



AGENDA
Strategic Priorities Committee

June 20, 2017

9:00 am

Council Chambers, Town Hall

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

3. AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Resolution

THAT the June 20, 2017 Strategic Priorities Committee agenda be accepted as presented.

4. DELEGATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

5. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REVIEW

5.1 PW 34-2017 Sparling Bush Management and Information

3

Resolution

THAT PW 34-2017 Sparling Bush Management be received for discussion.

5.2 DCS 15-2017 Recreation Master Plan Update - Review of Planning Context Report

51

Resolution

THAT report DCS 15-2017 Recreation Master Plan Update - Review of Planning Context Report be received for discussion.

6. NEXT MEETING

July 18, 2017 - 9:00am, Town Hall, Council Chambers

7. ADJOURNMENT

Resolution

That this meeting of the Strategic Priorities Committee adjourn at _____ am.

FORMAL REPORT

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| To: | Chair Stratthdee and Members of Strategic Priorities Committee |
| Prepared by: | Jed Kelly, Director of Public Works |
| Date of Meeting: | 20 June 2017 |
| Subject: | PW 34-2017 Sparling Bush Management and Information |

PURPOSE

To update Strategic Priorities Committee as to current Sparling Bush conditions and to facilitate a conversation around development of best practices including steps forward for ongoing management to improve the integrity and health of the site.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PW 34-2017 Sparling Bush Management be received for discussion.

BACKGROUND

Sparling Bush is a 2.4 hectare woodlot that was donated to the Town by a local resident, Mr. Herb Sparling, in or around the year 1980. This was part of a sub-division agreement, and the bush was to be used as parkland in lieu of a cash payment. Sparling Bush has residential development on its north, south, and west sides, with the cemetery property abutting the bush on its east perimeter.

Sparling Bush has two main entrance and exit points; one at the south end of Waterloo St., and the other from the south-west corner of the cemetery property. There is also an entrance off of Sparling Crescent, by way of thin strip of municipally owned land; however, this entrance is much less noticeable although it is utilized by local residents for loop trail access. The St. Marys Loop Trail uses a section of the bush trail to connect its north-south path.

Throughout the years, significant interest and activities have taken place with regards to the bush. In 2001, the Town commissioned a forestry expert, Mr. Warren Moore, to conduct an inspection and provide a report to the Town about the health of the bush as well as to identify issues and provide recommendations to improve the health of the site. As a result of this report, a meeting with neighbouring residents took place in late 2001, and out of that meeting a committee was formed (Friends of Sparling Bush) who would lead the activities to implement the recommendations contained in that report. The Rotary Club of St. Marys was also heavily involved in the activities surrounding the restoration and management of this area.

To better understand the current condition and risk associated with Sparling Bush, in late 2014 the Town of St. Marys requested that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) complete an inspection, and prepare a report of the condition of the bush along with recommendations to improve its health and overall management.

REPORT

A complete copy of the UTRCA Report has been attached, and below are some of the key points highlighted the from UTRCA report:

- A detailed vegetation study and inventory of the existing native and non-native plants have been listed;
- The bush is comprised of 69 total species (44 native and 24 non-native);
- Although 14 years old, much of the Warren Moore report of 2001 and many of its recommendations are still applicable today;
- The woodlot is still relatively healthy, but is showing signs of pressure from surrounding development;
- The relatively good health indicates that the woodlot was well managed historically.

Several core issues have been identified which are the major risk factors in regards to the health of Sparling Bush. These are listed below along with some possible solutions Council is asked to consider if they wish to proceed with any of the management strategies recommended by the UTRCA:

1. **Encroachment:** A point of concern noted in both the UTRCA 2015 and the Warren 2001 reports is that, over the years, a number of properties have encroached upon the woodlot by cutting vegetation, expanding lawns, planting ornamentals as well as erecting building structures. It should be noted that extensive encroachment on cemetery lands was observed during the recent May 2017 site visit. Pictures representing the encroachment are provided as an attachment to this report.

Recommendation: To stop encroachment both an educational and regulatory component is required. The purpose is to ensure that neighboring homeowners understand how certain actions can negatively impact the woods over the long term. A formal information campaign is recommended for development, and implementation of permanent property boundary markers to delineate property lines should be considered. Possible options for delineation of the property boundary includes natural barriers, property marker posts and or fencing.

More broadly, a policy should be developed to consider how to address encroachment scenarios on town lands such as the cemetery, storm water management ponds, trails, and unimproved road allowances.

2. **Non-Native Invasive Species:** Of the 24 non-native species identified in the report, the majority are located around the edge of the bush, which indicates that encroachment (above) is one of the leading causes of the non-natives in the bush. Furthermore, the dumping of unwanted yard waste (grass clippings and leaves) has also been observed, and this reduces the potential of natural regeneration and increases the potential to introduce seeds of non-native vegetation.

Recommendation: An educational and control program should be implemented to help with this issue. A control program would consist of manually pulling the non-natives. Scheduled removal of non-native species using Parks staff resources will begin in 2017, this should be considered a moving target intended to slow the invasive species penetration into the interior.

3. **Trail and Tree Management:** There is a recommendation for continued development of existing trail paths. This involves wood chip placement improving the surface, and blocking of improvised trails. It should be noted this practice has noticeably improved the overall interior health of the woodlot in recent years. Trees that represent a significant risk to users of the internal trails should be removed and recycled. Trees that do not represent a risk to users will left for their full life cycle. Also, there should be no harvesting of trees from the bush.

Several properties were observed to have created improvised individual trail access points from abutting rear yards. This was mostly observed stemming from properties fronting Sparling Crest. The town trail access from Sparling is not clearly marked or defined from Sparling Crescent. Creating a more visible access point from the municipal road allowance could deter the creation of private access points from rear yards. Furthermore recycling waste wood from removed trees can be placed along existing trails to deter users from creating additional paths which in turn damage the interior through soil compaction.

Recommendation: Annual application of wood chips to the approved existing trails to improve surface condition is currently occurring. This is done with chip material from the tree program and placed by internal parks staff resources.

Annual inspection of trees adjacent to internal trails. Only trees that represent a significant risk to users of the internal trail will be removed and waste wood material placed along existing trails to deter users from creating additional paths which future damage the interior.

4. **Signage:** There is a recommendation to improve local signage at trail entrance points to Sparling Bush with uniform signage for all three bush access points. Signage could include trail map, and acceptable & non-acceptable uses: such as: no illegal dumping of yard waste material, no fires or smoking, stay on path, etc.

Recommendation: It is recommended the Town work with the local Rotary service club to improve entrance point signage including approved activities and an official trail map of the bush interior. The Service Club has expressed an interest in this project. Clearly displaying the acceptable uses and approved trail mapping could assist in improving the overall woodlot health.

Piecing all of this together, the following table lays out a proposed schedule and budget for future consideration based on possible recommendations:

| | Task | Description | Cost |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 2017 (fall) | Tree planting | Augment bush perimeter on East / South sides to ease pressures from development | (Partner with Rotary and internal staff) |
| 2018 | Survey Work | Complete Survey of abutting properties on bush perimeter | \$12,000 |
| 2018 | Signage | Partner with Rotary club on informational entrance signage | \$3,000 |
| 2018 | Trail connection | Installation of stone dust trail connection to cemetery loop trail link | \$3,000 (Material & Internal staff resources) |
| 2018 | Information Campaign | Work with UTRCA to develop information for local residents | \$1,000 (printing & internal staff resources) |
| 2019-2020 | Post Markers | Installation of post markers to delineate property boundaries | \$15,000 |
| 2019-2020 | Sparling Trail Access | Create a more visible access point from Sparling Crescent to the towns trail network | \$5,000 (Fencing installation) |
| Annual | Tree Inspection | Inspection of tree adjacent to trails and perimeter properties | Internal staff resources |
| Annual | Trails | Apply wood chip | Internal staff resources |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | | material to trail paths, block and discourage additional path creation | |
| Annual / Periodic | Invasive Species removals | Manual removal of invasive species to control spread | Internal staff resources |

SUMMARY

Sparling Bush is an important part of the Town's urban forest, and one in which the residents of St. Marys, especially those living close to the bush, have an appreciation for and sense of connection to. To assist with the long term health of the bush, it's important that the Town work in conjunction with the UTRCA as well as neighbours and concerned citizens to re-establish communication with the intent of implementing the control measures as identified in both the 2001 report, as well as the most recent (2015) report.

In preparation for this report Town staff, Rotary and UTRCA representatives completed a site visit in May of 2017. UTRCA concurred with the Town's efforts to date and noted that the over health of the bush interior has improved since last visiting the site. This can be attributed to improved trail delineation and adoption of the conversation authority's woodlot management practices into Town operations in recent years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this time there are no specific financial implications for the town, the UTRCA report did recommend developing a budget for the implementation of recommendations.

Woodlot management practices that have low cost implementation have already been incorporated into the standard operation and associated Public Works operating budgets.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Vanni Azzano, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Jonathon Hahn, Parks Team Leader
Ron Aitken, St. Marys Rotary Club

Strategic Plan: this initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes and tactics in the Plan:

Pillar #4 Culture and Recreation: Strategic Priority for a "Focused Park Strategy"

- Outcome: St. Marys' parks are not only a prized asset, they are also a natural gathering place that can be optimized and incorporated into enhancing the cultural profile of St. Marys.

Tactic(s): Investigate implementing a forestry and tree management policy for the Town.

ATTACHMENTS

Sparling Bush Management Recommendations
Sample Informational Messaging

REVIEWED BY

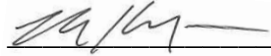
Recommended by the Department



Jed Kelly

Director of Public Works

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer

CAO / Clerk

SPARLING BUSH: MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS



**UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
JULY 2015**



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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) was approached by the Town of St. Marys to review and make recommendations on how best to manage Sparling Bush. This request came as a result of concern about the woodlots' overall health and management.

In preparing this report, the UTRCA undertook a detailed vegetation study which included both trees and herbaceous plants (Appendix 1). The UTRCA also reviewed a report entitled, "Sparling Woodlot Assessment," prepared by Warren Moore in October 2001 (Appendix 2). The Rotary Club of St. Marys commissioned the W. Moore report in an effort to guide the Town in its management of the woodlot. Although 14 years old, much of the W. Moore report and many of its recommendations are still applicable today. This UTRCA report in many ways will re-emphasize recommendations that were made in 2001.

SPARLING BUSH OVERVIEW

This 2.4 hectare mature sugar maple woodlot is still relatively healthy but is showing signs of pressure from the surrounding development. Encroachment and the spread of non-native invasive species are probably two of the main threats. The relatively good health indicates that the woodlot was well managed historically. The density, age and health of the trees indicate that it was never over harvested. Improvement cutting of diseased and damaged trees for firewood was probably the extent of harvesting.

The current basal area of the woodlot, 28.4 m²/ha, is greater than the recommended 20 m²/ha for optimizing timber growth. Basal area is the surface area of wood growing at breast height (1.3 m) on a given hectare of land. In this case, the higher basal area is probably protecting this woodlot from the spread of non-native invasive species into the interior. For this relatively small woodlot, the interior is almost void of non-native invasive plants, due to the closed canopy and lack of light reaching the forest floor. The closed canopy has also resulted in a very even age stand of sugar maple with very little regeneration of saplings and seedlings, resulting in a park-like woodlot.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are management recommendations to improve the integrity and health of Sparling Bush.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Foremost, we believe that community involvement through a dedicated group of interested volunteers would be of great benefit. A committee, such as a "Friends of Sparling Bush," could help in plan and implement projects to enhance the woodlot. The committee might include representation from the Town of St. Marys, the Rotary Club of St. Marys, adjacent landowners and the UTRCA. Herb Sparling, former landowner and Rotarian, bequeathed the woodlot

through the Rotary Club to the Town of St. Marys. Rotary is very dedicated to being a major partner in the enhancement of Sparling Bush.

Community involvement is critical in maintaining community support and will help in policing permitted uses. Community interest needs to be nurtured and supported.

ENCROACHMENT

The Town of St. Marys needs to re-establish the property boundaries between Sparling Bush and the adjacent residential properties. Over the years, a number of these properties have encroached upon the woods by cutting vegetation, expanding lawns, planting ornamentals and building structures. This type of encroachment makes a small fragile woodlot even smaller.

The other type of encroachment that is occurring is the dumping of unwanted yard waste (such as grass clippings and leaves) and even construction materials. This type of illegal dumping needs to be stopped. Yard waste reduces the potential for natural regeneration and increases the potential to introduce seeds of non-native vegetation. These materials can be disposed of through the Town's yard waste program.

To stop these types of encroachment there needs to be both an educational and regulatory component. In many cases, we believe that home owners, who really appreciate living near the woods, just do not understand how their actions can negatively impact the woods over the long term. In 1996, UTRCA and the City of London produced a brochure entitled, "Living With Natural Areas – A Guide for Citizens of London" (Appendix 3). In 1998, UTRCA and the City of Woodstock produced a flyer entitled, "Protecting Natural Areas in the City of Woodstock" (Appendix 4). These are examples of educational materials that outline how our actions can impact natural areas. A guide similar to these could be created for Sparling Bush or for St. Marys in general.

NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES

Our vegetation inventory indicated that Sparling Bush is comprised of 69 species in total, 44 of which are native and 24 non-native. All 24 non-native species are located in the edge community; only seven of them are also located in the interior community. This indicates that the interior is still relatively healthy and that the spread of non-natives is coming in from the edge.

Encroachment as described above is one of the leading causes.

To reduce the spread of non-native plants an educational and control program should be implemented. The UTRCA has produced an educational brochure entitled, "Recommended Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines – for Naturalization Projects in the Upper Thames River Watershed" (Appendix 5). This information could be shared with neighbouring homeowners or presented through a workshop conducted by UTRCA.

A control program might target some of the more aggressive non-natives such as common buckthorn, garlic mustard, Norway maple and common periwinkle. The program would consist of volunteer community members manually pulling the plants, under the supervision of the UTRCA and the Town of St. Marys. A monitoring and control program would be required

annually to try to maintain control of some of the more aggressive non-natives. Once control on these species is achieved, then some of the other non-natives could be targeted.

COMMUNITY NATURALIZATION

Once the encroachment and non-native invasive species issues have been addressed there will be an opportunity to re-plant some of the cleared area with native trees and shrubs. Planting of these areas will help to re-establish the perimeter of the woodlot. A planting day could be organized by UTRCA with planting assistance provided by school groups and/or community members.

WALKING TRAILS AND SIGNAGE

Currently, there are more walking trails than necessary in Sparling Bush. Many of these trails are coming from unauthorized entry points on private land. Excessive trails compact soil, prevent natural regeneration and promote the spread of non-native invasive plants.

The main trail is part of the Town's "LOOP" trail system with signed entry and exit points from the cemetery. There is also an entrance from Waterloo Street South that connects to the main trail. Most of the main trail is presently mulched with woodchips. It is recommended that the entire main trail be maintained with woodchips to indicate permitted use. All other trails could be closed by blocking with downed woody debris and planting with native trees and shrubs. To reduce public liability, an annual inspection of hazard trees adjacent to the walking trail should be made. Any trees within falling distance of the trail that are deemed to be a potential hazard should be felled by the Town. Material cut can be bucked up and left on the forest floor to decompose, adding organic matter to the forest.

Once some of the above issues have been addressed, the sign at the Waterloo Street South entrance can be updated. The new sign can indicate partners, permitted uses and walking trail location.

BUDGET

A budget should be developed for implementing the recommendations in this report. The UTRCA would be able to assist the Town of St. Marys in developing this budget. The UTRCA would also work with the Town and other partners in pursuing potential grants from external funding sources to cover these costs.

APPENDIX 1: 2015 Vegetation Inventory

Community 1 - Perimeter of the woodlot (see attached map)

| Native/Non-Native | Weediness | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Non-Native | -3 | Norway Maple | <i>Acer platanoides</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Horse-chestnut | <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Garlic Mustard | <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Smooth Brome | <i>Bromus inermis</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Lily-of-the-valley | <i>Convallaria majalis</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | European Swallow-wort | <i>Cynanchum rossicum</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Sweet Woodruff | <i>Galium odoratum</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Herb Robert | <i>Geranium robertianum</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | English Ivy | <i>Hedera helix</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Orange Day Lily | <i>Hemerocallis fulva</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Purple Dead-nettle | <i>Lamium purpureum</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Motherwort | <i>Leonurus cardiaca</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Privet | <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Tartarian Honeysuckle | <i>Lonicera tatarica</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Apple | <i>Malus pumila</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Lemon Balm | <i>Melissa officinalis</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Sweet Cherry | <i>Prunus avium</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Common Buckthorn | <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Curly Dock | <i>Rumex crispus</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Stonecrop | <i>Sedum sp.</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Climbing Nightshade | <i>Solanum dulcamara</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | European Mountain-ash | <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Common Comfrey | <i>Symphytum officinale</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Common Lilac | <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Common Periwinkle | <i>Vinca minor</i> |
| Native | | Manitoba Maple | <i>Acer negundo</i> |
| Native | | Black Maple | <i>Acer saccharum</i> |
| Native | | Sugar Maple | <i>Acer saccharum</i> |
| Native | | Red Baneberry | <i>Actaea rubra</i> |
| Native | | Jack-in-the-pulpit | <i>Arisaema triphyllum</i> |
| Native | | Calico Aster | <i>Aster lateriflorus</i> |
| Native | | Blue Cohosh | <i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i> |
| Native | | Enchanter's-nightshade | <i>Circaea lutetiana</i> |
| Native | | Alternate-leaved Dogwood | <i>Cornus alternifolia</i> |

| Native/Non-Native | Weediness | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Native | | Grey Dogwood | <i>Cornus foemina</i> |
| Native | | Red-osier Dogwood | <i>Cornus stolonifera</i> |
| Native | | Daisy Fleabane | <i>Erigeron annuus</i> |
| Native | | American Beech | <i>Fagus grandifolia</i> |
| Native | | White Ash | <i>Fraxinus americana</i> |
| Native | | Red/Green Ash | <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> |
| Native | | White Aven | <i>Geum canadense</i> |
| Native | | Canada Waterleaf | <i>Hydrophyllum canadense</i> |
| Native | | Virginia Waterleaf | <i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i> |
| Native | | Black Walnut | <i>Juglans nigra</i> |
| Native | | False Solomon's-seal | <i>Maianthemum racemosum</i> |
| Native | | American Ostrich Fern | <i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i> |
| Native | | Virginia Creeper | <i>Parthenocissus inserta</i> |
| Native | | Clearweed | <i>Pilea pumila</i> |
| Native | | Solomon's-seal | <i>Polygonatum biflorum</i> |
| Native | | Wild Black Cherry | <i>Prunus serotina</i> |
| Native | | Choke Cherry | <i>Prunus virginiana</i> |
| Native | | Bur Oak | <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i> |
| Native | | Red Oak | <i>Quercus rubra</i> |
| Native | | Staghorn Sumac | <i>Rhus typhina</i> |
| Native | | Wild Black Currant | <i>Ribes americanum</i> |
| Native | | Wild Red Raspberry | <i>Rubus idaeus</i> |
| Native | | Black Raspberry | <i>Rubus occidentalis</i> |
| Native | | Bloodroot | <i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> |
| Native | | Canada Goldenrod | <i>Solidago canadensis</i> |
| Native | | Early Meadow-rue | <i>Thalictrum dioicum</i> |
| Native | | White Cedar | <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> |
| Native | | Basswood | <i>Tilia americana</i> |
| Native | | Horse-gentian | <i>Triosteum aurantiacum</i> |
| Native | | Eastern Hemlock | <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> |
| Native | | Highbush-cranberry | <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> |
| Native | | Riverbank Grape | <i>Vitis riparia</i> |

Weediness Score

A negative score means the plant is non-native. A score of -1 to -3 indicates degree of invasiveness. A -3 score is the most invasive.

