67. Complete an analysis of the **number of females** and those identifying as females participating in leisure, and sport, pursuits by age group in North Dumfries. Address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to address barriers to participation and increase equity. Work with other organizations to **increase female participation** in active and sport pursuits.
68. Summarize all funding sources that **subsidize persons experiencing low income** in sport and leisure opportunities in North Dumfries. Provide this information to Social Service personnel working with recipients of government funding and post this information on the website as a first step. Develop a standard access policy for North Dumfries residents experiencing low income to improve seamless access to programs, services, and sport.
69. Meet with groups representing **persons with disabilities** to develop programs and approaches to include more persons with disabilities into recreation programs.
70. Ensure that all public spaces and facilities are safe and welcoming spaces for the **LGBTQ2S** community. Provide staff, volunteers, and partner training to better welcome and include these residents.
71. Engage with the **Indigenous community** to listen and understand how they would like to be included to a greater extent and represented in parks, sport, recreation, and culture within North Dumfries.

7.5 Expanding Cultural Opportunities

There is a wealth of research that reinforces the notion that arts and cultural opportunities are vital contributors to a high quality of life, bringing a range of benefits to individuals and communities. Arts and culture opportunities contribute to the community in many ways including:

- Providing a sustaining a sense of heritage through historical societies, walking tours and the museum archives;
- Creating a sense of local pride through community building, place-making, and providing quality experiences;

- Offering a greater variety of pastime activities for residents to pursue and develop skills;
- Generating economic multipliers, particularly with cultural events increasingly being marketed outside of communities to draw tourists, thus forming an important element of broader tourism strategies; and
- Encouraging social interaction by engaging residents to get involved in the community and providing venues where all residents can understand what makes the municipality unique.

To strengthen the arts and cultural contributors to the quality of life and history of North Dumfries.

Expanding Cultural Opportunities Objectives

- To build a sense of **local identity** through heritage, arts and culture.
- Increase **community cohesion and reduce social isolation** through culture and heritage opportunities.
- To increase **skill development and local industries** through visual and performing arts.
- To **preserve, protect and share** local history and heritage assets.
- Display local visual and performing arts in the **public realm**.
- Measure the **economic impacts** of arts, culture, and heritage in North Dumfries.

Enhancing Cultural Opportunities

In 2022, the Township's Leisure & Community Services Department added a culture division to its portfolio of services to recognize the important role that arts and culture play in the lives of North Dumfries residents and strives to facilitate and co-ordinate support for the arts sector. Expanding the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee's mandate to capture culture is the next logical step to ensure that it is well-represented in future Committee discussions and decisions.

North Dumfries has long recognized the importance of a vibrant arts and cultural community. The Master Plan community survey found that 63% respondents felt that before the pandemic they and members of their households were able to attend cultural venues as often as they would like. Of those unable to participate as often as they would like, forty-three percent felt that there is a lack of desired programs or facilities supporting culture and the arts. There is an overall satisfaction level for culture and the arts of 39%.

Findings from the consultation process suggests that there is a desire to enhance local arts and cultural opportunities in North Dumfries, particularly with respect to music performances, programming and events. Table 16 highlights the top ten requested cultural and arts activities and programs. Opportunities to provide these activities directly or in collaboration with community partners is encouraged to take place within existing Township spaces – as identified in this Master Plan. For example, some of these programs may be delivered in an outdoor setting at a Township park (e.g., Centennial Park) to respond to community requests for outdoor programming. The future repurposing of the Ayr Community Centre also presents an excellent opportunity for the Township to strengthen access to spaces capable of accommodating a wide range of arts and cultural activities and events.

Table 16: Top 10 Arts and Cultural Opportunities

Top 10 Requested Arts and Cultural Opportunities	
1. Live theatre and music concerts (e.g., music in the park)	5. Farmers' markets
2. Creative arts classes (e.g., pottery, quilting, crafts)	6. Special events (e.g., Indigenous recognition, food festivals, multi-cultural events)
3. General arts classes	7. Fine art classes (e.g., drawing and painting)
4. Performing arts classes (e.g., drama, music, singing, dance)	8. Art and antique exhibits
	9. Art in the park
	10. Cooking classes

There is value in reviewing leading trends in the arts and culture sector to assess its impact in the community including, but not limited to creating cultural hubs, community revitalization and public space renewal through arts and culture. A proactive approach should be considered to further demonstrate North Dumfries's commitment to recognizing local artisans, supporting arts and culture in the community, and creating inviting public spaces that are welcoming of all residents.

Farmers' Markets

While North Dumfries does not currently provide a farmer's market, the Township raises awareness of local and regional agricultural producers, encourages residents to support locally owned growers and businesses, and promotes regional farmers' markets such as in Kitchener and Cambridge. The Township also hosts artisan markets at the North Dumfries Community Complex that brings together designers, artisans and crafts persons from across the Region of Waterloo and Brant County. This event takes place during select dates throughout the year as it is a regional event that is also held at other locations.

The Master Plan community survey revealed that visiting farmers' markets is a popular activity. Nine-out-of-ten (91%) respondents reported that they have visited farmers' markets in 2019, which was the most popular arts and cultural activity. Nearly nine-out-of-ten (87%) of survey respondents supported investment in that farmers' markets, which was the second highest priority; several requests for a farmers' market was also made.

In recognition of local demand, strong agricultural roots and local and regional businesses in the sector, the Township is launching a farmers market in 2022, which will take place at the Ayr Community Centre.¹³ A locally-driven farmers' market will aim to continue to support locally-owned businesses and agri-tourism. Opportunities may also exist to evaluate potential partnerships to promote the farmers' market and to tap into existing events that share similar goals and objectives of supporting, promoting and celebrating local cultural resources.

Special Events and Celebrations in North Dumfries

With the support of Council, the Township invests resources to host and support special events throughout the year. The Master Plan community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 80% of respondents had attended a special event in North Dumfries. Special events provide a number of benefits including building community cohesion and civic pride and in generating economic development opportunities for local business owners. North Dumfries provides a schedule of special events that occur throughout the year and staff provide support in set-up/take-down, marketing and assisting community groups to organize them. The Township assists community groups in delivering special events for the most part and prepares and delivers Council approved special events. A sampling of annual events include:

- The Easter Egg Hunt
- Annual Kids Fishing Derby (Lions Club)
- Ayr Community BBQ for Charity
- Remembrance Day Service
- The Santa Claus Parade (Lions Club)
- The Community Carol Sing

For 2022, the Departmental Business Plan and staff report REC-10-2022 proposed additional annual special events as:

- Canada Day with Fireworks
- Family Day
- The CP Holiday Train
- New Summer Movie Nights
- Music in the Park
- Indigenous events
- Performances by Ayr Paris Band and Ayr Community Theatre

The Departmental Business Plan proposes the establishment of a Community Events & Festival Committee in 2023 to foster the continuation of a meaningful menu of annual special events for all residents and visitors. The development of a Special Events Policy should be a pre-cursor to the establishment of the committee to outline the commitments of Council in the development and fostering of Community Events and Festivals. The Policy should outline the benefits to the community, the conditions under which the Township will lead Council approved events and conditions for community lead events. Further the Policy should indicate the commitments of Council in terms of resources to assist community lead events and an evaluation metric of each event on an annual basis.

¹³ Township of North Dumfries. Staff Report REC-10-2022. April 11, 2022.

To justify further resources that will be required as events expand and more requests are received, it will be important to ensure that the return on the investment (ROI) can justify additional events and resources. Measuring the ROI can be done from a financial perspective (e.g., total municipal costs divided by the number of attendees or total cost subtracted from funds raised as a percentage of total costs). Quantifying the success of an event would be completed by measuring annual attendance and satisfaction levels among attendees, monitoring social media activity, and sponsor recognition. Both qualitative and quantitative measures should be developed to ensure the best use of public funding.

Recommendations – Expanding Cultural Opportunities

72. Host **bi-annual forums** with cultural associations and contributors to address ongoing supports and opportunities to promote arts and heritage opportunities.
 73. Alone or in partnership with community organizations, explore opportunities to provide introductory **visual and performing arts opportunities** for all age groups, with consideration given to requests identified through the Master Plan (e.g., pottery, crafts, music, etc.). Opportunities should be delivered through existing and planned indoor and outdoor Township facilities.
 74. Proceed with establishing a **farmers' market** at the Ayr Community Centre support locally-owned businesses and agri-tourism opportunities.
 75. Expand the **Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee's** mandate to include culture and heritage to ensure that culturally experienced and skilled representatives become part of the committee.
 76. Develop a **Special Events and Festivals Policy** to outline Council's commitments, partnership conditions, and resource allocations including an evaluation metric.
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7.6 Recreation & Cultural Capacity

Building capacity in Leisure & Community Services Department focusses on work that is completed internally for the most part – including policy development, training, volunteerism, strengthening partnerships and other initiatives to provide exemplary services to the public.

To ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the parks, recreation, and culture field.

Recreation and Cultural Capacity Objectives

- Ensure that Leisure & Community Services Department receives an **approved mandate** through a comprehensive service delivery model, policy and standards.
- Demonstrate compliance with **legislative requirements** and **industry standards**.
- Strengthen community engagement and enhance services through **volunteerism**.
- Promote Community Service opportunities through comprehensive **marketing and communications**.
- Utilize **technology** to streamline operations, produce efficiencies and strengthen relationships with residents and visitors.
- Increase the number of meaningful **community partnerships** that serve to engage more residents in leisure opportunities.
- Seek out alternate revenues through **sponsorships and grants**.
- Understand the **cost of providing services** in the development of a fair-minded fee structure.
- Demonstrate a strong **organizational culture** and responsive structure.
- Provide continuous **staff development** and training opportunities.
- **Measure** and report out on Departmental **performance**.

Legislative Compliance

Adherence to legislative and industry standards ensures that operations are compliant and embrace the highest standards. As a best practice, municipalities test their compliance on an annual basis at a minimum and make operational changes as legislative requirements and industry standards evolve. The Township's Leisure & Community Services Department is consistent in this regard and is compliant with current legislation as identified in its 2022 to 2024 Business Plan.

Policies

The Department continues to develop new policies that are relevant to their current operations. **A Special Events and Festivals Policy** and a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy** (both discussed in previous sections) are recommended. In addition to these tools, a **Partnership and Sponsorship Policy** is also recommended to look to alternate revenues to fund recreation and cultural services. Each policy that is developed should engage the public and relevant stakeholders to understand their priorities and how certain policy statements may impact their ability to operate groups or access services. Staff should develop a system for automatically reviewing policies on a regular basis.

Volunteerism

Consultation with community stakeholders found that organizations are challenged with volunteer recruitment and retention, which is a common issue groups face in communities across Ontario. It would be prudent to meet with community groups regularly to discuss strategies for volunteer promotion, establishing a common and central location to list opportunities, and a streamlined approach to matching volunteers with opportunities. The Township plays an important role in raising awareness about local volunteer opportunities, which are promoted on the North Dumfries website. Interested volunteers are directed to the respective department for training and orientation.

Current best practices in volunteerism include online software to recruit, match skills and competencies, track hours and provide training modules. Many municipalities have implemented an online system to match volunteers with volunteer needs and the department will list their opportunities with this organization as well as recruit using other mechanisms. It would be prudent to investigate online volunteer systems that serve to recruit and train volunteers in standard practices. This may save staff many hours of repeated training time. Volunteer Canada's Code for Volunteer Involvement and other resources can assist in strengthening volunteerism in North Dumfries (see Recommendation #53).

Costing of Services in Setting Fair Minded Fees

The Township's User Fees and Charges By-law is reviewed annually, and adjustments are made based on the fees that are set in adjacent municipalities. The cost to provide programs and services and an equitable cost recovery formula is currently not part of establishing fees for leisure services in the Township. Findings from consultation with stakeholders revealed that community groups would like to understand how fees are set and how much they are subsidized. Others expressed that fees are not affordable for their organization.

North Dumfries partially offsets the financial costs of providing leisure services through several revenue streams, most notably user fees, taxation and, to a lesser extent, sponsorships, grants, and partnerships. The Department also accepts that there are non-financial and intangible benefits that offset fiscal expenditures by way of increased physical and social health among residents, contributions to community vibrancy and cohesion etc. Therefore, the degree to which quantifiable costs are "recovered" is dictated by the Township's philosophy surrounding the "value" of the service that it provides to residents and the community. The first step in setting fair minded fees and cost recovery levels is understanding the cost to provide the service. This is a first step and an arduous task and will involve guidance and assistance from the Finance Department (to set corporate guidelines).

Once costs are known to produce an hour of ice for example, the current cost recovery levels can be ascertained by understanding the percentage of the costs that are recovered through the current fee structure. A comparison to the market rate is usually undertaken to determine if fees can be modified. Setting of fees can be developed by determining which age groups or types of programs should receive greater subsidies.

Marketing and Communications

Consultation during the Master Plan revealed that opportunities exist to strengthen how the Township engages its residents, including its use of social media. As the Department's services recover from the impacts of COVID-19, promoting and communicating leisure opportunities will need to evolve to respond to the Township's growing population. Ongoing and consistent communications and marketing efforts are critical to let residents know of changes in real time and to encourage participation in leisure experiences and programs. Communications, and marketing are both corporate and centralized functions in North Dumfries. Staff work collectively with the internal Department to articulate needs, prepare content, and determine the specific timing of announcements, promotions, and communications. Utilizing social media is becoming a constant expectation in that people want to know what is happening in real time. Dedicated staff time to promoting local and regional leisure services, including events and activities, is an important component to successful service delivery. It is suggested that staff develop an annual outline of their needs and that resources are determined as to delivering on these ongoing requirements (see Recommendation #48).

Community Partnerships and Sponsorships

The Leisure & Community Services Department works with partners to provide the highest level of service to the public while considering the sharing of resources and opportunities to promote business and partnership advantages. The starting point for successful partnerships and sponsorships is to develop a policy that articulate the types of services that will seek both partners and sponsors and define a transparent method of procuring these relationships. The goal is to maximize the community's assets and increase services at a shared cost or effort. There is a clear commitment to working with community partners and there are numerous arrangements in place. These relationships are crucial to providing high quality programs, services, facilities and special events which contribute to North Dumfries' high quality of life and are important for creating a sense of place, strong community cohesion, civic pride and economic development. Table 17 summarizes the formal or informal partnerships the Township has with various community groups who are responsible for leisure opportunities in North Dumfries.

Table 17: Summary of Community Organizations

Community Organizations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Ayr Scouts • Ayr Centennials • Ayr Community Theatre • Ayr Curling Club • Ayr Girls Guides • Ayr Jr Vics Softball • Ayr Masonic Lodge • Ayr Minor Hockey Association • Ayr Minor Soccer • Ayr-Paris Band • Ayr Pipe Band • Ayr Rockets Girls Hockey • Ayr Skating Club • Ayr-North Dumfries Lions Club • Baha'i Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Community Group • Charitable Research Reserve • EarlyON Waterloo Region • Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge & North Dumfries • Grand Valley Trails Association • It Takes a Village • Ladies Ringette • North Dumfries Garden Club • Neighbours Helping Neighbours • North Dumfries Community Health Centre • North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society • North Dumfries Preschool • Region of Waterloo Library • Scorpions Volleyball

As new partnership arrangements are evaluated, it will be important to ensure that the potential partners are in alignment with the Department's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships provides a net benefit to both organizations and reduce costs to the Township. As new partnerships are evaluated, consideration should be given to the following guiding principles:

- The outcome of the partnership is aligned with the municipal values, mandate, and priorities.
- There is an articulated need for the proposed program or service in the community.
- The financial and liability risks to the municipality are shared or reduced.
- 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.
- The quality of the program or service provided through the partnership meets municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation.
- Unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals are dealt with transparently and through a competitive process as identified in a procurement process.
- Accountabilities and responsibilities can be clearly defined and complied with; and
- Annual reporting requirements capture participation numbers, expenditure reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with departmental objectives.

The 2022 to 2024 Business Plan for the Leisure & Community Services Department proposes that staff develop standardized agreements with community partners who may share public spaces or work collectively to offer programs and services. agreements etc.

The Master Plan indicated that there is a need to explore programming opportunities for all age groups. Specifically, there is a need for more STEM programming and cultural opportunities (visual and performing arts). Staff will need to work with local partners to best understand the capacity for taking on additional programs. The Ayr Library is a good candidate to address more STEM programming in addition to what Langs offers. Reaching out to artists and performers may prove fruitful in expanding cultural programs and opportunities. Working directly with older adult groups to understand if local opportunities would be more beneficial than traveling to Cambridge or the limited opportunities offered at Roseville. These would be initial steps to determine if existing organizations have the capacity to offer additional opportunities.