Community 2 - Interior of the woodlot (see attached map).

| Native/Non-Native | Weediness | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Non-Native | -3 | Norway Maple | <i>Acer platanoides</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Garlic Mustard | <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> |
| Non-Native | -1 | Sweet Woodruff | <i>Galium odoratum</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Privet | <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> |
| Non-Native | -3 | Common Buckthorn | <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | Climbing Nightshade | <i>Solanum dulcamara</i> |
| Non-Native | -2 | European Mountain-ash | <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> |
| Native | | Black Maple | <i>Acer saccharum</i> |
| Native | | Sugar Maple | <i>Acer saccharum</i> |
| Native | | Blue Cohosh | <i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i> |
| Native | | Redbud | <i>Cercis canadensis</i> |
| Native | | Enchanter's-nightshade | <i>Circaea lutetiana</i> |
| Native | | Alternate-leaved Dogwood | <i>Cornus alternifolia</i> |
| Native | | Grey Dogwood | <i>Cornus foemina</i> |
| Native | | American Beech | <i>Fagus grandifolia</i> |
| Native | | White Ash | <i>Fraxinus americana</i> |
| Native | | Red/Green Ash | <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> |
| Native | | Yellow Aven | <i>Geum aleppicum</i> |
| Native | | White Aven | <i>Geum canadense</i> |
| Native | | Canada Waterleaf | <i>Hydrophyllum canadense</i> |
| Native | | Virginia Waterleaf | <i>Hydrophyllum virginianum</i> |
| Native | | Black Walnut | <i>Juglans nigra</i> |
| Native | | False Solomon's-seal | <i>Maianthemum racemosum</i> |
| Native | | Hop-hornbeam | <i>Ostrya virginiana</i> |
| Native | | Wild Black Cherry | <i>Prunus serotina</i> |
| Native | | Choke Cherry | <i>Prunus virginiana</i> |
| Native | | Wild Black Currant | <i>Ribes americanum</i> |
| Native | | Black Raspberry | <i>Rubus occidentalis</i> |
| Native | | Early Meadow-rue | <i>Thalictrum dioicum</i> |
| Native | | Basswood | <i>Tilia americana</i> |
| Native | | Highbush-cranberry | <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> |



APPENDIX 2: SPARLING WOODLOT ASSESSMENT, 2001

Sparling Woodlot Assessment

St Marys, Ontario

Woodlot Appraisal, October 2001

The Sparling woodlot is a typical woodlot found amongst our fragmented forests in Huron/Perth Counties. This woodlot is somewhat unique due to large diameter species found here. The six acre woodlot is an Upland Hardwood forest composed of mainly Hard maple with other species such as Beech, Basswood, Black cherry, and Black walnut. The walnut found in the woodlot is a species found naturally in the Carolinian area. St. Marys is basically on the northern fringe of the Carolinian Zone. The woodlot is in excellent health and the majority of stock is growing quite well. The overall diameter of the stand is 11 inches at DBH (diameter at breast height). This average diameter is quite large as a lot of the trees are mature, with an average age of 40 to 50 years old.

There are scattered larger trees through out the stand that are not common of the stock found in our area. Heavy logging pressure due to high prices have impacted many of our local woodlots leaving smaller residuals. Some of the larger stock of note are the large Black cherry and Walnut found in this woodlot. The one cherry is 28 inches in diameter, which is quite large for this species. There are scattered walnut of size as well found in the woodlot. One notices the lack of vegetation on the floor. The reason for this is the woodlot is overstocked, in that there is not sufficient sun reaching the forest floor for seedling germination. The woodlot has some interesting wildlife values.

Being on the edge of town one would feel that the woodlot would lack wildlife values. Entering the woodlot there are at least two stick nests, home to various hawks/owls. There are various cavity trees that provide home for squirrels, owls and possibly pileated woodpeckers. The woodlot is also home to an abundance of mast trees which provide food for many species of birds and small mammals.



This is a picture pointing south from the main entrance of the woodlot. Notice the little regeneration showing. Trees are quite straight and free of defects. The woodlot has been managed in the past where defective diseased trees, were removed leaving a good base of healthy trees. There are many wildlife values seen in this woodlot.

APPENDIX 3: LIVING WITH NATURAL AREAS: A GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS



Living With Natural Areas

a guide for homeowners

Is this information for me?

Natural areas are valuable features of our communities' parks and open spaces. Many citizens, however, may not be aware of these local treasures and the need to protect them. What can you do - whether as a property owner or as someone out to enjoy the scenery and get some exercise - to minimize your impact on natural areas? This brochure answers that question. First, it provides guidelines for those of us who live near natural areas, outlining ways to make the spillover impact from our properties more positive. Next, a "code of behaviour" describes what activities are appropriate in a natural area. The last section lists sources where more information can be obtained.



What is a natural area?

Natural areas include wetlands, meadows, woodlots, valley lands and other relatively undisturbed lands that are home to many different plants and wildlife. Natural areas also include the green spaces and stormwater management ponds found in many new developments.

Some natural areas contain rare plants, wildlife or landforms, or have features characteristic of the region before European settlement, or are especially large or diverse in habitat. Many natural areas are considered environmentally significant on a local, regional, provincial or even national scale.

Many municipalities are working to preserve local natural areas. Settlement and development have destroyed much natural vegetation and caused some types of habitat to disappear completely. Often, natural areas contain the only remaining large sections of forest or wetland. They help us to learn about nature, provide clues to the current health of our environment, and add to our quality of life.

Around your home - having a positive impact

The properties that surround natural areas were once part of a wild landscape. Some yards still have remnants of particular habitat types, such as wet areas along the edge of a wetland. As development moves closer to natural areas, trees and other plants that were once in the middle of woodlands or wetlands, shielded by forests, are now exposed.

Because urban development sits on the doorstep of many natural areas, what is done in neighbouring yards is critical to their health. Here are some ideas to help home owners to ensure that their activities can help neighbouring natural areas and enhance their yards at the same time.



What about encroachment into natural areas?

Thanks to people who recognize their property limits! If a lawn is mowed past property boundaries into a natural area, the rich habitat is replaced by a manicured lawn and the original diversity is reduced. The cumulative impact of dozens, even hundreds of landowners cutting into the edges of natural areas threatens their integrity.

Encroaching past private lot lines into municipal parkland or open space is not permitted and may result in legal proceedings. Call your municipality for more information.

APPENDIX 4: PROTECTING NATURAL AREAS IN THE CITY OF WOODSTOCK

Protecting Natural Areas



in the City of Woodstock



April 1998

Natural areas are not as common in our landscape as they once were. It is important that we do all we can to protect those that remain. If you live next to or visit a natural area in the City of Woodstock, there are things you can do to protect it and reduce your impact. Here are some simple guidelines.



Living Next to a Natural Area:



Compost your yard and garden waste. Dumping it in a natural area can smother natural vegetation. Some garden plants and seeds from food waste may begin to grow in the natural area and force native plants out.

Choose plants for your gardens and flowerbeds very carefully. Some plants are invasive and very aggressive. Plants from your garden can spread to the natural area and choke out native species. Try planting native species in your flowerbeds; they are better adapted to the local conditions. Avoid plants such as purple loosestrife, periwinkle and goutweed, and trees such as Norway maple.

Call the City of Woodstock Engineering Department at 539-2382 ext. 814 for more information on proper disposal of your paint, oil and other chemicals.



Dispose of household garbage and hazardous waste properly. Do not dump it in a natural area as it may contain harmful chemicals and will smother natural vegetation. Do not pour chemicals down a storm sewer. Oil, paint and other chemicals are extremely toxic and will eventually reach a waterway or wetland via stormwater drains.

Know where your property line is and do not mow into the natural area. Leave a buffer or space of two metres between the natural area and your lawn, if possible.



Save money and the environment by changing the way you maintain your lawn and garden. Even if your property is not near a waterway, pesticides and fertilizers can seep down into the groundwater. Try the following alternatives:

- 1 Add compost to your lawn to fertilize it.
- 1 Use a mulching lawnmower.
- 1 Plant native groundcovers rather than grass. They are better adapted to this area and require less maintenance.
- 1 Try nontoxic methods of pest control such as manual pulling of weeds.

Approximately 10 times more pesticides are used on city lawns than are applied on an equal area of farmland.

Do not remove fallen or rotting trees and branches from the natural area. They provide many homes for wildlife.

Natural Areas:

Wetlands, meadows, forests, valley lands and other relatively undisturbed lands that are home to many different plant and wildlife species.

APPENDIX 5: RECOMMENDED NATIVE TREES, SHRUBS AND VINES

Recommended Native Trees, Shrubs & Vines for Naturalization Projects in the Upper Thames River Watershed

The following woody plants (90 species) are native to southern Ontario and grow naturally in the Upper Thames River watershed (Middlesex, Oxford and Perth Counties). They are adapted to the local climate and so are harder than non-native species. Some species have very specific sun, moisture and soil requirements and may not do well in all sites; see the following pages for habitat details.

All species may be available at nurseries that sell native plants (see nurseries list on last page).

(R): Listed as rare in Ontario. Do not plant in large numbers
(C): Carolinian species, rarely found north of London

Trees

Acer rubrum
Acer saccharinum
Acer saccharum ssp. *nigrum*
Acer saccharum ssp. *saccharum*
Amelanchier arborea
Asimina triloba
Betula alleghaniensis
Betula papyrifera
Carpinus caroliniana
Carya cordiformis
Cory ovata
Celtis occidentalis
Cornus alternifolia
Cornus florida
Fraxinus americana
Fraxinus nigra
Fraxinus pennsylvanica
Gymnocladus dioica
Juglans cinerea
Juglans nigra
Juniperus virginiana
Larix laricina
Liriodendron tulipifera
Nyssa sylvatica
Ostrya virginiana
Platanus occidentalis
Pinus strobus
Populus balsamifera
Populus deltoides
Populus grandidentata
Populus tremuloides
Prunus americana
Prunus nigra
Prunus pensylvanica
Prunus serotina
Quercus alba
Quercus bicolor
Quercus macrocarpa
Quercus muhlenbergii
Quercus rubra
Quercus velutina
Sassafras albidum
Thuja occidentalis
Tilia americana
Tsuga canadensis
Ulmus americana
Ulmus rubra

Red Maple
Silver Maple
Black Maple
Sugar Maple
Downy Serviceberry
Pawpaw (R, C)
Yellow Birch
White Birch
Blue Beech
Bitternut Hickory
Shagbark Hickory
Hackberry
Alternate-leaved Dogwood
Flowering Dogwood (R)
White Ash
Black Ash
Green Ash or Red Ash
Kentucky Coffee-tree (R, C)
Butternut (R)
Black Walnut
Eastern Red Cedar
Tamarack
Tulip Tree (C)
Black Gum (R, C)
Hop-hornbeam or Ironwood
Sycamore (C)
White Pine
Balsam Poplar
Eastern Cottonwood
Large-tooth Aspen
Trembling Aspen
American Plum (C)
Canada Plum
Pin Cherry
Black Cherry
White Oak
Swamp White Oak
Bur Oak
Chinquapin Oak
Red Oak
Black Oak
Sassafras (C)
Eastern White Cedar
American Basswood
Eastern Hemlock
American Elm or White Elm
Slippery Elm or Red Elm

Shrubs

Amelanchier canadensis
Amelanchier laevis
Aronia melanocarpa
Cephalanthus occidentalis
Cornus alternifolia
Cornus amomum ssp. *oblique*
Cornus foemina ssp. *racemosa*
Cornus rugosa
Cornus stolonifera
Corylus americana
Corylus cornuta
Hamamelis virginiana
Ilex verticillata
Juniperus communis
Lindera benzoin
Physocarpus opulifolius
Prunus virginiana
Rhus aromatica
Rhus glabra
Rhus typhina
Ribes americanum
Ribes cynosbati
Rosa blanda
Rosa carolina
Rosa palustris
Salix amygdaloides
Salix bebbiana
Salix discolor
Salix eriocephala
Salix exigua
Salix lucida
Sambucus canadensis
Sambucus racemosa ssp. *pubens*
Spirea alba
Viburnum lentago
Viburnum trilobum

Canada Serviceberry
Smooth Serviceberry
Black Chokeberry
Buttonbush
Alternate-leaved Dogwood
Silky Dogwood
Grey Dogwood
Round-leaved Dogwood
Red-osier Dogwood
American Hazelnut
Beaked Hazel
Witch-hazel
Winterberry
Common Juniper
Spicebush
Ninebark
Choke Cherry
Fragrant Sumac
Smooth Sumac
Staghorn Sumac
Wild Black Currant
Prickly Gooseberry
Smooth Rose
Carolina Rose or Pasture Rose (C)
Swamp Rose
Peach-leaved Willow
Beaked Willow
Pussy Willow
Willow
Sandbar Willow
Shining Willow
Common Elderberry
Red-berried Elder
Narrow-leaved Meadow-sweet
Nannyberry
Highbush Cranberry

Vines & Woody Groundcovers

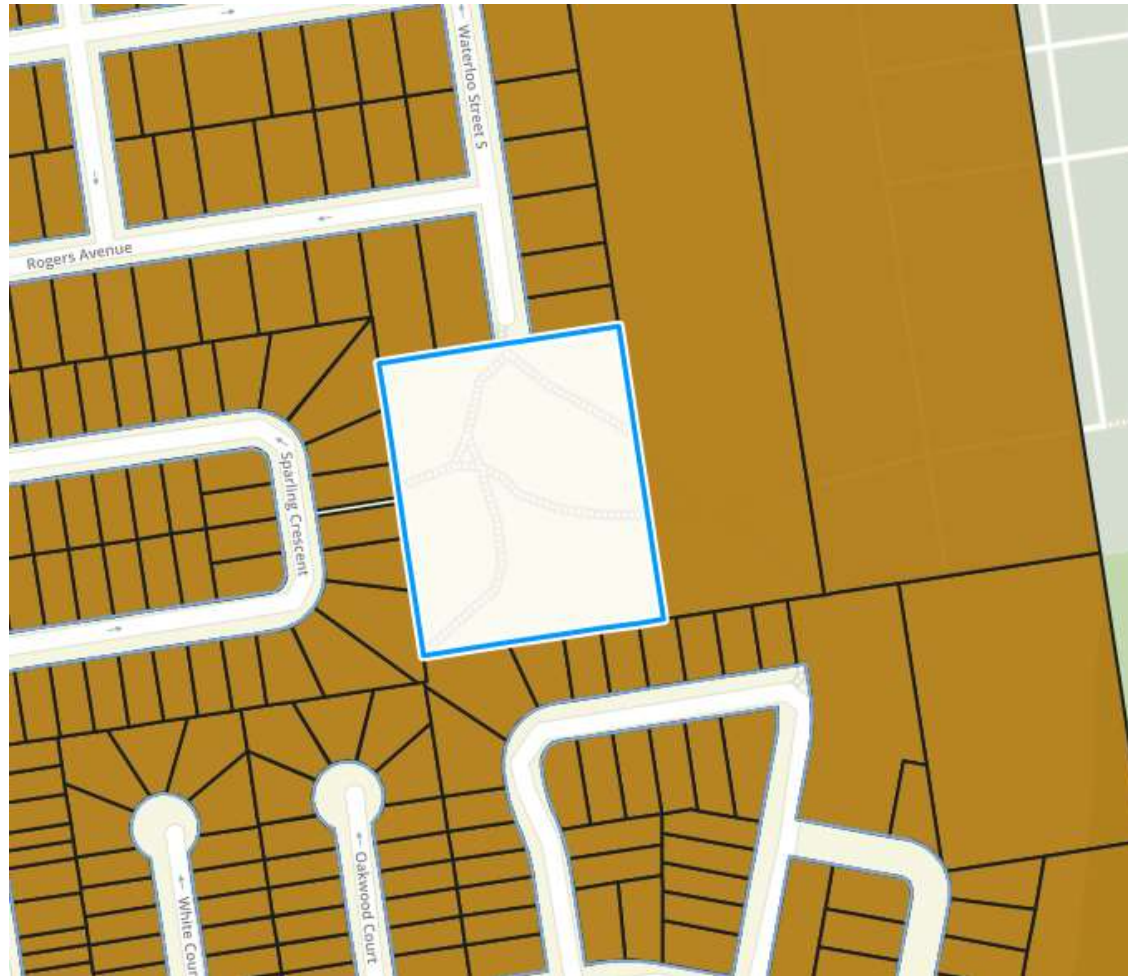
Celastrus scandens
Clematis virginiana
Euonymus obovata
Lonicera canadensis
Mitchella repens
Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Vitis riparia