Complaints Management

The consultation process revealed that community concerns are often expressed through social media, without giving Township staff the ability to provide a solution or intervention. This can often lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding, as well as exacerbating issues. It was suggested that complaints get formally tracked so that staff and Council can be proactive about occurring issues in future years and respond in a timely where possible. There is tracking management software that can prevent similar issues occurring year after year. Complaints are offered online, tracked and timing of the resolution is noted. This system will provide better response times and the ability for staff to improve customer service.

Measuring Performance in Leisure and Community Services Strengthens Accountability

Performance measures hold staff accountable for their work and provide valuable information in comparing performance against intended service targets year to year. This information provides base line data on which to refine and set achievable targets. This approach to enhance service delivery provides a vehicle to analyze what is important and allows staff to change course if changes are warranted. The objective is to align measures with the goals and objectives of the department(s), keep measures simple to tell the story of how the department meets its mission. For example, if the goal of leisure is to increase participation and utilize facilities to their maximum with high levels of satisfaction; then measures will centre around increasing participation from the previous year, communicating the capacity and utilization of public facilities, and testing public satisfaction levels. Measures need not be complex – they just need to tell a story and influence future actions.

Measuring performance allows an organization to quantify various elements of service delivery, demonstrate if progress is being made toward intended targets and assist in the setting of specific targets. For example, if public satisfaction rests at 70% in public skating hypothetically in year one – the target for the next year would be set potentially at 75% with a long-term target of 80% or more. More importantly, staff would engage with public skaters to determine what elements could be improved. Staff would test satisfaction levels and address participant concerns toward improving service delivery. This data provides the information needed to complete an annual or program end analysis and to ensure that program decisions are knowledge-based. This data must also be utilized to compare participation and utilization levels year-to-year, allowing the ability to develop initiatives to demonstrate continued improvement.

A framework for measuring performance is suggested to be implemented in each discipline. Data is most likely being collected currently. Annual reporting should also be a simple illustration that staff and the public can glean and determine if targets are being met or have been exceeded.

A typical performance measurement framework for Leisure & Community Services Department includes capturing the inputs (resources approved to deliver service), outputs (what was achieved within the approved resources, such as number of participants, pool attendance, square metres of facilities tended, etc.), efficiencies (the unit costs to deliver each service) and effectiveness (public and user satisfaction levels) (Table 18).

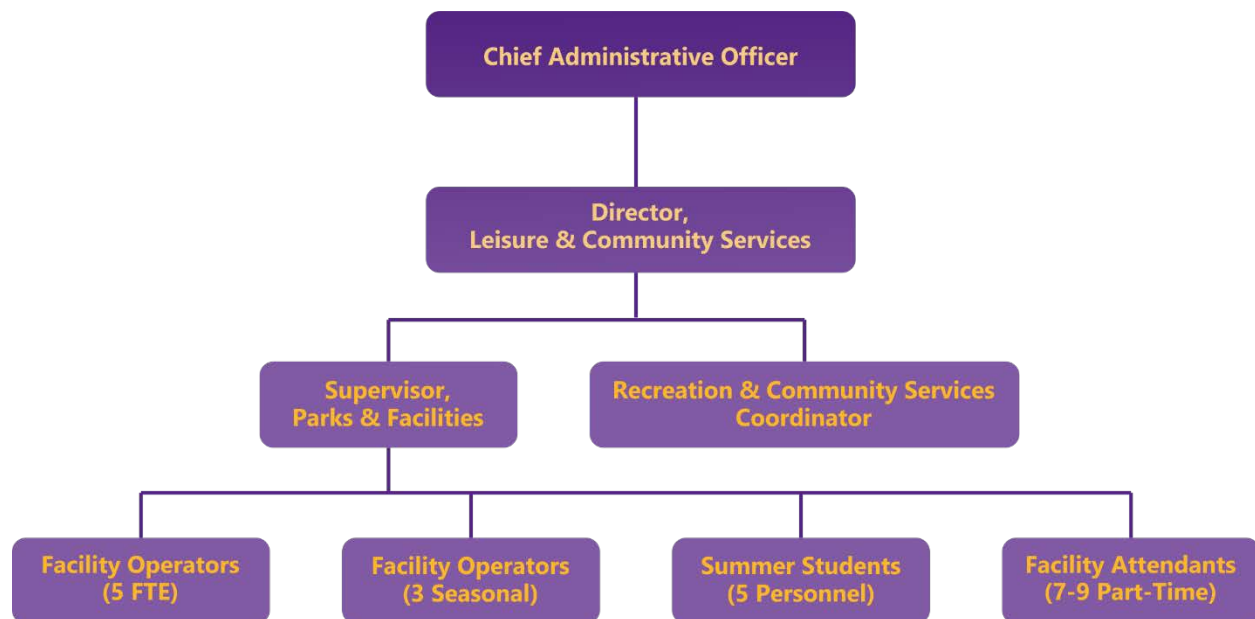
Table 18: Typical Performance Measurement Framework

Performance Measurement	Answers These Questions	Suggested Measures
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What resources are allotted to Leisure & Community Services (staff, financial and physical spaces)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full time equivalents (FTEs) in staff FTEs per service area Budget for key service areas Asset inventory Volunteerism
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the Department achieve with the resources provided? Were there increases/decreases in certain areas? How did these outputs compare to previous years and program related targets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation per age group achieved Performance against targets Participation in programs and drop-in opportunities. Results compared to the previous year or the average of the previous three years Any Pent-up Demands
Efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the high-level unit costs and have any been reduced by increased participation/productivity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on unit costs (increased participation might result in a reduction of unit costs over all) Efficiencies achieved through doing things differently Cost savings realized through partnerships and grants or alternate revenue streams
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do users and public rate services? Have there been satisfaction level improvements in targeted areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall public and satisfaction levels Number of complaints as compared to the previous year Comparison to previous year ratings as compared to the average of the last three years

Staff Capacity in a Growing Community

The Leisure & Community Services Department is led by a Director who provides direction to the Supervisor of Parks & Facilities and the Recreation & Community Services Coordinator. The organizational structure for the Leisure & Community Services Department (Figure 18) is well designed in that it ensures that like functions are captured together to service like customers. Parks and arena staff serve six months in the arena and six months in the parks system. Staff are utilized to work with groups, be a source of information and address developing services where there is a need (e.g., pickleball and public skating). This is efficient for the time being and can be described as a lean operation.

Figure 18: Leisure & Community Services Department Organizational Structure



Source: Township of North Dumfries 2022 – 2024 Leisure & Community Services Business Plan

The Master Plan identifies new facility space needs including, but not limited to, expanding the North Dumfries Community Complex with a second ice pad and repurposing the arena at the Ayr Community Centre to indoor multi-purpose space. Outdoor parks and recreation needs have also been recommended including hard surface multi-use courts and playgrounds, as well as five new parks to address growth-related needs. Additional staffing will be required to continue to operate and maintain the Township's leisure assets and to ensure that community expectations are met to deliver high quality services.

Leisure service needs are significant not only to respond to a growing community but to increase the current level of service as requested by the public. There are needs to increase cultural and STEM programming for age groups, address increasing adult and older adult programming and opportunities, develop baseline policies in partnerships and sponsorships, access and equity, and develop and introduce a complaints management system. Further, within a couple more years it will be time to plan for the growth in each age group and their recreation and cultural needs. There is a demonstrated need for one Community Development staff person to address leisure service recommendations in the short term - 2023 and another recreation and cultural programmer in 2025. Staff may wish to re-organize the structure and align common functions as they see fit however, program, event, policy needs cannot be realized without additional resources.

Recommendations – Recreation & Cultural Capacity

77. Track the concerns received in a **Complaints Tracking Program** regarding the delivery of services on an annual basis. Develop a common standard timeframe to respond to complaints. Utilization of this data to prevent common concerns and to communicate in advance of annual concerns (i.e., grass cutting levels in the spring of each year).
78. Apply a consistent formula to better **understand the costs** to provide the various services and determine current cost recovery levels. Develop a fair minded and transparent **Pricing Policy** to ensure that fees are equitable and respect the value that they provide to the community.
79. Develop a **Partnership and Sponsorship Policy** to seek out alternate revenue sources to offset the cost to provide Leisure and Community Services.
80. Develop a standardized **Partnership and/or Sponsorship Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding** to apply to various partnership types and to standardize municipal and partner expectations
81. Develop a meaningful set of **Performance Measures** for the Leisure & Community Services Department that describe the inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness measures employed in each discipline.
82. Seek Council approval for a **Community Development Coordinator** in 2023 as an addition to the staff complement to address the recommended actions for community development, expanding programs for all age groups, policy development, performance measurement etc.
83. Assess the need for a **Recreation and Cultural Coordinator** in 2025 to address the increased recreation and cultural needs of a growing population.
84. Prepare a **staffing plan** as part of the expansion of the North Dumfries Community Complex and the re-purposed Ayr Community Centre as the designs of these facilities are developed.

8.0 Master Plan Implementation

8.1 Monitoring & Updating the Master Plan

The Township should periodically review, assess, and revise the recommendations within the Master Plan to ensure that they remain reflective of community needs during the planning horizon. This will require monitoring population growth, facility utilization, activity levels, sector trends, and continued dialogue with community organizations and the public. The development of annual work plans and year-end reporting should be undertaken to track achievements, and lessons learned to determine the status and success of the Master Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustments in resource allocation and priorities may be required. The information collected through this monitoring process will assist the Township with undertaking a mid-term review and comprehensive review and update of the Master Plan by 2031.

Monitoring, reviewing and updating the Master Plan requires commitment from all staff involved in planning, financing, and delivering leisure services in North Dumfries, including buy-in from Council, stakeholders and the public. As a part of the developing annual work plans and year-end reporting, the following steps should be considered:

- a) review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);
- b) identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, updated population data and forecasts, etc.);
- c) cursory review of the Master Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- d) preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- e) 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
- f) budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

85. Develop a system for **regular monitoring and reporting** for the Master Plan, which should include tracking activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council.
86. Develop **annual work plans** that identifies recommendations from the Master Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Work plans should identify financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations.
87. Undertake a **mid-term review** around 2027 and **comprehensive review and update** of the Master Plan by 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in population growth, trends and other variables.

8.2 Funding Considerations

It is recognized that the Township has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires. This is one of the reasons for undertaking a Master Plan to understand community needs and priorities and to ensure that resources are directed in a fiscally responsible manner. The Master Plan's recommendations recognize that the Township has been proactive in strategic asset management to plan for the renewal of existing infrastructure, as well as future facilities to address emerging community needs. The most capital intensive expenditures identified in the Master Plan include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Expansion of the North Dumfries Community Complex to incorporate a second ice pad, together with associated amenities including modest spectator seating, dressing rooms.
- Architectural study of the Ayr Community Centre to re-purpose the facility for indoor multi-purpose uses, other capital work identified in the facility condition assessment and to meet accessibility requirements.

Funding these capital projects and others identified in the Master Plan will involve a combination of direct taxation combined with alternative non-tax base sources such as development charges, parkland cash-in-lieu, Township reserves, stimulus or grant programs from senior levels of government, debt financing, fundraising, donations and sponsorships. Long-term operations and maintenance are generally funded by the tax base and user fees. While proactive fiscal planning and operational sustainability need to be considered together with broader corporate funding needs, the Township has had past success with leveraging alternative funding strategies and partnerships to fund leisure services and should continue to be evaluated, where appropriate.

At the time of implementation, recommendations that have a capital requirement should be brought forward through the budget process once the Township has the information it needs to develop costs (e.g., design characteristics, financial contributions from non-municipal sources, etc.). It is envisioned that a number of service-delivery focused recommendations contained in the Master Plan centre upon community development and volunteer supports or can be worked into existing staff workloads. The addition of new Community Development Coordinator and Recreation and Cultural Coordinator staff positions recommended in this Master Plan will have implications on the Township's payroll if/when the position is approved to be added.

Recommendations – Funding Considerations

88. Where appropriate, evaluate **alternative funding and cost-sharing** approaches including (but not limited to) grants, fundraising, sponsorships, partnerships, and other forms of community collaboration to provide the best value to residents.

8.3 Action Plan Summary

Throughout the body of the Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each subsection or by topic area. By approving the Master Plan as a guiding document, the Township is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities, programs and services in the order, amount or manner indicated; rather this Master Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

Recommendations contained within the Master Plan are summarized on the following pages, together with potential resource implications including preliminary cost estimates for capital projects or staff time to implement actions. Estimates are based on past projects in comparable communities and should only be used as a guide for capital planning purposes. Actual costs will need to be determined by the Township at the time of implementation.

The timing for implementing each recommendation is identified and is generally synonymous with the level of priority, although this should be interpreted as a guide given that there are many factors that impact the timing of implementation such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rate of population growth, shifting trends and community interests, available funding opportunities, partnerships, and more. Timing is organized as follows:

Short-Term	2022 to 2024
Medium Term	2025 to 2027
Long-Term	2028 to 2031

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Recreation Facilities					
Arenas					
1. Proceed with constructing a second NHL-size ice pad at the North Dumfries Community Complex . Once complete, the Ayr Community Centre arena should be decommissioned and repurposed to address other community needs (see Recommendation #5).		•	•		\$10.87 million (2020 dollars) as per the Township's Arena Strategy
Aquatics					
2. Engage adjacent municipalities that provide indoor swimming pools to investigate strategies to maintain access to aquatic opportunities for North Dumfries residents such as providing financial support towards existing pool operations and negotiating registration slots .		•			To be determined subject to Township discussions with pool operators.
3. Re-visit the feasibility of an indoor aquatic centre beyond the planning period as the population reaches 25,000 to 30,000 residents. The Township may wish to initiate discussions with Brant County to explore the potential for a joint indoor swimming pool. In the interim, the Township may wish to evaluate potential site opportunities to plan for a potential indoor aquatic centre with consideration given to a central location for all residents, existing Township property, opportunities to expand existing facilities or co-locate with other civic uses (including a future community park), site servicing, and other criteria to be identified by Township staff.				•	Staff time and cost for acquiring land.
4. Construct a basic spray feature adjacent to the playground at the Roseville Community Centre.			•		\$500,000+

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Community Halls & Multi-Purpose Spaces					
5. Undertake an architectural exercise for the Ayr Community Centre to creatively repurpose the arena to include a large indoor, gymnasium-type space for active recreation and community uses with a stage and modest backstage area, as well as other supporting amenities such as storage, kitchen and a dividing wall. Multi-purpose rooms should also be incorporated with storage, dividing walls, counterspace and sinks. This exercise would include the second-floor hall space, particularly with respect to accessibility and aging building components noted in the Facility Condition Assessment.		•	•		\$7.5 to \$9.0 million (based on an estimate of \$250 to \$300 per square foot. Actual costs subject to the completion of the architectural exercise.
6. Promote the use of existing spaces and seek ways to bolster utilization such as working with community groups to increase the use of community halls and multi-purpose spaces and in developing new and expanded program opportunities.		•	•	•	Staff time
7. Undertake strategic capital improvements at the Roseville Community Centre including accessibility updates, kitchen, washrooms and aging building components identified in the Facility Condition Assessment. Improvements should position the Roseville Community Centre as a community hub for indoor and outdoor leisure activities, community programs and events.			•		Costs identified in the Facility Condition Assessment
8. The development of any new and significant Township facilities should consider the integration of multi-purpose space that is flexibly designed to accommodate programming and rentals, as well as corporate functions such as staff meetings and training space.		•	•	•	Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Dedicated Age Spaces					
9. Regularly engage the older adult and senior community to identify and prioritize improvements to encourage use of the Seniors' Centre at the North Dumfries Community Complex, as well as to understand how to make Township spaces and facilities more age-friendly with consideration given to strategies identified in this Master Plan (e.g., accessible park pathways, outdoor fitness equipment and comfort amenities such as seating, shade etc.).		•	•	•	Staff time
10. Potentially working with the Langs Community Health Centre, re-establish youth drop-in space at the North Dumfries Community Complex to strengthen this location as a youth activity hub, potentially with a lounge, study and computer area, and active space to support future program opportunities (e.g., general interest, STEM, etc.) and complement existing youth-oriented amenities that currently exist on site.			•		Staff time
11. Explore opportunities to establish satellite youth drop-in space or "youth pop-up" at the Roseville Community Centre and the Ayr Community Centre (once repurposed).			•		Staff time
Cultural Spaces and Resources					
12. Continue to promote existing arts and cultural opportunities available in North Dumfries and in adjacent municipalities, including the facilities, programs and services using online and print resources, including the Community Services Guide recommended in this Master Plan.		•	•	•	Staff time
13. Identify opportunities to incorporate public art and heritage features in strategic locations within the Township's parks and facilities, such as cultural heritage signage, art installations, and supporting infrastructure to support special events and festivals. This may be explored in partnership with the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society and other community organizations.			•		Costs to be determined on a case-by-case basis