Climbing Bittersweet
Virgin's-bower
Running Strawberry-bush
Fly Honeysuckle
Partridge-berry
Virginia Creeper
Riverbank Grape



Strategic Priorities Committee
June 20, 2017
PW 34-2017
Sparling Bush Visual Aids

Sparling Bush – Map



Sparling Bush – Dumping – Yard Waste



Sparling Bush – Dumping – Yard Waste



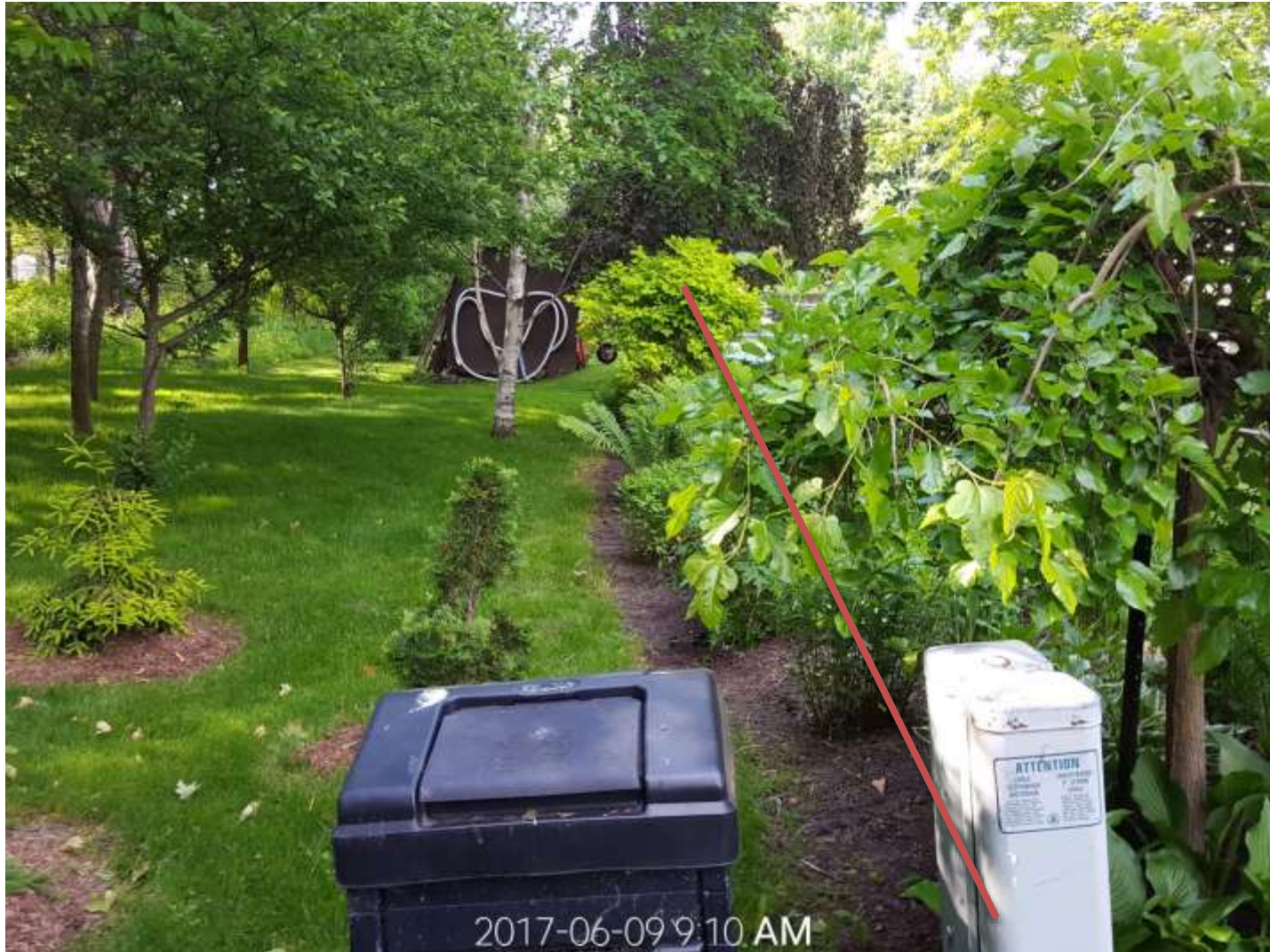
Sparling Bush – Improper Use



Sparling Bush – SW - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – W - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – W - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – NW - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – NE - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – S - Encroachment



Sparling Bush – Interior - Native Species



Sparling Bush – SE & NW – Interior Invasive Species



Sparling Bush – Interior – NE

Invasive Species



Sparling Bush – Cemetery SE Entrance



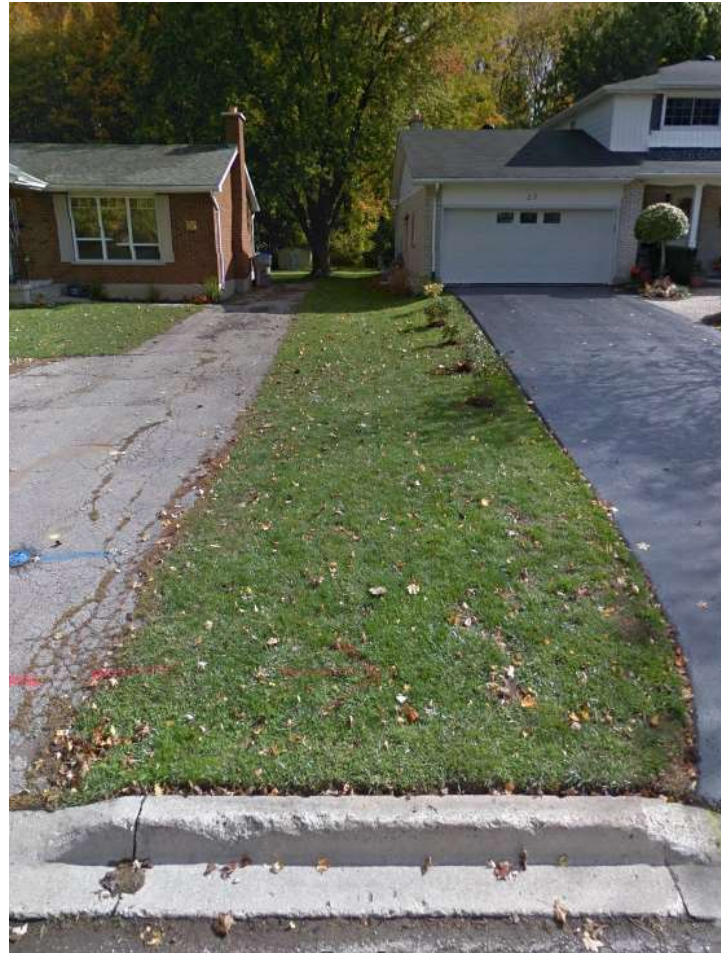
Sparling Bush – Cemetery SE Entrance



Sparling Bush – Waterloo St. Entrance



Sparling Bush – Sparling Crescent Entrance



Sparling Bush – Improvised Trails

Official Path



Improvised Paths



Sparling Bush – Tree Management



Dead Tree Removals adjacent to trail & leaning towards walking path

Sparling Bush – Blocking Improvised Trails



Sparling Bush – Blocking Improvised Trails



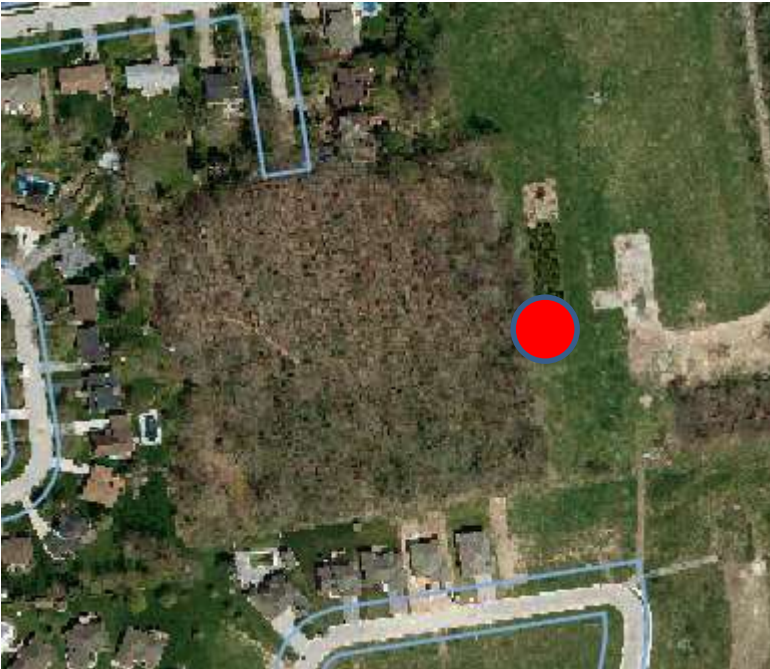
Sparling Bush – Sample Property Markers



Sparling Bush – Trail Extension to East



Sparling Bush – 2017 Bush Augmentation Rotary Partnership



Cemetery lands - Encroachment



Cemetery lands - Encroachment



Cemetery lands - Encroachment



Cemetery lands - Encroachment



Trail Encroachment



FORMAL REPORT

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| To: | Chair Stratthdee and Members of Strategic Priorities Committee |
| Prepared by: | Stephanie Ische, Director of Community Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 20 June 2017 |
| Subject: | DCS 15-2017 Recreation Master Plan Update – Review of Planning Context Report |

PURPOSE

This report provides a current status update regarding the Recreation Master Plan project, and introduces the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan Planning Context Report. Representatives from Monteith Brown will attend the June 20 Strategic Priorities Committee meeting to review the planning context report with Council.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT report DCS 15-2017 Recreation Master Plan Update – Review of Planning Context Report be received for discussion.

BACKGROUND

On August 16, 2016 staff brought forward to the Special Priorities Committee meeting a report outlining the existing Community Services programming currently offered. This was an opportunity to review all of the Community Services Department programming with Council as Council was in the beginning stages of considering a project to undertake a recreation master plan. Through this report staff presented Council with information regarding the programs provided by each department, the primary user group and the agreements that are currently in place. The Committee asked for follow-up information regarding the Town's ability to undertake a recreation master planning project immediately.

At the August 30, 2016 Council received a report to address the need to update the Town of St. Marys Recreation Master Plan. Council approved the recreation master plan project to proceed with a budget of \$65,000 and a Request for Proposal was prepared.

On October 21, 2016 a Request for Proposal went out asking for submissions to update the Town of St. Marys Recreation and Leisure Master Plan and Monteith Brown was the successful candidate.

Work on the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan began in January 2017.

REPORT

A steering committee of key stakeholders was developed and meetings with the consultants began January 6, 2017. The initial meeting included background information, Master Plan goals and expectations and communications protocols. To date Monteith Brown has held a public meeting, survey for community, held focus groups and key informant interviews. Information has been collected including budgets, policies, current programs/services, fee structure, organization chart and all recreation statistics, recreation inventory, building condition studies, current partnership agreements in place to name a few.

The Planning Context Report summarizes the Town's current inventory of recreation and leisure services opportunities, public consultation themes and on line survey results. The draft planning context report was presented to the steering committee in April. Next steps will be to develop recommendations based on information and research collected. These recommendations will help shape the direction for Recreation and Leisure Services for the next 10 years.

SUMMARY

Recreation is an experience for residents and allows them to participate in many ways including, physically, socially, intellectually and creatively. A recreation master plan is a guiding document that helps shape the direction for the municipality. Next steps will include completion of the Master Plan that will be presented to Council. Once this document is complete it will guide our municipal decision-making on recreation and leisure services over the next 10 years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There has been no change to the budget.

OTHERS CONSULTED

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants.

Strategic Plan: this initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes and tactics in the Plan:

Pillar #4 Culture and Recreation: Readjusting existing recreational services to a more scale-appropriate level will result in some measure of cost-savings for the Town by enabling it to reallocate funding to other priorities. In some cases, volunteers and the private sector can take on leadership or partnership roles for the delivery of some recreational services that are underutilized.

Strategic Priority for a "Recreation Services Master Plan"

- Outcome: Assessing the real needs of residents in terms of providing the right fit for recreational services provided by the Town will require contracting out for a consultant who specializes in this area given the exhaustive analysis to be performed in providing key recommendations.
- Tactic(s): Secure a consultant to complete a recreation master plan, implement the key recommendations as required, develop an inclusion policy, and review the long term effectiveness of the recreation master plan at key points in time to ensure currency and fit with the Town's priorities.

Strategic Priority for "Repurposing the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC)"

Outcome: As the PRC is adequate to a population of 30,000, it far exceeds the needs of the current population and thus results in additional costs to the Town. A more integrated approach may be preferable.

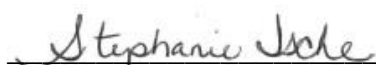
- Tactics: Align future use of PRC with the findings of the recreation services master plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Planning Context Report

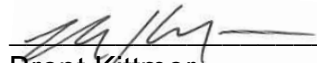
REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the Department

_____

Stephanie Ische
Director of Community Services

Recommended by the CAO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Kittmer", is written over a horizontal line.

Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk



Planning Context Report - **DRAFT**

Recreation and Leisure Master Plan

April 2017



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- Appendix B – Online Community Survey Summary
- Appendix C – Stakeholder Group Survey Summary

1.0 Introduction

This section highlights the importance of master planning in relation to recreation and leisure services in the Town of St. Marys. The purpose of the Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan (“Master Plan”) is described in this report as is the project methodology. An overview of the key background documents that were reviewed is presented to assist with establishing a thorough understanding of St. Marys’ local context and will be used to support the preparation of the Master Plan.

1.1 Importance of Master Planning

A Master Plan is a guiding document that recommends what the Town’s high level needs and priorities are, in this case as they pertain to recreation and leisure services in St. Marys. Recreation and leisure services play a key role in the advancement of community well-being by facilitating meaningful opportunities for physical activity and social cohesion. Master planning guides Council, staff, stakeholders, and the public with insights into recreation and leisure needs that are rationalized by existing supporting documents/studies, best practices, population characteristics and projections, consultation, quantifiable data, and a host of other inputs.

The preparation of a Master Plan identifies the appropriate recreation and leisure services required for current and future generations, with consideration given to population growth and where it is expected to occur. Recognizing that recreation and leisure investments in St. Marys must work within the financial resources that are available, the Master Plan helps to effectively prioritize recommendations so that the most pressing needs can be addressed in a timely manner. Building upon this, a Master Plan can assist Town staff with securing external funding given that long term planning can support grant applications. As a result, the importance of preparing a Master Plan for the Town of St. Marys that is community responsive and fiscally responsible cannot be overstated.

1.2 Project Purpose

The Master Plan will guide municipal decision-making on matters related to the provision of recreation and leisure services over the next ten years. There are several drivers behind the impetus for this Master Plan, which are highlighted below:

- **Population growth** is often the primary driver of many recreation and leisure studies. Over the next ten years, St. Marys is expected to grow modestly by about 180 to 460 persons. Understanding the socio-demographic characteristics of the existing population as well as who and where new residents will be accommodated are vital steps in order to identify strategies to serve both established and growing areas of Town.
- In smaller municipalities such as St. Marys, **the efficient use of municipal resources** is crucial. In accordance with the Town’s Strategic Master Plan, this Master Plan will identify strategies to ensure that the provision of recreation and leisure services are scale-appropriate for current and future residents, which includes, but is not limited to, cost-saving measures and maximizing the use of existing community facilities and resources (e.g., volunteers and non-municipal sector partnerships).

1.3 Project Methodology

The preparation of the Master Plan is based on several inputs and will be prepared through a three step process (Figure 1), beginning with the preparation of this Phase One Planning Context Report that summarizes:

- The socio-demographic profile of St. Marys;
- National, provincial, and county-wide trends in the recreation and leisure services sector;
- The results from the public consultation sessions; and
- The state of existing parks and recreation/leisure facilities and programs offered by the Town.

Please note that this Planning Context Report does not contain any recommendations – this will be the subject of the second phase of work.

The Draft Master Plan will be formed in Phase Two, which builds off of the information gleaned from Phase One and will assess the current and future needs associated with parkland, trails, recreation and leisure facilities, and service delivery models. Phase Three focuses on testing recommendations with the public, stakeholders, and Town staff, prior to seeking Council adoption of the Master Plan as a guiding document.

Figure 1: Project Methodology



1.4 Project Background Review

Several background documents have been reviewed to establish the planning context associated with the Master Plan. These documents are broad in scope, affecting St. Marys' growth, land use patterns, facilities, programs, and other municipal elements that will be taken into account during the preparation of the Master Plan.

For the Master Plan to be effective, it must align with the Town's Strategic Master Plan, among other guiding documents, and be synergistic with land use policies, such as the Official Plan, and related studies that have been completed. Information contained within these documents are used to provide baseline context for the Master Plan, while integrating and/or reinforcing appropriate findings that support the provision of recreation and leisure services. Background documents that have been reviewed as a part of the planning process include (but are not limited to) the following:

Strategic Policy Documents

- Town of St. Marys Strategic Master Plan
- Town of St. Marys Official Plan
- Town of St. Marys Public Library Strategic Plan

Other Supporting Documents

- Official Plan Discussion Papers
- 2017 Municipal Budget
- Municipal Cultural Plan
- St. Marys Public Library Conditions Survey
- Organizational Chart
- Facility Rental Fees
- Various staff reports, policies, financials, etc.

Recreation and Leisure Services Documents

- Programs & Services Guide
- User Agreements

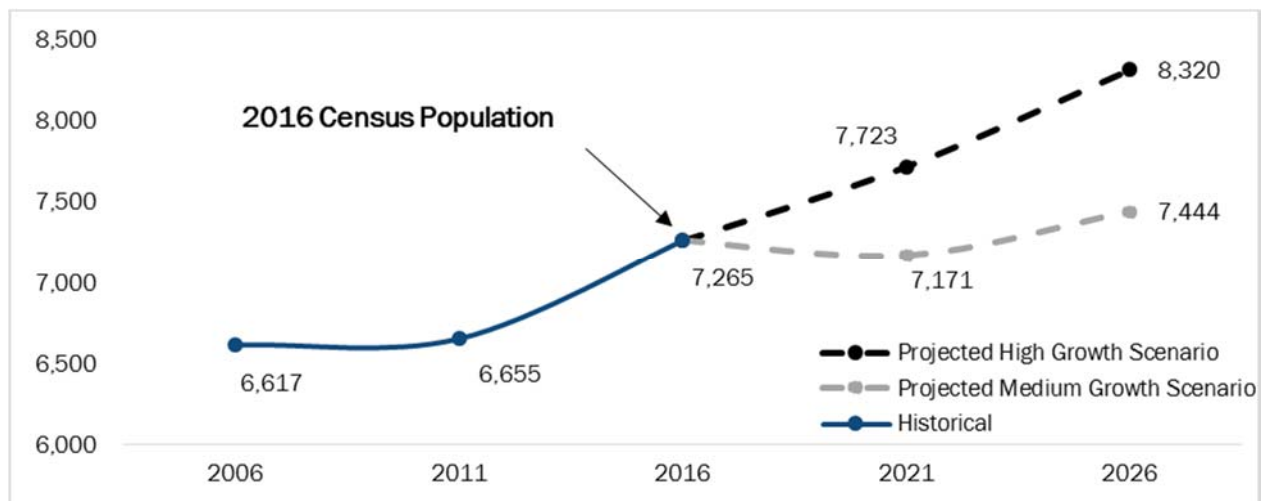
2.0 Key Research Inputs

This section provides a broad overview of trends related to the recreation and leisure services sector. Trends observed at the national level are identified along with their implications in the local context, which is supported by the Town's socio-demographic profile (based on data drawn from Statistics Canada and the Town of St. Marys) and secondary research methods.

2.1 Implications of Population Growth

St. Marys has experienced modest population growth over the past ten years. Statistics Canada reported a 2016 population of 7,265 persons, representing a 10% growth since 2006 (or 1% annually). Population projections for St. Marys are contained in the Town's 2013 Background Discussion Paper #1, which was prepared as a part of the Town's Official Plan Review. The Background Discussion Paper recommended that a 'medium-low' growth scenario be utilized for future planning considerations; however, the 2016 Census revealed that growth is more in line with the high growth scenario (Figure 2). Through discussions with Town staff, it was determined that the Master Plan should assume that the Town's population will reach between 7,444 to 8,320 persons by the end of the planning period, representing an increase of 3% to 15%.

Figure 2: Town of St. Marys Historical and Projected Population, 2006 - 2026



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 – 2016 Census. Town of St. Marys Background Discussion Paper #1: Population, 2013.

Discussion Paper #4 of the Official Plan Review provides insights to where population growth is expected to occur. There are currently a number of undeveloped pockets of residential lands in the north end of Town, as well as in the east and west end of St. Marys where population growth can be anticipated. Population growth in these areas drives the need to ensure that there are an appropriate supply and distribution of recreation and leisure services. Notwithstanding where growth is expected, it is essential that a geographically-balanced recreation and leisure system is provided throughout the Town in order to maximize opportunities available to new and existing residents.

2.2 Recreation Preferences among Age Groups

Understanding St. Marys' age profile provides insights into the types of recreation and leisure services that are in demand and should be provided. Research reveals that communities with a larger market of children and youth have higher demands for minor sports and active activities such as soccer, hockey, figure skating, and skateboarding. On the other end of the spectrum, municipalities with a large demographic of older adults and seniors have greater interests in health and wellness, arts and culture, and activities that encourage social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

The 2016 Census reported an average age of 44.1 years for St. Marys, which is older compared to the Province (41.0 years) and Perth County (41.6 years). This average age is not directly comparable to the 2011 Census, however, there is evidence of an aging population that is occurring throughout the Province, which is driven by the aging baby boomer population as they move through the age cohorts.

St. Marys is an attractive community for older adults and seniors to retire as it offers a relaxed, small town atmosphere that is a short driving distance to larger centres including London and Stratford. Discussions with staff and Council suggest that the aging population may also be the result of youth out-migration. This is a common trend observed in rural communities and small municipalities where youth and young adults are leaving for school or to seek employment and not returning. Staff and Council also suggest that affordability of housing is also a contributing factor to declining youth and young families who may not be able to afford to live in St. Marys. The County is currently preparing a Youth Strategy to explore solutions to encourage youth and young adults to remain in Perth County.

A closer look at St. Marys' age profile reveals additional evidence of an aging community. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the majority of growth occurred among residents over the age of 50. As illustrated in Table 1, the number of older adults between the ages of 50 and 69 increased by 16%, while the number of seniors over the age of 70+ grew by 21%. Interestingly, younger age cohorts under the age of 34 also experienced varying levels of growth.

Age cohort projections are not currently available; however, broader aging trends suggest that St. Marys' population will continue to age. While this may emphasize the need for quality facilities, programs, and services for older adults and seniors, a balanced portfolio of recreation and leisure services should continue to appeal to all age groups to ensure that there is something for everyone.



Friendship Centre – Multi-Purpose Room

Table 1: Population by Age Cohort, 2006 – 2011

| | 2011 | 2016 | Growth |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| Children (0 – 9 Yrs) | 735 | 770 | 5% |
| Youth (10 – 19 Yrs) | 805 | 820 | 2% |
| Adults (20 – 34 Yrs) | 1,075 | 1,175 | 9% |
| Mature Adults (35 – 54 Yrs) | 1,295 | 1,245 | -4% |
| Older Adults (55 – 69 Yrs) | 1,765 | 2,055 | 16% |
| Seniors 70+ Yrs | 985 | 1,195 | 21% |
| Total | 6,660 | 7,260 | 9% |

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 – 2011

2.3 Lack of Free Time and Physical Inactivity

The 2016 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for youth and children graded overall physical levels at D- for the fourth year in a row, suggesting that there has been limited progress in improving physical activity at the national level. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found that physical activity declines with age, which is driven by factors such as increasingly busy lifestyles of Canadians that are centered on vehicular transportation and an increasing variety of sedentary choices for leisure.

Communities are often faced with the challenge of overcoming the “lack of free time” barrier from a service delivery perspective as it is a societal issue that municipalities have little ability to directly influence. There are, however, solutions that can be implemented to mitigate impacts of the ‘time crunch’ and competition from sedentary activities. Some communities have extended hours of operation at certain facilities to allow residents to participate at times that are most suited to their needs while others are exploring more drop-in activities.

Providing more unstructured programs can facilitate opportunities to participate as casual drop-in activities are often highly desirable, driving the need for flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that facilitate unstructured pursuits. People with busy schedules are increasingly seeking spontaneous, non-programmed forms of activities that fit into their schedules, rather than committing to regularly-scheduled programs. The Town has explored strategies to increase levels of physical activity without requiring advanced registration or long term commitments to allow users to participate at their convenience through drop-in recreation programs (e.g., fitness classes) as well as public swim and skate programs. The Town also offers weekly and monthly drop-in programs for seniors at the Friendship Centre.

2.4 Overcoming Financial Barriers to Participation

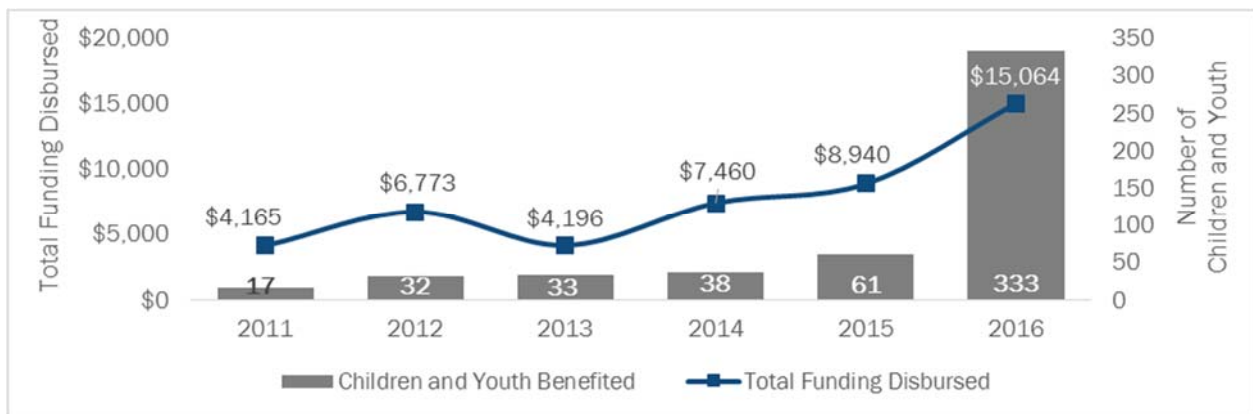
The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found that participation in physical activity is proportional to a household’s income. It was revealed that children between the ages of 5 to 19 who live in higher income households (\$80,000 per year or more) are more likely to participate in organized physical activities and sports compared to their counterparts who live in lower income households (\$30,000 per year or less).¹

¹ Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.cflri.ca>.

According to Statistics Canada’s 2011 National Household Survey (N.H.S.), the median after-tax income in St. Marys was \$73,007, which is higher compared to Perth County (\$71,128) and the Province (\$69,792). This finding suggests that based on income alone, St. Marys’ residents may be more active in physical activities compared to County and Provincial levels. The N.H.S. reported that 9% of St. Marys’ residents are living in low income households, which is lower compared to the County (11%) and the Province (14%). Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that a degree of affordable recreation and leisure services are made available.

To minimize financial barriers to participate in recreation and leisure activities, the Town offers monetary assistance for children and youth between the ages of four to 18 through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program. For 2016, the Jumpstart program disbursed over \$15,000 to 333 children and youth, which is an increase from 2011 where \$4,200 was distributed to 17 children and youth (Figure 3). The Town believes that the increase in the number of applicants and the amount of funding distributed in 2016 was due to increased efforts to promote the financial assistance program. Older adults and seniors who are members of the Friendship Centre may also be eligible for programming discounts. While there is currently no formal financial assistance program to benefit residents between these age groups (Town staff are currently working towards formalizing this process), the Town accommodates financial assistance requests on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the Town also provides one free room rental per month at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to local community groups.

Figure 3: Annual Canadian Tire Jumpstart Funding Disbursed, 2011 - 2016



Source: Canadian Tire Jumpstart

2.5 Engaging Persons with Disabilities

The Canadian Survey on Disability reported that approximately 3.8 million Canadians were living with a disability in 2012, representing 13.7% of Canadians and 15.4% of Ontarians.² While the number of persons with disabilities in St. Marys is not quantified, applying the provincial rate to the Town’s population leads to an assumption that more than 1,000 local residents could have some form of disability. Given these statistics and the aging of the population, it is crucial that recreation and leisure services in St. Marys consider inclusivity, universal design, and barrier-free elements wherever possible to minimize participation barriers.



² Statistics Canada. Canadian survey on disability 2012. Catalogue no. 89-654-X, Ottawa. Retrieved from <http://mieux-etre.edsc.gc.ca>.

Municipalities across the Province have embraced the principles of inclusivity through facility design and service delivery. This practice is guided by the *Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (A.O.D.A.), 2005, which requires municipalities to remove all barriers within municipal facilities by 2025. In doing so, municipalities are required to form Accessibility Advisory Committees (A.A.C.) and adopt accessibility plans, which identify, develop, and prioritize solutions to remove barriers from municipal facilities. The Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (A.A.C.) advises Council on the preparation and implementation of St. Marys' Accessibility Plan, and other matters related to accessibility. The Town's 2012 – 2017 Accessibility Plan identifies a number of accessibility improvements to areas of customer service, communications, employment, transportation, and the built environment. Limited actions were articulated with respect to accessibility improvements within recreation and leisure facilities, although it directed the A.A.C. to identify and develop an implementation plan to integrate accessibility features within Town facilities.

2.6 Aging Infrastructure

The 2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card rated Canada's overall sports and recreation facilities as "Fair", which was the lowest ranking out of all municipal assets that were evaluated. This ranking suggests that municipal facilities require infrastructure attention, show signs of deterioration, or have deteriorating facility components. On average, the Report Card found that community/recreation centres, pools, skate parks, and sports fields, were generally in good condition, while curling rinks, arenas, seniors' centres, and tennis courts, were fair, and youth centres were considered in poor condition. The deteriorating condition of municipal sports and recreation facilities can be attributed to a number of factors such as competing municipal priorities resulting in deferred maintenance and replacement, and old age.³

Many recreation facilities throughout the County were originally built between 1956 and 1980, with a number of them constructed to celebrate Canada's Centennial year in 1967. Since this period, infrastructure province-wide has been underfunded. Most recently, however, the federal government reignited its commitment to the parks and recreation sector with over \$1.8 billion in funding directed to improving and managing parks and recreation assets, in addition to accessibility and trail improvements.⁴

The Town has benefited from past provincial and federal economic stimulus programs. In 2009, the Town received \$142,068 in provincial and federal funding from the Recreation Infrastructure Program to replace the deck at the swimming quarry and to undertake upgrades to the outdoor pool at Cadzow Park.⁵ Most recently, Council endorsed a Cadzow revitalization project to update the park to include a new splash pad, pavilion, band shell, and playground. This project is expected to begin in 2017 and is being developed in partnership with the Rotary Club of St Marys and Lions Club, as well as funding received through the Canada 150 grant.

³ Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. 2016.

⁴ Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. CPRA applauds federal government commitment to parks and recreation opportunities for Canadians. Retrieved from <http://www.cpra.ca>.

⁵ Recreation Infrastructure Ontario. Funded Projects. Retrieved from <http://www.ic.gc.ca>.

2.7 Adopting Green Design

Environmental concerns are often top of mind among many Canadians as there is an increasing need to make efficient use of natural resources. Many municipalities demonstrate environmental awareness in the design and redevelopment of facilities that integrate state-of-the-art technologies to enhance environmental efficiency. The design of environmentally friendly facilities is promoted and encouraged by the Canadian Green Building Council, which is responsible for the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system in Canada. To obtain LEED certification, a facility must meet rating standards in sustainable development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials, and indoor environmental quality. Green Globes and BOMA Best are other national sustainability certification programs designed to assess environmental performance and management of existing and newly constructed buildings.

While the Pyramid Recreation Centre is not a LEED certified facility, the Town received \$626,012 from the Gas Tax Fund to undertake various energy efficiency upgrades including a computer controlled refrigeration system, heat recovery equipment in the pool and arena, a new building automation system that controls energy usage and an on-demand hot water heating system for the aquatics centre. The Pyramid Recreation Centre also features high efficiency motion sensor lighting and natural light throughout the building to reduce reliance on artificial lighting.⁶



2.8 The Merits of Outdoor Play

Children are given fewer opportunities to engage in outdoor and ‘risky’ play compared previous generations. Children spend less time outdoors due to safety concerns and more time spent indoors engaged in sedentary behaviours and most likely in front of screens. With respect to increasing physical activity levels among children, ParticipACTION emphasizes that ***“Access to active play in nature and outdoors – with its risks – is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings – at home, at school, in child care, in the community and in nature.”***

Richard Louv authored two books specific to outdoor play; ‘Last Child in the Woods’ and ‘The Nature Principle – Human Restoration and the End of Nature Deficit Disorder’. In his books Louv (who completed extensive research across North America) contends that ‘Nature Deficit Disorder’ is becoming increasingly evident in people who do not get outdoors often enough. It is not positioned as a medical diagnosis but a health issue with possible symptoms of anxiety, depression, aggression, sadness and negative emotions. His research demonstrates that parents are allowing children to spend more time indoors in front of screens and are ignoring the merits of free play in an outdoor setting. Outdoor play is critical to children’s development; they need outdoor and unstructured play to master new skills, be active, learn new things and become in awe of their natural environment.

In recent years, a number of strategies have been formulated to increase opportunities for outdoor play. In 2016, the Lawson Foundation launched an Outdoor Play Strategy that provided \$2.7M in funding to support risky outdoor play initiatives across Canada. Their research presents that children do better academically who are exposed to outdoor risky play and further that outdoor play is

⁶ Marketwired. Government of Canada Contributes to Energy Efficiency Upgrades to St. Marys Community Centre Through the Gas Tax Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.marketwired.com/>.

fundamental to children’s development. The Canadian Public Health Association has also received funding to develop a Policy Tool Kit for service providers to outline healthy risks in playground settings.



Kin Park

3.0 Public Consultation Inputs

Public consultation is integral to the master planning process. It ensures that the public, stakeholders, municipal officials and staff have the opportunity to be engaged to provide input and insights relating to the provision of recreation and leisure opportunities. At the project's initiation, a Public Consultation Strategy was crafted, which articulated the consultation tasks to be undertaken at key stages during the planning process. Each consultation tool was designed to maximize community involvement and was tailored to respond to a variety of audiences in St. Marys. The following consultation tools were utilized:

- Master Plan Launch Event
- Online Community Survey
- Stakeholder Group Survey
- Towns Staff Workshop
- Interviews with Key Informants and Councillors



Later in the process, a Public Meeting/Open House will be scheduled to present the Draft Master Plan to the public and stakeholders to test recommendations and invite community feedback. Following any needed refinements, a presentation will be held with Council to seek adoption of the Master Plan.

The following sections summarize key themes emerging from each public consultation session.

NOTE: The information and suggestions presented in this section do not represent recommendations, nor has the public input been altered even in instances where the comments incorrectly reflect the Town's actual policies, practices, or level of provision.



Riverwalk Trail

3.1 Summary of Public Consultation Themes

A broad range of comments were expressed throughout the community engagement sessions held in the first phase of this project. considered in this Master Plan.

Table 2 summarizes the most common themes that were heard based on the opinions, preferences, and priorities of residents, stakeholder groups, Town staff, and Council. These themes, which are listed in no particular order of importance or priority, will be used to inform the second phase of the project together with other inputs considered in this Master Plan.