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Sports Fields					
14. In order to continue to meet the ball diamond needs of user groups, the Master Plan supports the Township's planned ball diamond improvements : a) Update fencing, lighting and netting at Schmidt Park. b) Replace sports lighting at Diamond 1 at Victoria Park and undertake enhancements at Diamond 2, including installing lighting and work in partnership with the Ayr Minor Softball Association to install a new batting cage and outfield fencing.		•			\$750,000 (Schmidt Park and Victoria Park)
15. Regularly engage sports field users to collect annual registration to inform future needs and identify and prioritize improvements to sports fields to continue providing high quality user experiences.		•	•	•	Staff time
16. Strategically promote and program underutilized soccer fields for unstructured/non-programmed open space for activities such as walking paths, picnicking, local community events, farmer's markets, casual sports (area to throw frisbees and footballs, etc.), outdoor programming, outdoor skating rinks, and other such activities.		•	•	•	Staff time
Playgrounds					
17. Strive to provide playgrounds within 500 metres (for parkettes) to 800 metres (for neighbourhood and community parks) of residential areas in Ayr, unobstructed by major barriers. On this basis, address playground gaps on the east and south side of Ayr at future neighbourhood parks and parkettes. Playgrounds at parks to serve the Cambridge West subdivision residents is also recommended.		•	•	•	\$50,000 per location

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
18. Subject to regular safety inspections, target playground replacement after a lifecycle period of 15 years. The development or redevelopment of playgrounds should incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Creative playground designs are encouraged with consideration given to natural and adventure play components at strategic locations (e.g., Community Parks).		•	•	•	\$50,000 per location
Skateboard Parks					
19. Construct a small-scale skateboard zone or “skate spot” at the future neighbourhood park in the south end of Ayr. This location should feature a concrete pad with ramps and rails suitable for beginner and intermediate users.		•			\$150,000 - \$250,000
20. Investigate opportunities to create small “skate spots” at the Roseville Community Centre, Branchton Park and Clyde Park. These could be designed in coordination with the proposed multi-use basketball and ball hockey courts and include modular components that can be removed to support other potential activities (e.g., outdoor skating).		•	•		\$100,000 - \$150,000 per location
Outdoor Basketball & Ball Hockey Courts					
21. Construct full-size multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey at Cowan Park, Schmidt Park, Roseville Community Centre, Clyde Park and the future neighbourhood parks in Ayr and Cambridge West subdivision.		•	•		\$40,000 per location
22. Repurpose the underutilized soccer field at Browns Park with a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.			•		\$40,000
23. Replace the shooting pad at Branchton Park with a full-size multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey.			•		\$40,000

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Outdoor Tennis & Pickleball Courts					
24. Continue with constructing three lit tennis courts at Schmidt Park and add playing lines for pickleball .		•			\$400,000
25. Move forward with replacing the tennis court lighting at Victoria Park and add playing lines for pickleball to the court surface.		•			Lighting replacement (\$22,000) Pickleball lines (\$2,500)
26. Construct one court for tennis and pickleball at Browns Park.			•		Costs for constructing one court for tennis and pickleball (\$30,000)
Community Gardens					
27. Working with community volunteers and organizations, promote the use of the community garden at the North Dumfries Community Complex and explore potential program opportunities that recognize the benefits of community agriculture, food security and cooking.		•	•	•	Staff time
BMX Pump Tracks					
28. Support the development of a community-level asphalt pump track at Schmidt Park , contingent upon securing external funding through grants and willing partners to assist with fundraising efforts.		•	•	•	Staff time
Sand Volleyball Courts					
29. Continue to support the Scorpion Youth Volleyball Club, promote the use of the sand volleyball courts and monitor demand to inform future needs and improvements as the Township emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.		•	•	•	Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Outdoor Skating Rinks					
30. Move forward with an application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund grant for the purchase of equipment and supplies to establish three outdoor skating rinks at Schmidt Park, Victoria Park and Roseville Community Centre and seek volunteers for general maintenance during the skating season. If the grant application is not successful, continue to explore outdoor skating opportunities in partnership with willing community volunteers.		•			\$25,000 (to be funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund if successful)
Off-Leash Dog Parks					
31. Re-locate the off-leash dog park at Cowan Park to the west side of the North Dumfries Community Complex as a temporary measure until the Township completes a future expansion to the North Dumfries Community Complex. At this time, the re-located off-leash dog park can be made permanent or potentially relocated to a future community park location. The provision of future off-leash dog parks should consider supporting amenities such as shade, seating, water, landscaping and other comfort features.			•		Staff time and purchase of materials
Outdoor Fitness Equipment					
32. Research and consultation for the Master Plan supports the Township’s planned installation of outdoor fitness equipment at Cowan Park and Clyde Park. Based upon a review of the success of these initial fitness equipment installations, the Township should pursue other strategic locations including high traffic locations, community parks and facilities such as the Roseville Community Centre and Schmidt Park, as well as along trails. Basic outdoor fitness equipment should also be considered in other parks, such as at Douglas Park and Browns Park.		•			\$40,000 per location

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Water-based Facilities					
33. Initiate a site selection process to establish appropriate locations along the Nith River and Grand River for casual viewing and enjoyment, including opportunities to launch personal, non-motorized watercrafts (e.g., canoes, kayaks, etc.) Potential site selection criteria should include, but not be limited to, parking, visibility, compatibility with adjacent land uses, connections to active transportation infrastructure, safety, and more.			•		Staff time and resources required for site works and promotion
Disc Golf Course					
34. Explore the development of a disc golf course if there is a willing community partner coming forward with a proposal to establish this new level of service. The proposal should speak to potential locations, site size and design, potential program opportunities to be led by the community partner, and other key considerations.		•	•	•	Staff time and costs to purchase and install disc golf baskets.
Other Recreation Facilities					
35. Evaluate requests for new indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural facilities on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of utilizing existing public space, the willingness of an organization to partner in providing the facility or space, and other factors.		•	•	•	Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Parkland, Trails & Natural Areas					
Parkland Hierarchy					
<p>36. The parkland hierarchy contained in the Leisure Services Master Plan should be used to guide the development and redevelopment of active parks according to park type, form, function, size, and the features and amenities that they provide. Parkland categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community Parks are designed for active and passive recreation and leisure activities for all residents and/or the broader regional population, including special events. b) Neighbourhood Parks are designed for the recreation and leisure activities of residents in a specific residential neighbourhood. c) Parkettes are in highly visible and accessible locations that support spontaneous gatherings and public rest areas. 		•	•	•	Staff time
Active Parkland Supply & Future Needs					
37. Maintain an active parkland provision target of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents. This would require the Township to acquire 1.7 hectares of active parkland over and above what is currently planned. Emphasis should be placed on securing new parkland within residential growth areas of Ayr. New active parks within rural settlement areas should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.		•	•	•	Staff time and cost to acquire land to be determined on a case-by-case basis
38. As a long-term goal, explore opportunities to acquire land for the purposes of establishing a future community park (2031+) to accommodate future recreation needs, which could be co-located with an existing or future indoor leisure facility.				•	Staff time and cost to acquire land