Table 2: Summary of Community Engagement Themes

| Key Themes (in no particular order) | Master Plan Launch Event | Online Community Survey | Stakeholder Group Survey | Towns Staff Workshop | Key Informant Interviews |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| The Pyramid Recreation Centre and Friendship Centre are fantastic facilities that residents are proud to have access to. | • | • | • | • | • |
| More could be done to improve the maintenance of the Town's parks and recreation facilities. | • | • | • | | |
| The swimming quarry is a unique recreational amenity for residents and visitors. | • | • | • | • | • |
| Trails are a highly valued asset in St. Marys and there is a desire to enhance the Town's loop network to connect existing and new growth areas. | • | • | • | • | • |
| There is a desire for new and more recreation programs (e.g., non-sport programs for youth, fitness classes, etc.). | • | • | | | |
| There is a desire for new recreation facilities such as a walking track, pickleball courts, and a gymnasium. | • | • | • | | • |
| Communication between residents, stakeholders, and Town staff is an area in need of improvement. | • | • | • | • | • |

3.2 Master Plan Launch Event

A Launch Event was held on February 23, 2017 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to formally introduce the Master Plan and to engage residents to contribute opinions, ideas and priorities. The Event began with a presentation describing the purpose and process of developing the Master Plan, the benefits of recreation and leisure, key trends, and an overview of ways to become involved in the planning process. Following the presentation, participants were grouped into tables and asked to respond to questions regarding a broad range of topics related to recreation and leisure. The event was attended by 25 members of the public and representatives of local organizations. Members of Council, and Town staff were also in attendance to observe. Residents who were not able to attend the event were encouraged to submit written comments, which are also captured in this section. Common themes

and responses received during this event are summarized below, while a transcript of the input received from this event is found in **Appendix A**.

Community Values in Recreation and Leisure Services

It was clear that participants are proud to have access to the recreation and leisure opportunities available in St. Marys. It was expressed that there are a number of facilities, programs, and services available in Town that are not available in comparable municipalities. Participants were particularly proud of the swimming pool and quarry, skateboard park, and the older adult opportunities offered at the Friendship Centre. The Town's trail system and green spaces was also noted as a valued asset.

Improving Outdoor Parks and Recreation Facilities

With respect to improving outdoor parks in St. Marys, the majority of comments pertained to improving or enhancing the Town's trail system. Suggested improvements included establishing trail linkages to connect residents to the north end of Town, lighting pathways, constructing washrooms, installing fitness equipment along walking routes, and providing or enhancing wayfinding signage.

Participants offered a number of suggestions to improve outdoor recreation facilities. Many comments were related to improving the Town's tennis courts. Ideas included accommodating other sports such as pickleball, lighting the courts to extend the playing time, and enlarging the nearby parking lot. Participants also expressed the desire to improve safety and visibility of the Town's skateboard park, including the suggestion to add lighting. Other suggested improvements included revitalizing Cadzow Park, splash pad improvements, and shade areas at sports fields.

Improving Indoor Recreation Facilities

Participants expressed the desire for new or expanded indoor recreation facility spaces including an indoor walking track, gymnasium, and indoor pickleball courts. Suggestions were expressed to improve supporting amenities to enhance access and comfort at Town facilities, such as improving heating and cooling at the Town auditorium, warmer change rooms, an enhanced viewing area for the pool and blue rink, and continuing to ensure that the Town's municipal spaces are affordable for all users.

Improving Recreation and Leisure Programs and Services

Suggestions to improve recreation and leisure programs and services primarily focused around the need to improve the promotion and advertising to ensure that residents are aware of the leisure activities that are available. Participants also felt that there are opportunities to improve the selection of non-sport programs for all age groups. Suggested programs included campfire nights, parent and tot skating, geo-caching, more public swim and skates, scuba diving, and water craft rentals at the swimming quarry.

Priorities for Recreation and Leisure Services

Participants identified a number of priorities to be considered over the life of the Master Plan. The most common priority was the need to continue to maintain the Town's existing assets as they relate to parks and outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, programs, and services. Recognizing the population of older adults and seniors in St. Marys, participants also articulated the desire to continue

focusing on the provision of age-friendly facilities, services, and programs. It was also indicated that recreation and leisure opportunities must be affordable to minimize financial barriers to participating in activities.

Participants felt that the provision of new recreation facilities should be considered including a multi-purpose gymnasium, indoor walking track, pickleball courts, trail development, and the provision of supporting amenities (e.g., washrooms and lighting). The desire to revitalize Cadzow Park was also identified, as well as suggestions to improve the communication of recreation and leisure opportunities to ensure that residents are aware of the activities and events that are available.

3.3 Online Community Survey

The Master Plan's online community survey was active from February 10, 2016 to March 3, 2017, collecting resident feedback on a variety of topics related to recreation and leisure services. A broad range of input was received to understand local participation and usage patterns, opinions, and priorities in leisure pursuits. The survey was promoted through several avenues, including the project webpage, e-mails, social media, posters, newspaper ads, and word of mouth.

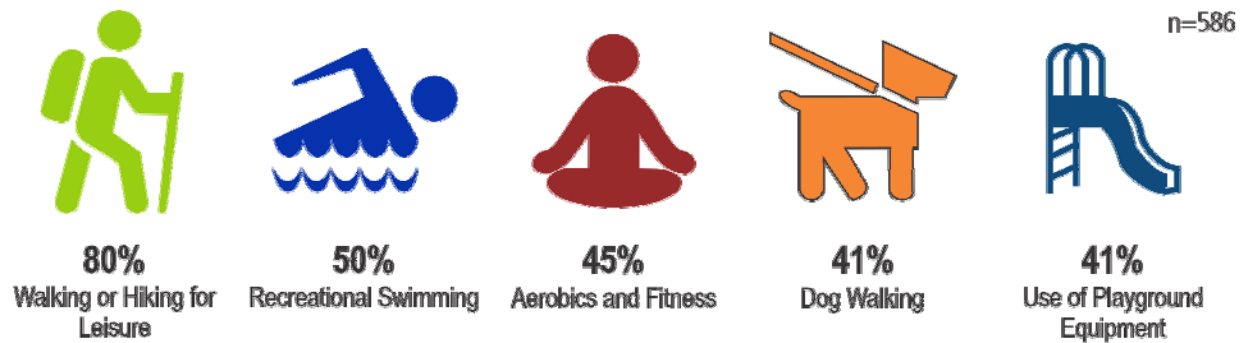
A total of 586 surveys were completed and analyzed. This section summarizes the key findings of the survey and excludes 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses', with a greater level of detail found in **Appendix B**. It is important to note that this was a self-administered, non-random survey and thus the results cannot be considered statistically significant or representative of the opinions of all residents. As with other consultation tools, the survey findings should not be considered in isolation, but instead factored within the context of other community input and assessment methodologies.

Participation in Recreation and Leisure Activities

The top five most popular recreation and leisure activities over the past 12 months are presented in Figure 4 and consists of walking and hiking for leisure (80%), recreational swimming (50%), aerobics and fitness (45%), dog walking (41%), and using playground equipment (41%). A common element among these popular activities is that they can be self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with participation trends observed across the Province. The most popular organized sport was baseball/softball (24%), which placed 11th out of 21 activities.

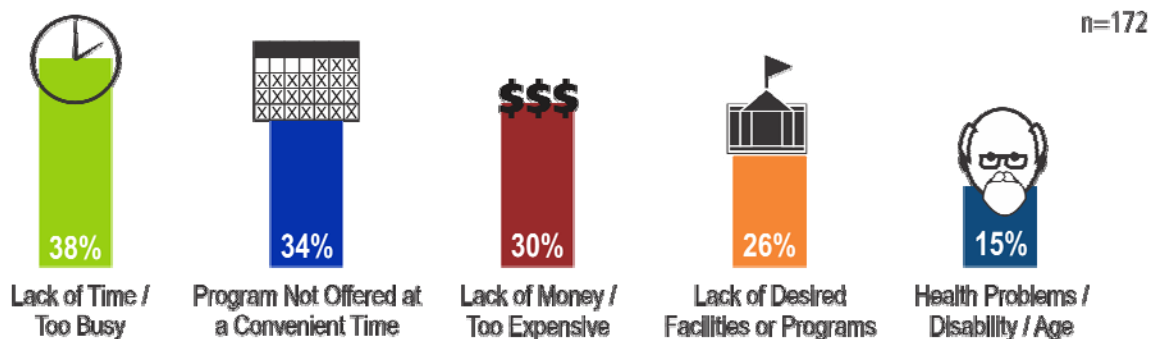
The majority of these activities took place within a park or recreation facility in St. Marys (83%), while other locations included at home (42%), at a park or facility in another municipality (25%), or at school (8%).

Figure 4: Top Five Most Popular Recreation and Leisure Activities, Past 12 Months



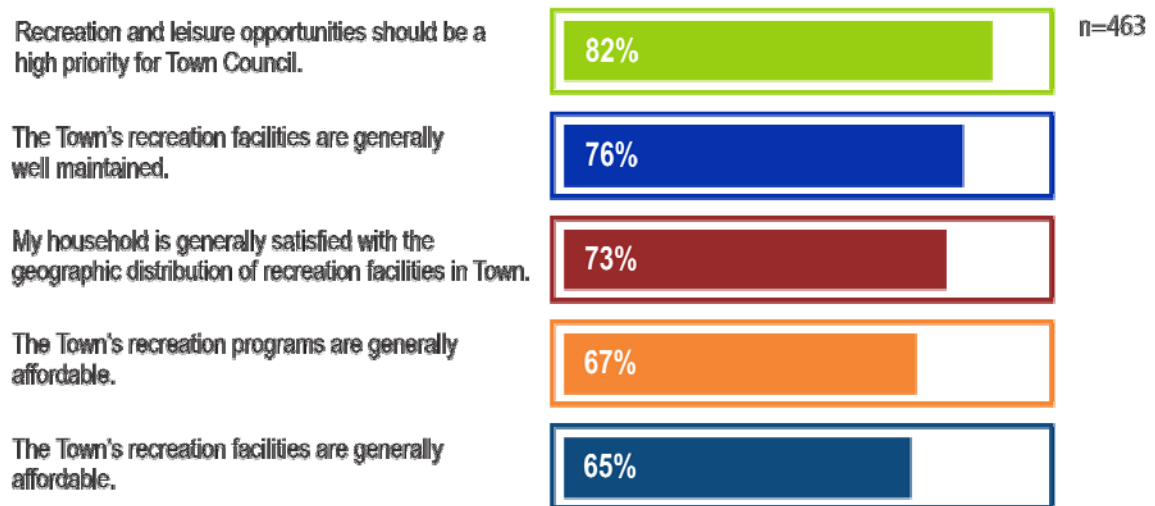
The survey revealed that one third (33%) of respondents were unable to participate in recreation and leisure activities as often as they would like. As illustrated in Figure 5, the most common barrier reported by respondents was the lack of time or being too busy (38%). This is a common challenge found in many communities. Other barriers included programs not being offered at a convenient time (34%), lack of money (30%), lack of desired facilities or programs (26%), or health problems, disability, or age (15%). Broadly speaking, other municipalities have explored solutions to minimize barriers to participation by employing strategies such as extending hours of operation, holding multiple program sessions throughout the day and week, and promoting financial assistance programs.

Figure 5: Top Five Barriers to Participation in Recreation and Leisure Activities



Respondents rated their level of agreement with a number of statements related to recreation and leisure opportunities in St. Marys, the results of which is illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Agreement with Various Statements



Importance and Satisfaction with Recreation and Leisure Opportunities

Figure 7 illustrates respondents' level of importance and satisfaction with various recreation and leisure facility types. Respondents felt that active transportation facilities (e.g., trails, sidewalks, etc.) were the most important facility type (95%), followed by passive parks (93%), outdoor recreation facilities (87%), and indoor recreation facilities (82%). For each facility type, respondents reported a lower level of satisfaction, suggesting that expectations are not currently being met in relation to the importance placed on each facility.

Figure 7: Importance and Satisfaction with Recreation and Leisure Facilities

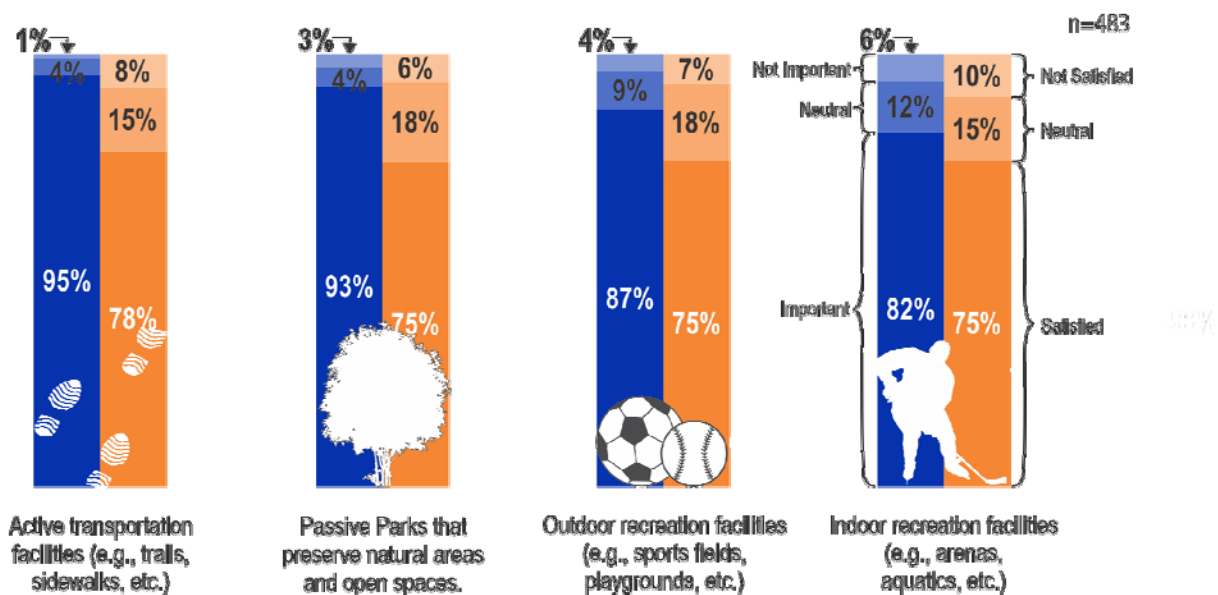
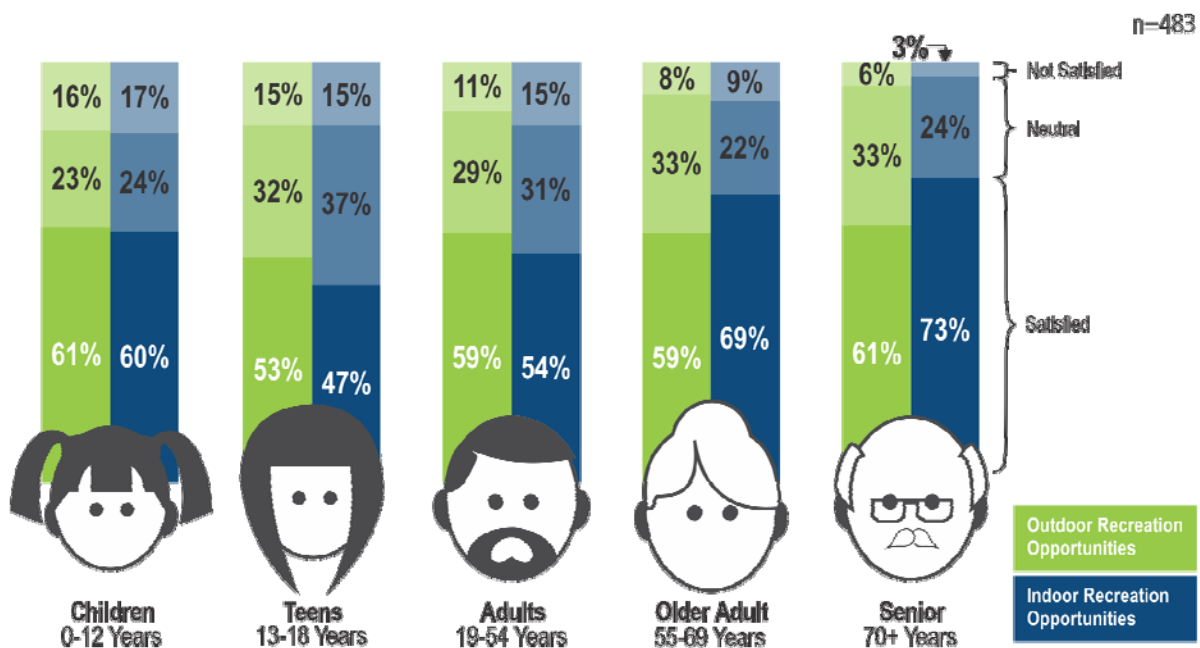


Figure 8 summarizes respondents' satisfaction levels with respect to outdoor and indoor recreation and leisure opportunities, by age group. With respect to outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities,

respondents' satisfaction levels were generally balanced across each age group. Respondents were most satisfied with outdoor recreation opportunities for children (age 0-12) and seniors (age 70+) (61%), this is followed closely by satisfaction levels for adults (age 19-54) and older adults (age 55-69) (59%). Outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities for teens (age 13-18) had the lowest levels of satisfaction (53%).

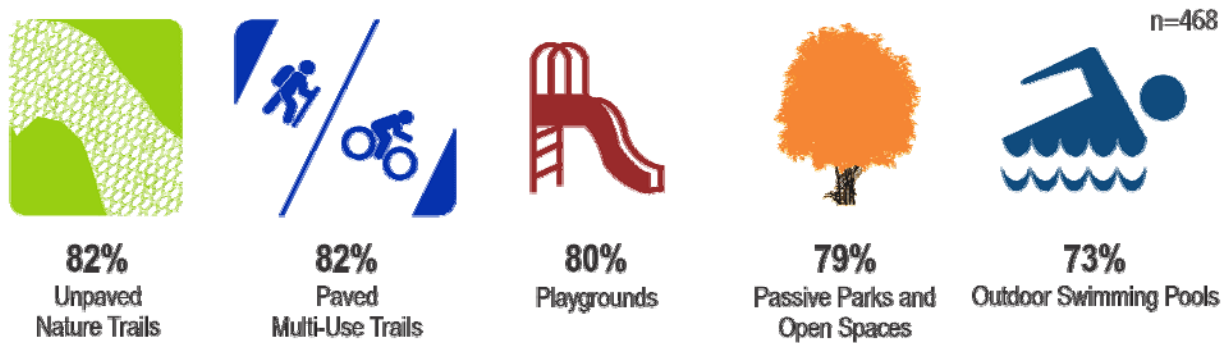
More varied satisfaction levels were observed for indoor recreation and leisure opportunities. Respondents were most satisfied with the indoor recreation and leisure opportunities for seniors (age 70+) (73%), followed by older adults (age 55-69) (69%), children (age 0-12) (60%), and adults (age 19-54) (54%). Once again, respondents were least satisfied with the indoor recreation and leisure opportunities for teens (age 13-18), which is common in many municipalities. Recognizing that the median age of the respondent is 46 years, respondents may not be fully aware of all the opportunities that may exist. However, the Master Plan will delve deeper into this area to identify gaps that may exist and how best to address them. Recognizing that there are respondents who are not satisfied or are neutral with respect to indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities for all age groups, these results suggest that improvements are needed to ensure that the Town continues to respond to residents' recreation and leisure needs at all age levels.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with Recreation and Leisure Opportunities, by Age Group



The highest priorities for additional public spending for recreation and leisure facilities (for upgrades or new construction) is presented in Figure 9. The top five facilities for additional spending are unpaved nature trails (82%), paved multi-use trails (82%), playgrounds (80%), passive parks and open spaces (79%), and outdoor swimming pools (73%). The desire for an enhanced trails system in St. Marys was heard throughout the consultation process.

Figure 9: Top Five Facility Priorities for Additional Spending



Summary of Survey Respondents

Responding households were over represented in children, youth, and adult age groups, and under-represented in mature adults, older adults and seniors (Figure 10). The average household size of respondents was 3.1 persons, which is greater compared to the 2016 Census (2.3 persons per private household). This is commonly in other communities that complete a survey of this type as households with children and youth are more likely to complete a self-administered survey regarding recreation and leisure opportunities. Additionally, the average age was 45 years, which is slightly higher compared to the average reported in the 2016 Census (44.1 years).

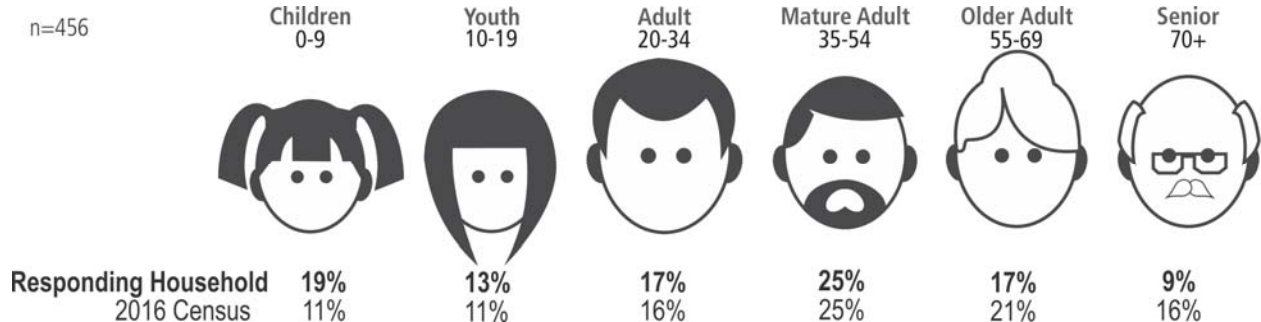


The average household size of respondents was 3.1 persons, which is greater compared to the 2016 Census (2.3 persons per private household).



The average age of respondent was 45. Slightly higher compared to the 2016 Census (44.1 years).

Figure 10: Demographic Composition of Responding Households



3.4 Stakeholder Group Survey

A self-administered online survey specific to St. Marys’ stakeholder groups was distributed to collect information regarding group participation information, trends, facility utilization, future group needs, and more. A total of 11 surveys were completed from the groups listed in Table 3. The following is a summary of key findings with additional information about each stakeholder group found in **Appendix C**.

Table 3: Respondents to the Stakeholder Group Survey

| Stakeholder Group Survey Participants | |
|---|---|
| Arena Groups | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Marys Minor Hockey Association St. Marys Model T’s Hockey Club | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Marys NBC Hockey Club St. Marys Ringette Association |
| Outdoor Sports Groups | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Marys and Area Minor Soccer Association St. Marys Minor Ball Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Marys Social Tennis Club |
| Service Clubs and Other Providers | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McConnell Club Rotary Club of St. Marys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Marys Community Players The Friendship Centre |

Key Arena Group Themes

- Some suggested improvements to the arenas at the Pyramid Recreation Centre included larger and additional storage spaces, the use of free meeting rooms, a smoother ice surface, and an improved score-keeping system.
- The need to improve communication between the Town and arena groups was suggested, including the need to hold an annual or bi-annual meeting with sports groups to discuss issues, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- The scheduling of ice was raised as a concern by some groups. There were requests for earlier ice times and it was suggested that blackout periods should not negatively impact practices and games.

Key Outdoor Sports Group Themes

- Suggested improvements to St. Marys’ outdoor sports fields included providing access to washrooms and shade shelter, particularly at the Baseball Hall of Fame, additional storage space, and improving the general quality of soccer fields.
- A multi-use gymnasium was requested to accommodate indoor sports such as basketball, pickleball, and soccer.
- Some of the concerns raised by groups included securing enough facility time, attracting and securing volunteers, and costs associated with facility maintenance and paying coaches and referees, while maintaining affordable registration costs.

Key Service Clubs and Other Provider Themes

- Suggestions to improve the facilities at the Pyramid Recreation Centre included upgrading the sound equipment and keeping rental costs low.
- Suggestions to enhance the facilities at the Town Hall auditorium included installing air conditioning, updating the kitchen, and constructing additional washrooms.

3.5 Town Staff Workshop and Interviews with Key Opinion Leaders

To engage Town staff in the preparation of the Master Plan, a workshop was held on January 23, 2017 with staff at all levels from managers and supervisors to frontline administration. Discussions centred on community strengths, needs, priorities, challenges, and opportunities with respect to the provision and delivery of recreation and leisure opportunities. Interviews were also held with a variety of key stakeholders and members of Council. The following themes emerged from the discussions:

Figure 11: Staff's Vision for the Future



Improving the Use of Existing Recreation Spaces

- There is great pride in the recreation and parks facilities.
- There are a wide range of program opportunities for residents of all ages.
- The challenges rest with maximizing the use of the recreation centre during all prime and non-prime hours. It was indicated that a development plan for the quarry might increase utilization and become a tourist attraction.

Partnerships

- The partnership with the school board is strong and reciprocal use is mostly seen in the schools using the recreation facility. After school programming is a success with children walking to the recreation centre to receive supervision and get involved with a good choice of activities. The schools are supportive in promoting recreation activities within their current communication channels. A reciprocal use agreement between the Town of St. Marys and the Public School Board is under development.
- There have been no formal discussions to date with the Y as to the use of space in the recreation centre for YMCA programming.
- The Library and Recreation staff are beginning to have discussions about the types of programming each should manage to reduce duplication and maximize participation.

Enhancing Communications and Public Education

- There is a belief that formalized internal communications could strengthen the delivery of services through better coordination of efforts. Further it was felt that a better understanding of the costs to provide services would create an opportunity to examine further efficiencies.
- Participants in the staff workshops and key opinion leader interviews felt that the penetration rate of the full population was not high in the use of the recreation centre.
- It was felt that greater out-reach and public education might help residents see the value in participation and better understand the opportunities within the centre.
- There is an appreciation for the communications support that is being provided to the department.
- There are varying levels of support for a Recreation Centre Advisory Committee. There is a common belief that a terms of reference could articulate the responsibilities of the committee and staff and ensure that the community uses the facility to a greater extent.

Measuring Performance

- Many statistics are kept to monitor the use of programs and camps and to track concerns and complaints. This is an excellent approach in monitoring the performance of the department and ensuring that staff are nimble in responding to concerns. The Master Planning exercise will serve to review the performance measures to ensure that they are reflecting an accurate assessment of the work of the department to engage as many residents as possible in active lifestyles.



Pyramid Recreation Centre

4.0 Parks System Overview

Access to engaging and meaningful parkland in St. Marys is a key indicator of the quality of life in the community. This section assesses the Town's current supply of parkland and reviews existing parkland regulations and policies established in the *Ontario Planning Act* and the Town's Official Plan. The Town's parks system facilitates a number of outdoor recreation opportunities and it is essential that these amenities are preserved and enhanced to extend the quality of life for current and future generations. Parkland can take many different forms, ranging from manicured parkettes and open spaces to large naturalized tracts of ecologically valuable areas. Primary considerations for the parks system includes, but are not limited to:

- planning the appropriate function and use for parks;
- achieving a satisfactory distribution of parkland to ensure that they are easily accessible and maintain the integrity of natural heritage systems; and
- maintaining a high degree of walkability and connectivity among parks through active transportation infrastructure, key linkages, etc.



Lind Park

4.1 Parkland Classification System

A parkland classification system (or parkland hierarchy) is used to guide the development of St. Marys' parks system by directing usage, size, form, function, and/or level of amenity found within different types of parks. The classification system also allows the public to understand what a new park might include and can position parks to be compatible with neighbouring land uses. The Town's current parkland classification system contained in St. Marys' Official Plan classifies parks into four categories, which is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Existing Parkland Classification System, Town of St. Marys

| |
|--|
| Town Park |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to serve the Town and surrounding areas (1,500 to 10,000 residents). Permitted recreation uses include lit sports fields, golf courses, community centres, concessions, washrooms, seating, and more. May be serviced by water, sanitary, and hydro. Size generally ranges between 10 hectares to 50 hectares in area. |
| Neighbourhood Park |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed to provide recreational areas and open space to serve residents within a 2 kilometre service area (or 1,000 to 2,000 residents). Permitted recreation uses includes playground equipment, seating, green space, and water fountain. Size generally ranges between 0.5 hectares to 4 hectares in area. |
| Parkette / Tot Lot |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The smallest form of open space to serve residents within 500 metres (or 50 to 100 residents), without obstruction of physical boundaries. Permitted recreation uses include a playground Smaller than 0.5 hectares in area |
| Open Space |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive open spaces and parks, including walking and biking trails, natural areas, gardens, storm water management area, cemeteries, elementary and secondary school open space. |

Source: Town of St. Marys Official Plan

4.2 Current Parkland Supply

The Town's parks system provides nearly 47 hectares (116 acres) of active parkland located across 20 sites, as shown in Table 5. These parks contain a range of recreation facilities including sports fields, playgrounds, seating, shade, and passive spaces that facilitate informal gatherings or activities. **Based on the 2016 Census population of 7,265, the Town is achieving an overall parkland service level of 6.4 hectares per 1,000 residents.** The next phase of the Master Plan process will evaluate current and future parkland needs based several key inputs including projected population growth, parkland distribution, and other variables.

Residents also have access to Town-owned open spaces, woodlots and other naturalized municipal lands, over and above the 47 hectares of parkland, which support Official Plan objectives to provide and promote a range of recreation activities and facilities, and to preserve and enhance natural areas. In addition to the municipal parks supply, residents and sports groups enjoy the use of many open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities located at local schools and the Wildwood Conservation Area.

Table 5: Parkland Supply, Town of St. Marys

| Town Park | | Area (ha) | Area (ha) |
|--------------------------------|------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame | 13.3 | St. Marys Quarry | 2.6 |
| | | | Sub-Total: 15.9 |
| Neighbourhood Park | | | |
| Cadzow Park | 0.9 | Milt Dunnell Field | 4.5 |
| Centennial Park | 1.1 | North Ward Park | 0.6 |
| Early Learning Centre | 0.6 | Skateboard Park | 0.5 |
| East Ward Park | 1.7 | Solis Park | 3.1 |
| Junction Station Dog Park | 1.3 | Southvale Park | 2.3 |
| Kin Park | 1.9 | Teddy's Field Diamond | 0.6 |
| Lawn Bowling Club | 0.7 | Tennis Courts | 2.5 |
| Meadowridge Park | 7.9 | West Ward Park | 0.4 |
| | | | Sub-Total 30.6 |
| Parkette | | | |
| Lind Park | 0.2 | Millennium Park | 0.1 |
| | | | Sub-Total 0.3 |
| | | | Total Park 46.8 |

Note: Parkland Supply excludes open spaces, woodlots and other naturalized municipal lands, as well as non-municipal parkland found at local schools and the Wildwood Conservation Area.

4.3 Current Active Transportation Network

The Town boasts an impressive active transportation network that connects residents and visitors to key destinations throughout St. Marys using modes of active transportation such as walking and cycling. There is approximately 18.8 kilometres of active transportation network in St. Marys; the inventory is contained in Table 6. The Town's trail network, and park supply, is illustrated in Figure 12. St. Marys' active transportation network is located on a mixture of municipal and non-municipal lands (including private property), as well as along roadways. At a conceptual level, the next phase of the Master Plan process will investigate the need for new active transportation routes and linkages to supplement the Town's existing network, with emphasis given to connecting destinations and developing linkages through future residential areas.

Table 6: Active Transportation Inventory

| Trail Name | Length (kilometres) |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Grand Trunk Trail | 3.2 |
| Loop Trail | 13.0 |
| Riverwalk Trail | 2.3 |
| Taylor Trail | 0.3 |
| Total | 18.8 |

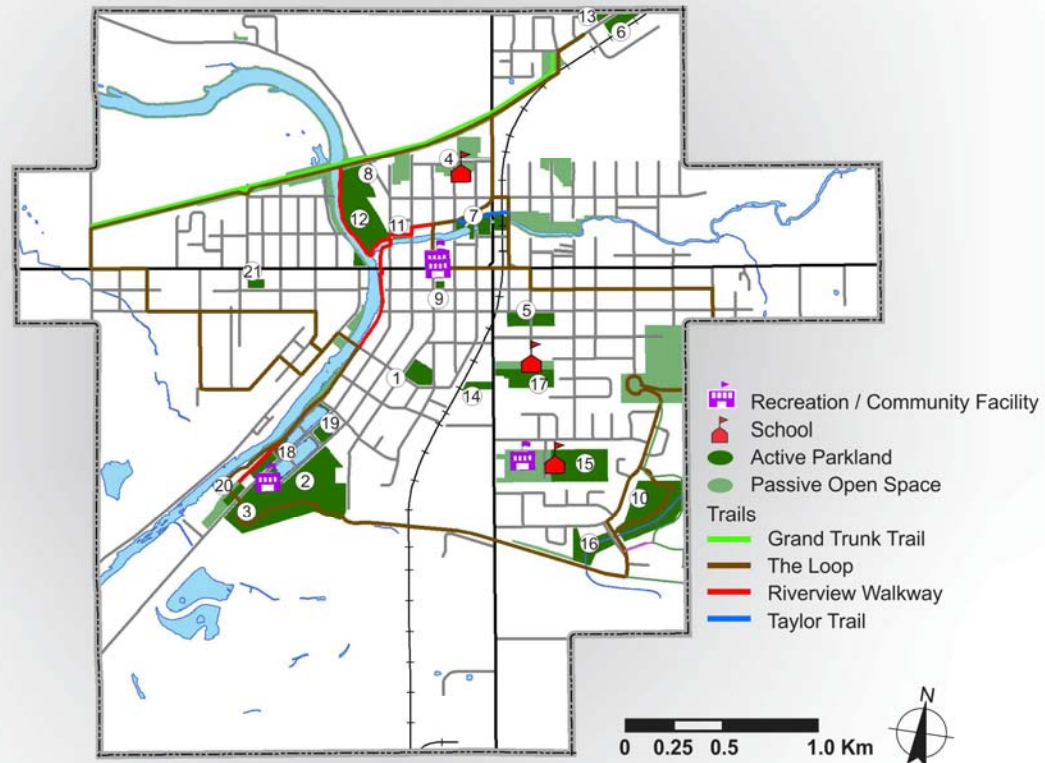
Generally speaking, through the consultation process for the Master Plan residents spoke highly of the Town's trail network. While the online community survey found that 95% of respondents indicated that

active transportation facilities were important, only 78% were satisfied with the active transportation opportunities in St. Marys, suggesting that there is room for improvement. Respondents also ranked unpaved nature trails and multi-use trails as the most supported recreation facility types for future investment. Participants at the Master Plan Launch Event also expressed the desire to enhance active linkages throughout St. Marys such as connecting residents in the north end of the Town, adding pathway lighting, constructing washrooms, installing fitness equipment, and providing wayfinding signage.



Grand Trunk Trail

Figure 12: Distribution Map of Parkland and Trails



Parkland

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Cadzow Park | 12. Milt Dunnell Field |
| 2. Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame | 13. North Ward |
| 3. Centennial Park | 14. Skateboard Park |
| 4. Early Learning Centre | 15. Solis Park |
| 5. East Ward Park | 16. Southvale Park |
| 6. Junction Station Dog Park | 17. St. Marys DCVI (Town maintained) |
| 7. Kin Park | 18. Swimming Quarry |
| 8. Lawn Bowling Club | 19. Teddy's Field Diamond |
| 9. Lind Park | 20. Tennis Courts |
| 10. Meadowridge Park | 21. West Ward Park |
| 11. Millennium Park | |

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

5.0 Recreation and Leisure Facility Overview

This section explores the state of the Town’s existing recreation and leisure portfolio and the factors that may influence the future provision of facilities, services, and programs in St. Marys. An inventory of the Town’s recreation facilities is contained in this section and where appropriate, supporting mapping is provided to illustrate the distribution of facilities. General facility observations are articulated, together with general market trends, and public input.

5.1 Overview of Recreation Facilities

Table 7 summarizes the indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure facilities owned by the Town of St. Marys. Recreation facilities provided by non-municipal organizations are excluded, although they are recognized for their contributions to the local recreation system and are referenced where applicable.