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Parkland Policy & Acquisition					
39. At the time of an Official Plan review, undertake necessary policy updates with the following in mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Legislative changes to the <i>Planning Act</i> such as the alternative rate for cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 dwelling units (as opposed to the previous rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units). b) The dedication of land for park purposes less than 0.5 hectares should be discouraged, unless it is necessary to reconcile gap areas. c) Criteria for accepting suitable land for developing active parkland should consider street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, opportunities for future expansion, drainage, grading, and other site conditions. 		•			Staff time
40. Augment parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu practices with a range of land acquisition tools to maximize public access to parkland and natural areas (e.g., land purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.).		•	•	•	Staff time and cost to acquire land to be determined on a case-by-case basis
Parkland, Open Space & Trail Design					
41. Parks, open space and trails should be designed in a manner that considers universal accessibility , with consideration given to establishing designated circulation areas and pathways. Consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee, persons with disabilities, and others should form part of all park design processes.		•	•	•	Costs to be determined on a case-by-case basis
42. The design of Township parks, open spaces and trails should have regard for safety and comfort amenities to encourage use. On a case-by-case basis, evaluate opportunities to incorporate features including, but not limited to, seating, shade, pathways, picnic tables, washrooms and other amenities that attract people and encourage use.		•	•	•	Costs to be determined on a case-by-case basis

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
43. Continue with plans to renew the Victoria Park pavilion to replace elements that have reached the end of its lifespan. Emphasis should be placed ensuring that the pavilion is barrier-free to accommodate persons with disabilities. Safety enhancements should be considered, which may include improving sightlines and lighting.		•			\$80,000 to \$100,000
44. Undertake a review of all Township's park signage to ensure that the corporate brand and information are conveyed consistently.		•			\$2,500 to \$5,000 per sign
45. As the Township continues to develop its recreational trail system, establish wayfinding signage to raise awareness about trails and to encourage their use. Wayfinding information should include the trail route, distance, amenities, difficulty, destinations in the community, connections to Township and non-municipal trails, and other key information. Wayfinding signage should be erected in prominent locations in North Dumfries and published on the Township's website.			•		\$2,500 to \$5,000 per sign
46. In partnership with other organizations, explore initiatives to be more resilient to climate change and protect and enhance the natural environment . Initiatives include establishing pollinator gardens, planting native species, setting tree canopy targets, establishing outdoor educational programs, strategically naturalizing open space, and other strategies determined by the Township. Opportunities may exist at Douglas Park, Riverside Park and other locations.			•		Costs to be determined on a case-by-case basis

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Recreational Trails					
<p>47. Update to the 2014 Trails/Cycling Master Plan to provide a renewed vision and detailed investigation for active transportation development opportunities. The update should incorporate and build upon the Township's efforts to strengthen the trail network, as well as the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan. Key trail initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creating a walking loop within the Ayr settlement area utilizing a combination of sidewalks and off-road linkages; b) Establishing pedestrian circulation areas within existing parks (e.g., pathways to playgrounds, sports fields, pavilions, etc.); c) Identifying active transportation routes within future residential areas as permitted by the Official Plan; d) Strengthening connections to non-Township owned trails and trail systems in adjacent municipalities, including working with land owners to establish public access; and e) Either alone or in partnership with others, promote active transportation opportunities including publishing trail routes (e.g., online and print map, mobile application, etc.), establishing walking groups, create pedestrian days in downtown Ayr, raise awareness for non-Township owned trails, and other strategies identified by the Township. 					Consulting Fees (\$50,000)

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
Leisure Service Delivery					
Leisure Service Delivery in North Dumfries					
48. At minimum, bi-annually develop a summary of all leisure by age group offered within North Dumfries and within proximity for the purpose of communicating and promoting these opportunities to the public. Start dates, prerequisites, cost, location, and contact information should all be included to promote a seamless delivery system.		•			Staff time
49. Develop a Community Services Guide to list and promote all leisure programs and services. List all aligned and available services within the community. Subsections should be broken down by age group as well as by oriented family activities.		•			Staff time
50. Refine the Municipal Grants program to provide start up and special event funding to encourage community groups to assist in the provision of a robust spectrum of services. Grants could be offered where there are identified gaps and could also be offered over 3 years on a declining basis to assist with sustainability.			•		Staff time
51. Develop Shared Files for all groups to access and share information on funding and grant opportunities from other levels of government and philanthropic organizations to promote recreation and active living opportunities in North Dumfries. Any additional information to groups on trends in recreation and culture, initiatives and plans by other levels of government and key agencies and links to key studies and best practises that could assist groups in the delivery of services should be included.			•		Staff time
52. Provide central resources on governance and the formation and ongoing requirements of not-for-profit groups in the delivery of leisure opportunities to keep community groups and agencies abreast of any changes and best practises.		•			Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
53. Strengthen the ability to recruit volunteers to include the use of technology to match volunteer skills with opportunities, provide basic training on policies and track volunteer hours. Work with community stakeholder groups to understand their difficulties in obtaining and retaining volunteers. Utilize the resources and standards as provided by Volunteer Canada .		•			Staff time and potential costs for technology support
Active Living					
54. Work with community partners and interested parties to introduce Physical Literacy to all age groups in North Dumfries to better enable participation in active pursuits.			•		Staff time
55. Promote the benefits of being active on an ongoing basis and the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines to all North Dumfries residents.		•			Staff time
56. Seek Council's approval to enter the Community Better Challenge through ParticipACTION in 2023 or 2024 to become Canada's Most Active Community.		•			Staff time
57. Approve staff providing programs and services directly on the condition that there is a quantifiable need for a program/service and a community partner does not have the capacity to deliver it.		•			Staff time and costs for program materials
58. Staff and community partners should aim to have a collective satisfaction level of 80% for programs and services.			•		Staff time
59. Determine the capacity and participation rates of recreation and sport opportunities (once greater recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is experienced) for each age cohort in North Dumfries and confirm any pent-up demands and current participation rates.			•		Staff time
60. At a minimum, strive to engage 25% of any given age cohort in programs, services, and sports within North Dumfries			•		Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
61. Based on current participation rates identify additional program and camp opportunities that may be required because of projected population growth in each age group.			•		Staff time and costs for program materials
62. Work with community partners to implement quality assurance frameworks in the provision of service including HIGH FIVE – Principles of Healthy Childhood Development, Youth Friendly Community Criteria, and the Principles of Healthy Aging.			•		Staff time
Access & Inclusion					
63. Develop an Inclusion and Access Policy with community partners to identify what actions the Township of North Dumfries and partners are committed to in including underrepresented residents within Leisure and Community services.			•		Staff time
64. Provide and enable training and professional development opportunities for staff, partners, and volunteers with respect to equity and inclusion of all underrepresented populations in the delivery of services.	•				Staff time
65. Organize and meet with underrepresented residents and organizations as well as leisure/sport service providers to determine what the Township is doing well and what could be done to be more intentionally inclusive of all residents facing barriers.			•		Staff time
66. Complete visual audits of facilities and public spaces to ensure that leisure use reflects the full citizenry of North Dumfries. Identify the people who are not regularly utilizing public spaces and engage them to understand any barriers.			•		Staff time
67. Complete an analysis of the number of females and those identifying as females participating in leisure, and sport, pursuits by age group in North Dumfries. Address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to address barriers to participation and increase equity. Work with other organizations to increase female participation in active and sport pursuits.			•		Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
68. Summarize all funding sources that subsidize persons experiencing low income in sport and leisure opportunities in North Dumfries. Provide this information to Social Service personnel working with recipients of government funding and post this information on the website as a first step. Develop a standard access policy for North Dumfries residents experiencing low income to improve seamless access to programs, services, and sport.			•		Staff time
69. Meet with groups representing persons with disabilities to develop programs and approaches to include more persons with disabilities into recreation programs.			•		Staff time
70. Ensure that all public spaces and facilities are safe and welcoming spaces for the LGBTQ2S community. Provide staff, volunteers, and partner training to better welcome and include these residents.			•		Staff time
71. Engage with the Indigenous community to listen and understand how they would like to be included to a greater extent and represented in parks, sport, recreation, and culture within North Dumfries.		•			Staff time
Expanding Cultural Opportunities					
72. Host bi-annual forums with cultural associations and contributors to address ongoing supports and opportunities to promote arts and heritage opportunities.		•	•	•	Staff time
73. Alone or in partnership with community organizations, explore opportunities to provide introductory visual and performing arts opportunities for all age groups, with consideration given to requests identified through the Master Plan (e.g., pottery, crafts, music, etc.). Opportunities should be delivered through existing and planned indoor and outdoor Township facilities.			•		Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
74. Proceed with establishing a farmers' market at the Ayr Community Centre support locally-owned businesses and agri-tourism opportunities.			•		Staff time
75. Expand the Leisure & Lifestyle Advisory Committee's mandate to include culture and heritage to ensure that culturally experienced and skilled representatives become part of the committee.		•			Staff time
76. Develop a Special Events and Festivals Policy to outline Council's commitments, partnership conditions, and resource allocations including an evaluation metric.			•		Staff time
Recreation & Cultural Capacity					
77. Track the concerns received in a Complaints Tracking Program regarding the delivery of services on an annual basis. Develop a common standard timeframe to respond to complaints. Utilization of this data to prevent common concerns and to communicate in advance of annual concerns (i.e., grass cutting levels in the spring of each year).			•		Staff time (and/or fees for establishing/acquiring a tracking program)
78. Apply a consistent formula to better understand the costs to provide the various services and determine current cost recovery levels. Develop a fair minded and transparent Pricing Policy to ensure that fees are equitable and respect the value that they provide to the community.			•		Staff time
79. Develop a Partnership and Sponsorship Policy to seek out alternate revenue sources to offset the cost to provide Leisure and Community Services.			•		Staff time
80. Develop a standardized Partnership and/or Sponsorship Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding to apply to various partnership types and to standardize municipal and partner expectations			•		Staff time