Table 7: Summary of Recreation and Leisure Facilities

| Facility Type | Supply | Location(s) |
|--|--------|--|
| Ice Pads | 2 | Pyramid Recreation Centre (Blue Rink and Rock Rink) |
| Indoor Aquatics | 1 | Pyramid Recreation Centre |
| Fitness Spaces | 0 | - |
| Gymnasiums | 0 | - |
| Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms | 10 | |
| Multi-Purpose / Halls | 6 | Halls: Friendship Centre (2), Pyramid Recreation Centre, Town Hall, |
| Meeting Rooms | 4 | Lind Sportsplex Lounge Meeting Rooms: Friendship Centre (3), Pyramid Recreation Centre (2) |
| Youth Space | 1 | Pyramid Recreation Centre |
| Older Adult Space | 1 | Pyramid Recreation Centre (Friendship Centre) |
| Soccer Fields | 6 | |
| Full | 4 | Full: St. Marys DCVI (Lit), Meadowridge Park, Solis Park (2) |
| Junior | 2 | Junior: Southvale Park, West Ward Park |
| Ball Diamonds | 10 | |
| Lit | 4 | Lit: Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), Solis Park, Teddy’s Field |
| Unlit | 6 | Unlit: Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), East Ward Park (2), Milt Dunnell Field (2) |
| Tennis Courts | 4 | Outdoor Tennis Courts |
| Basketball Courts | 0 | - |
| Skateboard Parks | 1 | Skateboard Park |
| Outdoor Aquatics | 1 | St. Marys Quarry |

| Facility Type | Supply | Location(s) |
|---------------------|--------|--|
| Off-Leash Dog Parks | 0 | - |
| Playgrounds | 9 | Cadzw Park, Early Learning Centre, East Ward Park, Kin Park, Meadowridge Park, Milt Dunnell Field, North Ward Park, Solis Park, West Ward Park |

5.2 Ice and Curling Pads

Supply

The Town has two ice pads (180' by 85') – known as Blue Rink and Rock Rink – which are located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The Blue Rink, which offers year-round ice, was constructed in 1977 and has a spectator capacity of 344. The Rock Rink is a seasonal ice pad that was constructed in 2004 as a part of the Pyramid Recreation Centre expansion and has a seating capacity of 1,071. Other supporting amenities include 11 change rooms, two referee rooms, and storage spaces. The Town's arenas are generally in good condition. Future arena improvements that are expected to be undertaken over the next ten years include replacing mechanical equipment, LED lighting retrofits, and replacing arena flooring.

There are four curling sheets located at the Lind Sportsplex. Constructed in 1998, this facility is operated by the St. Marys Curling Club during the fall and winter months, while the Town operates the facility during the spring and summer for activities such as shuffleboard when the curling sheets are removed. The Lind Sportsplex is generally in good condition and features new exterior fencing along the perimeter abutting the swimming quarry. Roof replacement has been identified by staff as a future project.



Pyramid Recreation Complex

Market Trends

Winter ice sports such as hockey and figure skating have been definitive Canadian pastimes for decades. At the national level, data from Hockey Canada indicates that participation in minor hockey is steadily declining across Canada and Ontario.⁷ The decline in hockey participation is being driven by a number of factors including, but not limited to, the escalating costs of equipment and travel, and greater concerns over safety. The increasing cost of renting ice is also a common concern among user groups in many communities.

In some municipalities, declining participation figures has resulted in surplus arena capacity with communities undertaking a number of strategies to cope with shifting arena needs and underutilized ice pads. Such strategies include, but are not limited to, amendments to ice allocation policies, enhancing programming to promote learn-to-skate and sport safety, subsidies to reduce the cost to participate, and decommissioning ice pads.

Regional differences exist with respect to curling. Experience in other communities suggests that curling is a sport in decline as clubs are challenged with keeping doors open as their memberships

⁷ Hockey Canada. Annual General Meeting Reports.

decline, with some clubs folding completely. On the other hand, some clubs continue to thrive. Research completed by Curling Canada revealed that although the sport continues to appeal largely to older adults and seniors, many curling clubs are offering youth leagues and programs to recruit new members and help sustain membership levels as older members become less active in the sport.

Public Consultation

The online community survey revealed that over the past 12 months, 26% of respondents participated in recreational skating and 23% of respondents participated in organized hockey, figure skating, and ringette. When questioned about municipal investment in recreation facilities, 60% of respondents supported spending additional funds on arenas, which ranked 12th out of 23 facility types.

Four hockey groups completed the Stakeholder Survey including the St. Marys Minor Hockey Association, St. Marys Model T Hockey Club, St. Marys NBC Hockey Club, and St. Marys Ringette Association. These organizations reported a combined membership of 640 participants, all of whom utilize the ice pads at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on a regular basis. The groups made a number of requests and suggestions to improve the user experience including access to a free meeting room, a warm up area for players, and more storage space. The Model T Hockey Club requested earlier scheduled ice times and the Ringette Association indicated that arena blackout periods should be improved to minimize impacts on scheduling practices and games. To improve communication between the Town and user groups, it was also suggested that regular meetings be held to discuss a variety of topics such as general improvements to ice scheduling.

For curling, membership data provided by the St. Marys Curling Club revealed that participation has remained stable over the past four years. The Club reported a 194 members for the 2016/17 curling season. No community input was received with respect to curling facilities.

5.3 Indoor Aquatics

Supply

The Town offers an indoor salt water pool with a four lane, 25 metre tank and an attached leisure tank. Supporting amenities includes an accessible ramp and lift, as well as an on-deck sauna and hot tub. The pool is in good condition as staff have been diligent in general upkeep, maintenance, and replacement of mechanical equipment. Future improvements identified in the Town's capital budget includes replacing pool tiles and grouting, lighting retrofits, and replacing associated mechanical equipment that has reached the end of its lifespan.

Market Trends

Indoor pools are among the most sought after public facilities due to their ability to accommodate a wide range of programs and many ages, interests, and abilities. While private backyard pools can provide similar recreation experiences, public pools offer a broad range of aquatic programming and like many other recreation facilities also serve as a venue for residents to gather and form community ties. Despite these benefits, municipal indoor pools are one of the most expensive recreational facilities to operate and can challenge the ability of smaller communities to fund ongoing operation due to smaller tax bases.

Public Consultation

Residents who participated in the public consultation process were proud to have an indoor aquatic facility, particularly for a Town with a smaller population compared to other municipalities. In the online community survey, 50% of the respondents participated in recreational swimming, which was the second most popular activity in the past year. Instructional swimming or aquafit was the sixth most popular activity, with 34% of respondents participating in this type of activity in the past year. When questioned about future spending, 60% of respondents supporting spending additional funds on indoor swimming pools, ranking 13th out of 23 facility types. This suggests that there are other facility priorities.

5.4 Fitness Spaces

Supply

The Town does not have any dedicated fitness spaces, although it does offer limited community fitness programs within its multi-purpose spaces such as at the Community Centre space at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

Market Trends

As with many communities large and small, local fitness providers offer a broad range of studio-based active living programs in private spaces, while equipment-based fitness centres are offered by local non-municipal establishments. The YMCA of Stratford-Perth, which has dedicated space at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital, offers a number of fitness classes (for YMCA members only). Other equipment-based fitness centres can be found within driving distance to area municipalities including Stratford and London.



Pyramid Recreation Centre

The emphasis being placed on personal health is resulting in growing participation across Ontario for physical fitness activities. This is translating into increasing use of private and public sector fitness services including active living programming centred on general health and wellness, cardiovascular training and stretching activities (e.g., aerobics, yoga, pilates, etc.). Group fitness programming is one of the fastest growing segments of the sector, more so than traditional weight-training, given that these programs are designed to be fun, social activities ('Zumba' is a notable example).

Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 45% of responding households participated in fitness activities such as aerobics, yoga, or weight-training, which was the third most popular activity undertaken in the past year. When respondents were asked if there were any facilities they would like to see offered, that are not currently available, a fitness studio was a common request to accommodate fitness activities, as well as similar activities that may take place in the same space such as dance and gymnastics. When respondents were asked about spending additional funds on recreation facilities, 71% of respondents supported spending for a fitness centre, which ranked 7th among 23 facility types. This suggests that respondents viewed this as a relatively high priority.

5.5 Gymnasiums

Supply

The Town does not provide a municipal gymnasium, nor does the Town have regular access to any school gymnasium. The Town does, however, provide a select number of active indoor recreation programs at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

Market Trends

Gymnasiums provide a venue to facilitate a wide variety of indoor sports and recreation opportunities that require a hard surface and a large open space. Gymnasiums support both formal and drop-in activities including basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, general fitness, and other active programs. A variety of non-recreational activities may also take place in these facilities such as trade shows, large gatherings, and other events.

Public Consultation

Given that the Town does not offer a gymnasium, nor does it have access to one, participants at the Master Plan Launch Event made a number of requests for a multi-purpose gymnasium. While the online community survey did not survey respondents about gymnasiums, it was revealed that participation in gymnasium-based activities was low. 9% and 8% of respondents participated in basketball and pickleball, respectively, which were some of the least popular activities over the past 12 months. This may be due to limited opportunities to engage in these types of activities in St. Marys. Respondents from the survey made a number of requests for gymnasium-based activities such as an indoor playground and pickleball courts. Despite these requests, 57% of respondents supported investing in gymnasiums, which ranked 16th out of 23 facility types. This suggests that support for a gymnasium was low and that there are higher community priorities. Improving access to school gymnasiums was noted as an area needing to be further explored by the Town.

5.6 Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms

Supply

The Town provides a number of community halls, multi-purpose spaces, and meeting rooms that can be used for a broad range of activities including, but not limited to, municipal programs, meetings, birthdays, social gatherings, weddings, banquets, theatrical performances, and other special events. Some spaces can also be partitioned into smaller facilities to accommodate users seeking smaller spaces. Space are equipped with a variety of amenities and features to accommodate an array of uses including, but not limited to, a full kitchen, table and seating, storage, washrooms, and more.



St. Marys Friendship Centre

The Town’s capital budget identifies approximately \$277,000 allocated towards various projects related to improving community rooms located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre including updating sound systems and replacing flooring and kitchen equipment. Upgrades are also planned to be undertaken to the Town Hall Auditorium, which is to be funded in part by an Ontario Trillium grant. \$15,000 is also allocated towards exterior washroom upgrades at the Town Hall. A summary of available spaces is listed below.

| Multi-Purpose Rooms | Community Centres / Halls |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.R.C. Meeting Room (4) • P.R.C. End Zone • P.R.C. Friendship Centre Multi-Purpose Room • Lind Sportsplex Lounge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P.R.C. Friendship Centre Main Hall • P.R.C. Community Centre • Town Hall Auditorium |

Market Trends

Historically, stand-alone community spaces were constructed as small single-purpose facilities often for a purpose that is no longer required. As such, these spaces have generally been re-purposed to accommodate passive activities (such as gatherings and meetings). The construction of stand-alone facilities is generally discouraged in current facility planning exercises due to a number of factors such as programming limitations, operational costs, and other variables. Multi-purpose and meeting rooms are typically incorporated within modern facility designs as complementary spaces to other facility components as they can accommodate a broader range of uses including community programs to supplement rental revenues. The multi-purpose spaces at the Pyramid Recreation Centre are examples of co-locating multiple recreation facility components to facilitate cross programming opportunities, while achieving economies of scale in facility construction and efficiencies in maintenance/management.

Public Consultation

Limited input was received with respect to multi-purpose spaces and meeting rooms throughout the consultations. In the online community survey, investment in multi-purpose space and meeting rooms ranked 17th out of 23 facility types, suggesting a lower priority relative to other facilities. It is recognized that a number of stakeholders regularly use these community spaces for meetings. Some requests were received for free access to some of these spaces. Other improvements were also suggested, which were specific to the Town Hall auditorium, including providing air conditioning, providing new washrooms, and updating the kitchen.

5.7 Youth Space

Supply

The St. Marys Youth Centre is located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and is open to all youth between Grades 4 to 8. According to the Town’s Program and Services Guide, the youth centre’s mission is to provide local and area youth with a safe and inclusive space to socialize and build positive relationships, encourage development and reinforce positive play. The Youth Centre is open daily during the week between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm where youth can drop-in to use the computers, play games, watch TV, do homework, play dodgeball, use the kitchen, and more.

Market Trends

The provision of dedicated community space for specific age groups offers a number of benefits for youth, particularly given that they are often considered as under-represented segments of the population. These age groups also have specific needs and desires, resulting in the need to ensure that youth spaces are designed to respond to each age group appropriate. Research has revealed that youth between the ages of 10 and 19 years prefer unorganized and self-structured activities, prompting the emergence of drop-in youth spaces that allow users to engage in their desired activities on their own schedule. These spaces also function as a safe environment to facilitate positive reinforcement to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health among youth. The Town's current focus on youth in Grades 4 to 8 suggests that a large segment of the youth population (those generally aged 13 to 19) will need to be assessed as part of the Master Plan process.



St. Marys Youth Centre

Public Consultation

The online community survey revealed that 14% of responding households participated in organized youth programs. 47% of respondents were generally satisfied with the indoor recreation opportunities for youth (15% were unsatisfied) and 53% were satisfied with outdoor recreation opportunities (15% were unsatisfied). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents supported additional spending for towards youth centres, ranking sixth out of 23 facility types. This suggests that investment in dedicated youth spaces/centres was a relatively high priority compared to other facilities.

5.8 Older Adult Space

Supply

The Town provides one older adult space at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. Known as the Friendship Centre, this space provides a place for older adults and seniors over the age of 50 to gather, socialize, and to participate in a broad range of recreation activities. The Friendship Centre also provides older adults access to a number of home and support services such as meals on wheels, shopping services, wellness seminars, and more. Membership to the Friendship Centre is optional, although members are eligible for benefits such as discounts on programs and facility rentals.

Market Trends

The provision of older adult space is an important consideration when designing and/or improving recreation facilities as it provides a location for a growing segment of the population to gather and share common interests. As older adults and seniors become more sophisticated, municipalities are faced with increasing pressures to provide a range of recreation pursuits that respond to broad interests. Users continue to seek traditional activities such as reading and guest speakers, while

others desire active recreation programs and activities centred on socialization. While communities have responded to the rise of the ‘active’ older adult and seniors through the provision of low impact fitness activities, municipalities frequently receive requests for new or expanded recreation activities (e.g. pickleball courts which is a popular sport among older adults and has become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada). As the majority of population growth is expected to occur among the older adult and senior population, it is essential to ensure that the needs of this age group are addressed, while ensuring that the Town offers a balanced spectrum of recreation and leisure opportunities that appeal to all age groups.



St. Marys Friendship Centre

Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 14% of respondents participated in organized older adult and senior programs, which was one of the least popular activities in the past year. Nearly two-thirds of respondents also supported additional investment in dedicated older adult centres, ranking 11th out of 23 facilities. However, as previously noted, the survey was under-represented by older adults/seniors suggesting that the results of the survey may not fully capture the needs of this age group.

A Stakeholder Survey was also submitted by the St. Marys Friendship Centre. The group reported a membership level of 340 members. This does not include the number of non-members, so the actual number of users is likely greater than noted. The group did not suggest any facility improvements to the existing space, although it was suggested that a multi-purpose gymnasium should be developed to support active recreation programs for the benefit of all residents.

5.9 Soccer Fields

Supply

The Town offers six soccer fields at five locations (Figure 13). The supply consists of four full fields, one of which is lit and irrigated, and two junior fields. Lit soccer fields are assumed to be equivalent to 1.5 unlit soccer fields to account for extended hours of play. As a result, the Town's has an unlit equivalent supply of 6.5 soccer fields. This supply includes the soccer field located at St. Marys DCVI, which is maintained and permitted by the Town. Supporting amenities found at most soccer fields include players' benches and on-site parking. The Town's soccer fields are generally in good condition and can be found at the following locations:

- **Full Soccer Fields:** St. Marys DCVI (Lit), Meadowridge Park, Solis Park (2)
- **Junior Soccer Fields:** Southvale Park, West Ward Park

Market Trends

Soccer experienced enormous growth in participation and popularity during the 1990s when it overtook baseball and hockey as the most popular organized sport among Canadian youth. Coupling

this trend with its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate, soccer fields are in high demand in most municipalities. These factors drive the need for soccer fields, particularly ones that are designed to a suitable size and configuration to meet the needs of soccer groups. Since the Ontario Soccer Association adopted the Long Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) model, which is expected to be fully implemented by 2017, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs, which have impacted soccer field needs.

With less emphasis on scoring and winning, L.T.P.D. focuses on improved coaching, fewer games, more ball time, and skill development. Several new standards were developed that are specific to each age group, which includes varying coaching styles, number of plays, playing time, field size, and other variables. Some of these new standards will have a direct impact on the provision of municipal soccer fields, particularly with respect to the standards in field size and the number of players, as reducing the number of players per team influences the demand for field time.

Public Consultation

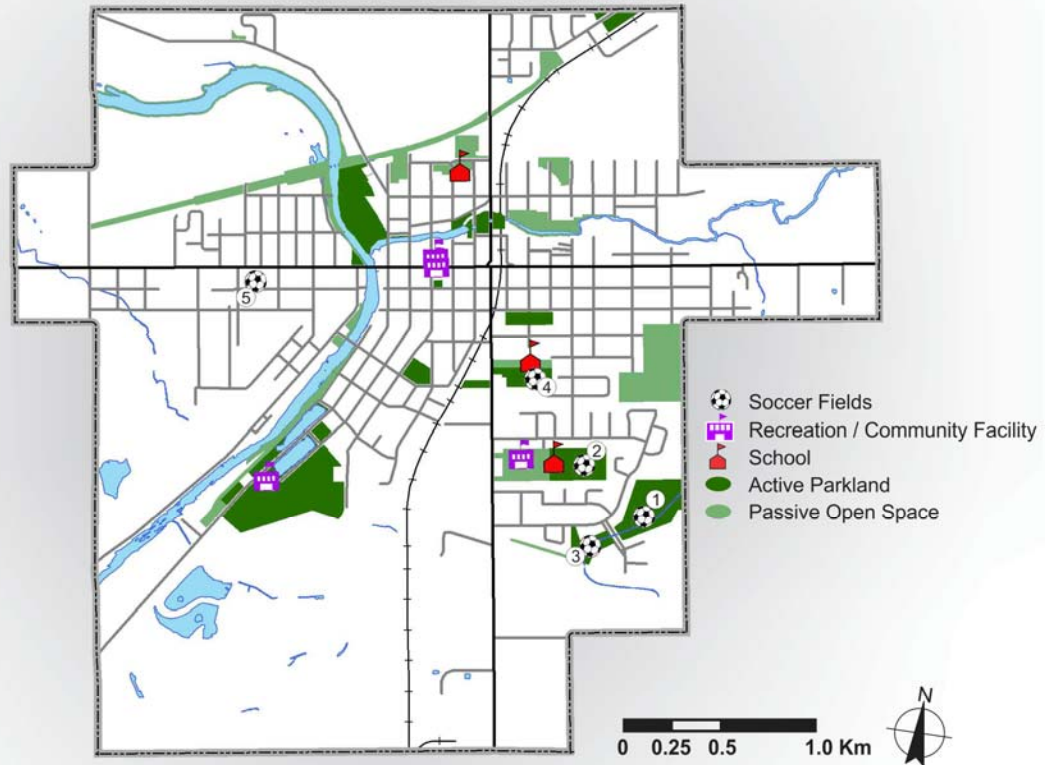
The online community survey revealed that 18% of responding households participated in soccer in the past year. There was also a moderate level of support for investment in soccer fields. Over two-thirds (67%) of responding households supported spending additional funds towards soccer fields, ranking 10th out of 23 facility types.