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031	Resource Implication
81. Develop a meaningful set of Performance Measures for the Leisure & Community Services Department that describe the inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness measures employed in each discipline.		•			Staff time
82. Seek Council approval for a Community Development Coordinator in 2023 as an addition to the staff complement to address the recommended actions for community development, expanding programs for all age groups, policy development, performance measurement etc.		•			New Department staff and associated wages
83. Assess the need for a Recreation and Cultural Coordinator in 2025 to address the increased recreation and cultural needs of a growing population.			•		New Department staff and associated wages
84. Prepare a staffing plan as part of the expansion of the North Dumfries Community Complex and the re-purposed Ayr Community Centre as the designs of these facilities are developed.			•		New Department staff and associated wages

Recommendations	Suggested Timing	2022 to 2024	2025 to 2027	2028 to 2031+	Resource Implication
Master Plan Implementation					
Monitoring & Updating the Master Plan					
85. Develop a system for regular monitoring and reporting for the Master Plan, which should include tracking activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council.		•			Staff time
86. Develop annual work plans that identifies recommendations from the Master Plan that staff seek to achieve over the short-term. Work plans should identify financial requirements and other resources required to implement recommendations.		•	•	•	Staff time
87. Undertake a mid-term review around 2027 and comprehensive review and update of the Master Plan by 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes in population growth, trends and other variables.			•	•	Staff time
Funding Considerations					
88. Where appropriate, evaluate alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches including (but not limited to) grants, fundraising, sponsorships, partnerships, and other forms of community collaboration to provide the best value to residents.		•	•	•	Staff time

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

- 1. How physically active has your household been during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before? This includes leisure-time activities, such as participation in organized or in unorganized sports, physical activities, and play.**

	#	%
More physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic	128	21%
Less physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic	249	41%
No change/the same level of physical activity	222	36%
Answered Question	609	

- 2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 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. (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	511	86%
Enjoying Parks and Open Spaces	396	66%
Use of Playground Equipment	308	52%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness or Weight-training	292	49%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating or Ice Skating	291	49%
Swimming (recreational)	278	47%
Dog Walking (on or off-leash)	277	46%
Use of Splash Pad	260	44%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	239	40%
Soccer	199	33%
Jogging or Running for Fitness	195	33%
Boating (kayaking, canoeing, tubing)	184	31%
Baseball or Softball	182	31%
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	175	29%
Organized Children & Youth Programs (e.g., day camps)	141	24%
Tennis	110	18%
Wheeled Action Sports (e.g., skateboarding or BMX)	92	15%
Basketball	78	13%
Volleyball	73	12%
Curling	57	10%
Pickleball	30	5%
Football	21	4%
Lacrosse	18	3%
Organized Seniors' Programs (e.g., cards, dancing)	17	3%
Other (please specify)	50	8%
Answered Question	596	

3. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you and members of your household able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

	#	%
Yes	400	65%
No	164	27%
Uncertain	49	8%
Answered Question	613	

4. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, what were the reasons that prevented you from participating in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like? (select up to three responses)

	#	%
Lack of desired programs or facilities	126	61%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	73	35%
Program not offered at convenient time	69	33%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	59	28%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	24	12%
Lack of money / Too expensive	21	10%
Lack of motivation / Not interested	18	9%
Health problems / Disability / Age	16	8%
Lack of child care	7	3%
Language / Cultural barrier	0	0%
Don't know	4	2%
Other (please specify)	21	10%
Answered Question	208	

- 5. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following arts and cultural activities? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participated, either at home or in public. (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Visit a Farmers' Market	490	89%
Attend a Special Event (e.g., Canada Day Fireworks, etc.)	440	80%
Attend Live Theatre	310	56%
Visit a Museum	294	53%
Drawing or Painting	182	33%
Singing or Playing an Instrument	161	29%
Visit an Art Gallery	149	27%
Pottery or other Artisan Crafts	115	21%
Other (please specify)	20	4%
Answered Question	552	

- 6. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you and members of your household able to participate in arts and culture as often as you would like?**

	#	%
Yes	376	63%
No	152	26%
Uncertain	68	11%
Answered Question	596	

7. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, what were the reasons that prevented you from participating in arts and cultural activities as often as you would like? (select up to three responses)

	#	%
Lack of desired programs or facilities	95	43%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	77	35%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	77	35%
Program not offered at convenient time	57	26%
Lack of motivation / Not interested	35	16%
Lack of money / Too expensive	34	15%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	26	12%
Health problems / Disability / Age	11	5%
Lack of child care	6	3%
Language / Cultural barrier	0	0%
Don't know	12	5%
Other (please specify)	16	7%
Answered Question	221	

8. 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 North Dumfries that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top 10 Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities

1. Swimming (including aquafit)	6. Group Fitness (e.g., yoga, aerobics, etc.)
2. Walking trails	7. Basketball courts
3. Pump track	8. Bike trails and supporting infrastructure
4. Arena activities (e.g., public skate and more ice time)	9. Gymnasium activities (e.g., badminton, volleyball, basketball, etc.)
5. Disc golf	10. Outdoor skating

9. If applicable, list up to two (2) arts and cultural activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in North Dumfries that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top 10 Requested Parks and Recreation Opportunities

1. Live theatre and music concerts (e.g., music in the park)	6. Special events (e.g., Indigenous recognition, food festivals, multi-cultural events)
2. Creative arts classes (e.g., pottery, quilting, crafts)	7. Fine art classes (e.g., drawing and painting)
3. General arts classes	8. Art and antique exhibits
4. Performing arts classes (e.g., drama, music, singing, dance)	9. Art in the park
5. Farmers' markets	10. Cooking classes

10. In general, how important are the following facilities to your household?

	Not at all important		Somewhat unimportant		Neither unimportant nor important		Somewhat important		Very important		Don't Know / Don't use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Recreational trails and pathways	6	1%	3	1%	14	3%	90	17%	414	79%	10	12%
Outdoor recreation spaces such as sports fields and ball diamonds	24	5%	16	3%	35	7%	112	22%	327	64%	25	25%
Open space parks for unstructured use	13	2%	12	2%	65	12%	173	33%	261	50%	12	13%
Children's outdoor playgrounds	47	9%	17	3%	40	8%	89	18%	305	61%	40	35%
Indoor spaces at the North Dumfries Community Complex	30	6%	29	6%	50	10%	157	31%	246	48%	24	24%
Arts and cultural spaces such as special event space	30	6%	26	5%	99	19%	187	37%	168	33%	24	23%
Indoor spaces at the Ayr Community Centre	70	14%	38	8%	80	16%	141	29%	156	32%	53	41%

11. What is your level of satisfaction with the following parks, recreation and culture facilities in North Dumfries?

	Not at all satisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Very Satisfied		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Outdoor recreation spaces such as sports fields and ball diamonds	11	2%	23	5%	57	12%	202	42%	184	39%	58	43%
Children's outdoor playgrounds	11	2%	39	9%	75	17%	181	40%	146	32%	82	51%
Indoor spaces at the North Dumfries Community Complex	21	4%	48	10%	83	17%	202	42%	124	26%	56	41%
Open space parks for unstructured use	18	4%	34	7%	128	26%	211	43%	105	21%	40	34%
Recreational trails and pathways	38	7%	79	15%	64	12%	219	42%	119	23%	17	18%
Indoor spaces at the Ayr Community Centre	38	9%	62	15%	135	32%	137	33%	47	11%	115	59%
Arts and cultural spaces such as special event space	34	8%	74	18%	164	40%	104	25%	35	9%	123	61%

12. For each age group listed below, what is your level of satisfaction with the parks and recreation activities in North Dumfries?

	Not at all satisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Very Satisfied		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Families	16	5%	66	19%	16	5%	201	58%	48	14%	123	46%
Older Adults (60+ years)	28	14%	47	23%	28	14%	76	37%	26	13%	40	10%
Adults (40 - 59 years)	30	10%	52	18%	30	10%	137	47%	44	15%	17	5%
Young Adults (19 - 39 years)	23	8%	67	22%	23	8%	157	52%	34	11%	82	27%
Teens (13 - 18 years)	25	11%	65	28%	25	11%	92	39%	27	12%	58	15%
School-Age Children (5 - 12 years)	16	5%	47	16%	16	5%	162	55%	53	18%	115	36%
Preschool Children (0 - 4 years)	14	6%	46	19%	14	6%	114	48%	50	21%	56	15%

13. For each age group listed below, what is your level of satisfaction with the arts and culture activities in North Dumfries?

	Not at all satisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Very Satisfied		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Families	33	13%	87	33%	33	13%	88	34%	20	8%	167	47%
Older Adults (60+ years)	30	17%	56	32%	30	17%	46	26%	15	8%	287	66%
Adults (40 - 59 years)	32	15%	65	30%	32	15%	70	33%	15	7%	230	58%
Young Adults (19 - 39 years)	37	16%	75	32%	37	16%	71	30%	14	6%	211	56%
Teens (13 - 18 years)	30	17%	56	33%	30	17%	45	26%	11	6%	267	61%
School-Age Children (5 - 12 years)	30	15%	61	31%	30	15%	61	31%	15	8%	234	56%
Preschool Children (0 - 4 years)	27	15%	59	32%	27	15%	53	29%	16	9%	256	59%

14. For the amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support or oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards building new or improving the following indoor facility types?

	Strongly oppose		Somewhat oppose		Neither oppose nor support		Somewhat support		Strongly support		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Swimming Pools	39	8%	20	4%	43	9%	64	13%	332	67%	20	17%
Equipment-Based Fitness Centre	27	6%	36	7%	101	21%	150	31%	167	35%	29	22%
Gymnasiums	23	5%	29	6%	123	26%	160	34%	140	29%	33	24%
Arenas	57	12%	55	11%	67	14%	111	23%	198	41%	27	22%
Fitness Studio	29	6%	45	9%	122	25%	140	29%	147	30%	26	20%
Performing Arts Theatres or Space	42	9%	35	7%	140	29%	141	29%	128	26%	28	22%
Indoor Space for Large Special Events	30	6%	40	8%	173	36%	152	31%	90	19%	26	20%
Indoor Community Meeting Space	33	7%	55	12%	159	34%	148	31%	76	16%	36	25%
Museums	57	12%	48	10%	158	32%	142	29%	84	17%	25	20%

15. For the amenities and facilities listed below, to what degree do you support or oppose ADDITIONAL spending towards building new or improving the following outdoor facility types?

	Strongly oppose		Somewhat oppose		Neither oppose nor support		Somewhat support		Strongly support		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Nature trails	7	1%	5	1%	32	6%	115	23%	341	68%	7	6%
Farmers Markets	7	1%	6	1%	53	11%	128	26%	305	61%	9	8%
Paved Multi-Use Trails	15	3%	16	3%	64	13%	151	31%	249	50%	11	9%
Outdoor Ice Rinks	20	4%	17	4%	73	15%	134	28%	241	50%	20	16%
Acquisition of Parks and Open Space	12	2%	18	4%	87	18%	161	33%	212	43%	10	8%
Comfort Amenities (seating, shade shelters)	15	3%	15	3%	89	18%	168	34%	208	42%	11	9%
Playgrounds	14	3%	14	3%	89	19%	142	30%	209	45%	38	26%
Picnic areas	15	3%	17	4%	117	24%	165	34%	165	34%	22	16%
Outdoor Swimming Pools	59	12%	33	7%	74	15%	85	17%	238	49%	19	15%
Community Gardens	23	5%	17	4%	123	26%	152	33%	152	33%	35	24%
Cycling Infrastructure (i.e. bike racks, road markings, Ayr-Cambridge bike corridor, etc.)	36	8%	25	5%	106	23%	132	28%	170	36%	35	24%
Splash Pads	33	7%	36	8%	112	24%	129	28%	154	33%	44	30%
Outdoor Basketball Courts	21	5%	25	6%	135	30%	163	36%	110	24%	49	31%
Performing Arts Space	35	8%	37	8%	136	29%	128	28%	127	27%	41	27%
Outdoor Space for Large Special Events	26	5%	31	7%	156	33%	144	30%	117	25%	29	21%
Off-leash Dog Parks	38	8%	42	9%	127	28%	116	25%	134	29%	48	31%
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	43	9%	43	9%	125	27%	135	29%	117	25%	39	26%
Tennis Courts	23	5%	35	8%	141	33%	127	30%	96	23%	80	42%
Rock Climbing Wall	53	11%	39	8%	132	29%	130	28%	108	23%	41	27%
Sand Volleyball Courts	33	7%	32	7%	161	36%	136	30%	85	19%	57	34%
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	27	6%	54	12%	147	33%	136	30%	86	19%	49	30%

	Strongly oppose		Somewhat oppose		Neither oppose nor support		Somewhat support		Strongly support		Don't Know / Don't Use	
Skateboard/BMX Park	69	16%	43	10%	134	30%	90	20%	109	24%	57	34%
Soccer Fields	41	9%	70	15%	145	32%	116	25%	88	19%	44	29%
BMX Pump Track	73	17%	41	9%	138	32%	70	16%	110	25%	70	39%
Pickleball Courts	31	8%	34	8%	181	44%	94	23%	71	17%	92	46%

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

	Greatly below expectations		Below expectations		Matched expectations		Exceeds expectations		Greatly exceeds expectations		Don't Know / Don't Use	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Value of tax dollars spent towards facilities and recreation.	18	4%	74	16%	277	59%	83	18%	19	4%	20	17%
Affordability of parks, recreation and culture programs.	23	5%	96	22%	276	63%	38	9%	8	2%	29	22%
Location of parks, recreation and culture amenities.	23	5%	111	23%	287	61%	46	10%	6	1%	26	20%
Maintenance of parks, recreation and culture amenities.	23	5%	111	23%	287	61%	46	10%	6	1%	36	25%
Inclusion and accessibility for residents with low income backgrounds and persons with disabilities.	43	10%	143	33%	217	50%	27	6%	5	1%	25	20%

17. Looking ahead, what lasting impacts – if any – might the COVID-19 pandemic have on your participation in parks, trails, recreation and culture activities? (e.g., could include increased participation, decreased participation, no change in participation, etc.)

Responses have not been presented but key themes have been considered in the development of the Master Plan.

18. Please provide us with any additional comments.

Responses have not been presented but key themes have been considered in the development of the Master Plan.

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

	#	# of persons	%	2016 Census
under 10 years - Number of Persons	195	344	20%	12%
10 - 19 years - Number of Persons	175	298	17%	14%
20 - 34 years - Number of Persons	149	252	14%	15%
35 - 54 years - Number of Persons	310	548	31%	29%
55 - 69 years - Number of Persons	135	221	13%	20%
70 years and over - Number of Persons	54	77	4%	9%
Total persons		1740	100%	
Answered question	496			

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

Age	#	%
25 years or younger	5	1%
26-35 years	52	15%
36-45 years	126	38%
46-55 years	67	20%
56-65 years	48	14%
66-75 years	28	8%
76 years or older	10	3%
Answered Question	336	
Median Age	43	

21. Do you live in...

	#	%
Ayr	422	83%
Rural area within the Township of North Dumfries	43	8%
Outside of the Township of North Dumfries	22	4%
Rural settlement area (please specific):	19	4%
Answered Question	506	