A Stakeholder survey was also submitted by the St. Marys and Area Minor Soccer Association, which reported a membership of 250 participants. The group uses a number of fields throughout St. Marys and expressed areas for improvement including reseeding and grading fields, particularly at Solis Park, and additional storage space. The use of a large indoor space for indoor programs was also requested. Concerns were raised by the group including the ability to attract and retain volunteers, as well as the ability to pay for referees, field lining, and Town fees.



Meadowridge Park

Figure 13: Distribution Map of Soccer Fields



Soccer Fields

1. Meadowridge Park (1 Unlit)
2. Solis Park (2 Unlit)
3. Southvale Park (1 Unlit)
4. St. Marys DCVI (Town maintained) (1 Lit)
5. West Ward Park (1 Unlit)

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

5.10 Ball Diamonds

Supply

The Town maintains a supply of 10 ball diamonds at five locations in St. Marys (Figure 14), consisting of four lit diamonds and six unlit diamonds. Each lit diamond is equivalent to 1.5 unlit equivalent diamonds due to its extended playing opportunities in the evening and as a result, the Town has an equivalent supply of 12 ball diamonds. Supporting amenities such as spectator seating and parking can be found at most of these ball diamond locations to support games. Site visits indicate that various ball diamond components are aging and in need of replacement including replacing fencing, backstops, drainage, netting, light posts, and more. The Town has made efforts in this regard such as replacing fencing, re-grading diamonds, and general maintenance and upkeep. The Town's ball diamonds can be found at the following locations:



Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame

- **Lit Ball Diamonds:** Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), Solis Park, Teddy's Field
- **Unlit Ball Diamonds:** Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), East Ward Park (2), Milt Dunnell Field (2)

Market Trends

After being considered a sport in decline for the better part of the past two decades, baseball and its variations (softball, fastball, slo-pitch, etc.) is currently experiencing a resurgence. The renewed interest in baseball is driven by a number of factors such as a greater focus in skill development and grassroots programs to engage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport. The growing popularity and success of the Toronto Blue Jays is also likely a contributing factor. Locally, the presence of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame contributes to the popularity of the sport and highlights the importance of baseball sports in St. Marys.

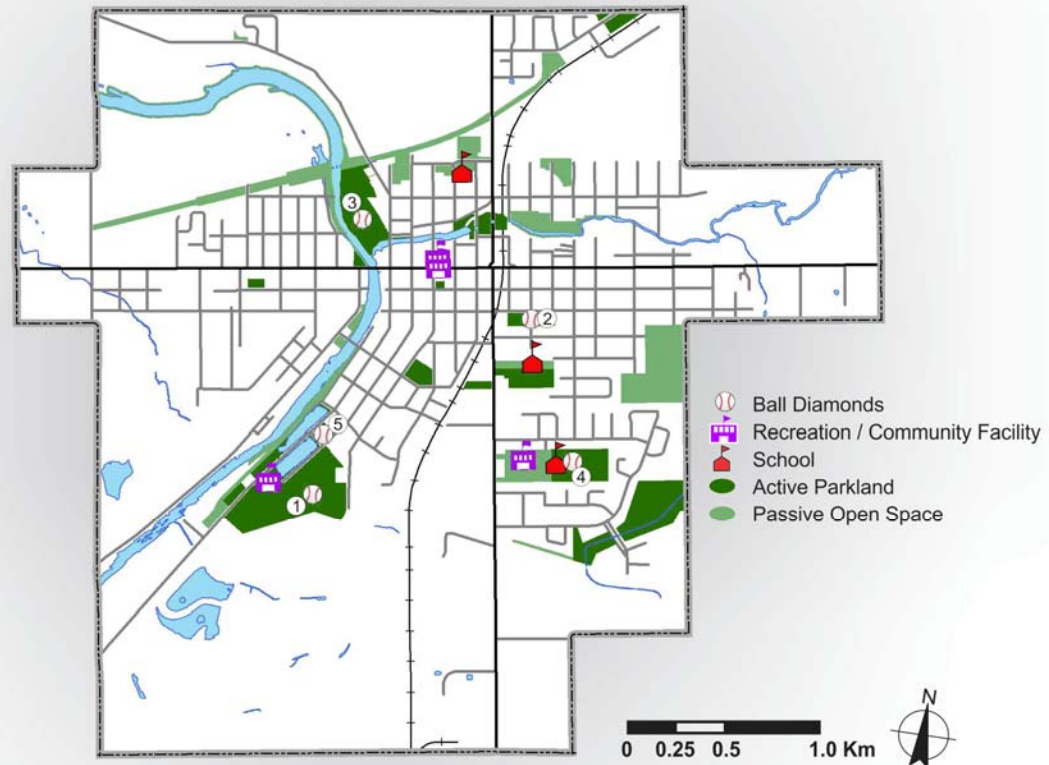
Since Baseball Canada adopted the Long Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) model, the organization has focused on developing and honing skills and coaching styles, as well as fostering leadership and organization. Suitable competition formats and facility types are also core components of Baseball Canada's L.T.P.D. model, the latter of which will have implications on the provision of diamond types and sizes in St. Marys.

Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 24% of responding households participated in baseball or softball in the past year. In terms of municipal spending, 57% of respondents supported investment in ball diamonds, ranking 18th out of 23 facility types. This finding suggests that investment in ball diamonds is a low priority compared to other recreation facility types.

A stakeholder survey submitted by the St. Marys Minor Ball Association indicated that the group currently has 236 players. The Association uses a number of ball diamonds in St. Marys and suggested that the diamonds should have movable bases to accommodate various playing levels. Washrooms and a pavilion at the Baseball Hall of Fame was also suggested, in addition to a request for additional ball diamond time.

Figure 14: Distribution Map of Ball Diamonds



Ball Diamonds

1. Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2 Lit, 2 Unlit)
2. East Ward Park (2 Unlit)
3. Milt Funnell Field (2 Unlit)
4. Solis Park (1 Lit)
5. Teddy's Field Diamond (1 Lit)

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

5.11 Tennis Courts and Pickleball Courts

Supply

The Town provides four lit tennis courts at the St. Marys Tennis Courts. The tennis courts are in good condition as resurfacing was completed by the Town in 2013. There are no outdoor pickleball courts provided in the Town.

Market Trends

A 2014 participation study undertaken by Tennis Canada found that more than 6.5 million Canadians played tennis at least once over a 12 month period, a growth of more than 32% since 2012. This study also found that the popularity of tennis is growing among Canadians as 51% of the population indicated that they are somewhat or very interested in the sport, which is an increase from 38% in 2012. This trend is on par with research that suggests that the sport is experiencing a resurgence over the past several years since the popularity of tennis peaked in the 1970s.

Growth in tennis is driven by a number of factors such as the growing segment of active baby boomers that seek social, low impact activities. Increasing participation among baby boomers has also driven the rising popularity of pickleball, which is a similar form of racquet sport as tennis. There is also a growing focus on promoting the sport at the youth level through club memberships for youth and programming opportunities that emphasizes the Long Term Athlete Development model. Tennis Canada reported that in 2013, more than 600,000 children between the ages of six and 11 played tennis.



St. Marys Tennis Courts

There is also evidence that baby boomers are creating a small boost in tennis and related racquet sports as participation trends suggest that older adults have a greater desire to remain physically active in their retirement years. This age segment has driven the sport of pickleball to become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada, which is a lower intensity paddle sport that can be played on modified tennis courts (it requires a badminton-sized court and a net that is slightly lower than tennis height). Pickleball recently debuted at the Ontario Senior Games and is easy for beginners to learn, but can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Public Consultation

Participants at the Master Plan Launch Event made suggestions to improve the tennis courts in St. Marys, including installing a timer for the court lights, adding lighting to the adjacent parking lot, and varying views on painting multi-use markings on the courts to accommodate pickleball games. Comments were also received to construct new pickleball courts rather than utilizing the tennis courts. The tennis courts are currently utilized by the St. Marys Tennis Club, which currently has 27 members. Through the stakeholder survey submitted by the Club, the cost of renting courts is currently the primary concern.

The online community survey found that 15% and 8% of responding households participated in tennis and pickleball, respectively, in the past year, suggesting that these hard surface court activities have moderate to low participation compared to other activities. There was also a moderate level of support for investing in tennis courts with 58% support from respondents. 34% of respondents supported investment in pickleball courts, which ranked last, suggesting that it may not be a high priority among respondents and, as a relatively new activity, may not be well-known.

5.12 Basketball Courts

Supply

The Town does not provide any outdoor basketball courts within its parks; however, there are a number of basketball courts located at a number of schools within the Town.

Market Trends

Basketball courts are flexible outdoor recreation facilities as they can accommodate many informal and unstructured activities that require a large, hard surface. Research revealed that basketball courts are primarily used by male youth and the sport continues to be a popular pastime activity due to its national appeal, driven by the popularity of the Toronto Raptors, and low barriers to participation. Compared to other sports such as hockey, basketball is easy to learn, safe, affordable to play, and can be played with one person or in small groups.

The provision of basketball courts has remained unchanged for many generations as they are generally rudimentary in design. These facilities can be constructed from concrete, although asphalt is often the preferred surface material. Basketball courts can be provided in a variety of configurations given that these facilities are generally not programmed and primarily focus on facilitating spontaneous opportunities for active play. Best practices suggest that the most common template is a full basketball court with posts, nets, and painted lines although multi-use courts are increasing in popularity to increase flexibility and range of uses on a court surface..

Public Consultation

Limited public input was received with respect to basketball courts. The online community survey revealed that only 9% of responding households participated in basketball in the past year, which was the fourth least popular activity (recognizing that primary users of basketball courts are youth who may not have been as well-represented in the survey responses). This may be partially due to the fact that the Town does not provide any outdoor basketball courts and has primarily relied on non-municipal providers such as schools, as well as home driveway basketball hoops to meet this need. 54% of responding households supported investment in municipal basketball courts, ranking 20th out of 23 facility types, which suggests that this was not a priority for respondents.

5.13 Skateboard Parks

Supply

The Town provides one permanent skateboard park located adjacent to the Pyramid Recreation Centre and the St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute. The skateboard park is in good condition and features a number of components including ramps, rails, and edges, as well as a pavilion.

Market Trends

Research reveals that youth are gravitating towards more unstructured, unscheduled, and low-cost activities. Skateboarding is a pursuits that has become increasingly popular in many municipalities. Once considered a fad, skateboarding has demonstrated sustained longevity and after being associated with negative youth behaviour, many municipalities recognize that skateboard parks can function as positive places that provide safe and accessible venues for youth to engage in physical activities, while socializing with others that share a common interest.



St. Marys Skateboard Park

Similar to other recreation facilities that facilitate informal and spontaneous active play, there is no design standard for skateboard parks, allowing the opportunity to develop a venue(s) that offer unique skating experiences. Skateboard parks can be designed on a large plaza scale or smaller skate zones using concrete with a variety of basic or challenging components such as rails, stairs, bowls, and jumps. Alternatively, modular components may also be utilized so they can be moved or reoriented as needed. Mobile skateboard parks, which can be moved from one location to another, have also been used in communities where youth populations are dispersed across large geographical areas.

Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 2% of responding households participated in skateboarding in the past 12 months, which was the second least popular activity. 42% of respondents also supported additional investment in skateboard parks, which ranked 22nd out of 23 facility types. These findings suggest that skateboarding is not a high priority for the community, although (as with outdoor basketball courts) it is also recognized that respondents who completed the survey may not be the target market for this facility type.

5.14 Outdoor Aquatics

Supply

Outdoor Pool

Unique to St. Marys is the Town's swimming quarry, which is Canada's largest outdoor freshwater "swimming pool". This local treasure has been providing residents and visitors with a refreshing recreational amenity for over seven decades and is situated adjacent to the Town's tennis courts and the Lind Sportsplex. Amenities found at the quarry include a water trampoline and paddle board rentals (municipally-operated). An outdoor pool was previously located at Cadzow Park, although it is now permanently closed due to its deteriorating condition.

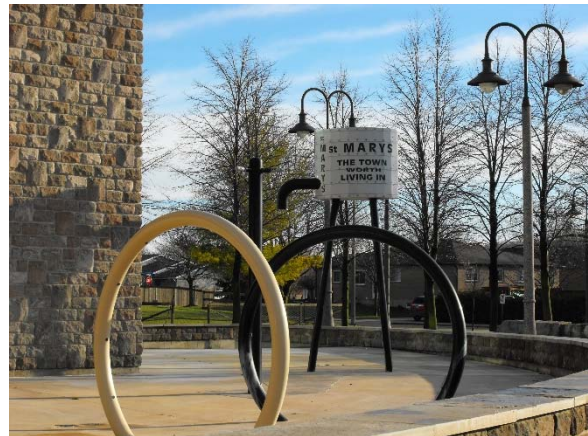
Splash Pad

St. Marys currently offers one outdoor splash pad at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. A second outdoor splash pad is planned to be located at Cadzow Park to replace the recently closed pool.

Market Trends

Outdoor municipal pools were once regarded as a key part of Ontario’s community fabric with many municipalities constructing them in the 1960s and 1970s. New outdoor pools construction is not common in the modern era due to a number of factors such as the high cost to construct, operate, and maintain, particularly given that an outdoor pool is operational for only a few months throughout the year, declining participation levels, and the popularity of backyard pools and, as is the case in St. Marys, the availability of indoor pool opportunity..

As an alternative to outdoor swimming pools, municipalities have shifted to the provision of splash pads. Splash pads have gained in popularity over the last number of years to become one of the most sought after amenities for young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot summer day. Splash pads have proven to be more cost effective than traditional outdoor pools to build and operate as they can be integrated into most park systems and do not require regular staffing as there is no standing water to supervise and treat frequently. Splash pads can be developed in a variety of stimulating designs with a range of apparatuses that provide an enhanced aquatic experience for residents of all ages.



St. Marys Splash Pad

Public Consultation

Participants at the Master Plan Launch Event praised the quarry as it provides unique swimming opportunity in St. Marys. As previously identified, swimming is a very popular activity in St. Marys. The online community survey found that 50% of responding households participated in recreational swimming in the past year, which was the second most popular activity. 34% of respondents also participated in instructional swimming or aquafit classes. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents supported additional investment in improving or developing new outdoor aquatic facilities, ranking 5th out of 23 facility types, suggesting that outdoor aquatic opportunity is a high priority.

The online community survey also measured participation and support for splash pads. In the past 12 months, 30% of responding households used a splash pad, which was one of the most popular activities. Respondents made a number of requests for a new splash pad in St. Marys, particularly to replace the outdoor pool at Cadzow Park. 68% of responding households supported investment in new or improving splash pads, ranking 9th out of 23 facility types, suggesting that this was a high priority among respondents.

5.15 Off-Leash Dog Parks

Supply

The Town currently provides one off-leash dog park located at the Junction Station Dog Park in the north end of St. Marys.

Market Trends

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 in a controlled area. However, dog parks should be not viewed strictly for pets as observations suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, such as residents living in isolation.

Public Consultation

Limited input was received through the consultation process regarding off-leash dog parks. The online community survey revealed that 41% of responding households have gone dog walking in the past 12 months, which was the 4th most popular activity. 51% of respondents also supported additional investment in off-leash dog parks, ranking 21st out of 23 facility types, suggesting that it was not a priority for respondents.

5.16 Playgrounds

Supply

The Town provides nine playgrounds at parks throughout St. Marys (Figure 15). In addition to these locations, residents also have access to school playgrounds. A cursory review of the Town's playgrounds during site visits reveals that St. Marys' play structures offer both basic and creative play experiences. The playground structures vary in age and condition with newer style playgrounds located at the Early Learning Centre and North Ward Park. The oldest playgrounds are located at Milt Dunnell Field and Meadowridge Park, which are 15 and 12 years old, respectively.

Market Trends

The design of playgrounds has evolved from the traditional playground equipment, which typically consists of swings, slides, and other basic elements that generally do not provide engaging playing experiences. Modern playgrounds are uniquely designed to facilitate creative play that allows the user to use their imagination to create more enjoyable playing environments. This may include a broad range of design elements such as the use of vibrant colours, interactive play components, thematic designs, and components that stimulate the senses. These features are considered by the Canadian Standards Association (C.S.A.), which guides the standards for children's play spaces and equipment. Guided by the A.O.D.A., the provision of new playground structures after 2016 must have accessible components.

Risky play and outdoor playgrounds are becoming more popular across the world, which encourages children and youth to take more risks through climbing, exploring, moving vigorously, and creating their own activities using their imagination. These styles of play are popular in the U.K. and U.S.A., and are gaining traction in Canada. This may be beneficial for children across the County, particularly given that the most recent ParticipACTION report card identified that the over-protection of children (due to the perceived need to ensure that they are healthy and safe) is negatively impacting their ability to be physically active and develop valuable skills. In Ontario, the Lawson Foundation is dedicating \$2.7 million towards risky play in Canada and in 2016, awarded the Y.M.C.A. of Western Ontario with \$160,000 towards a pilot project focusing on self-directed and unstructured risky play.

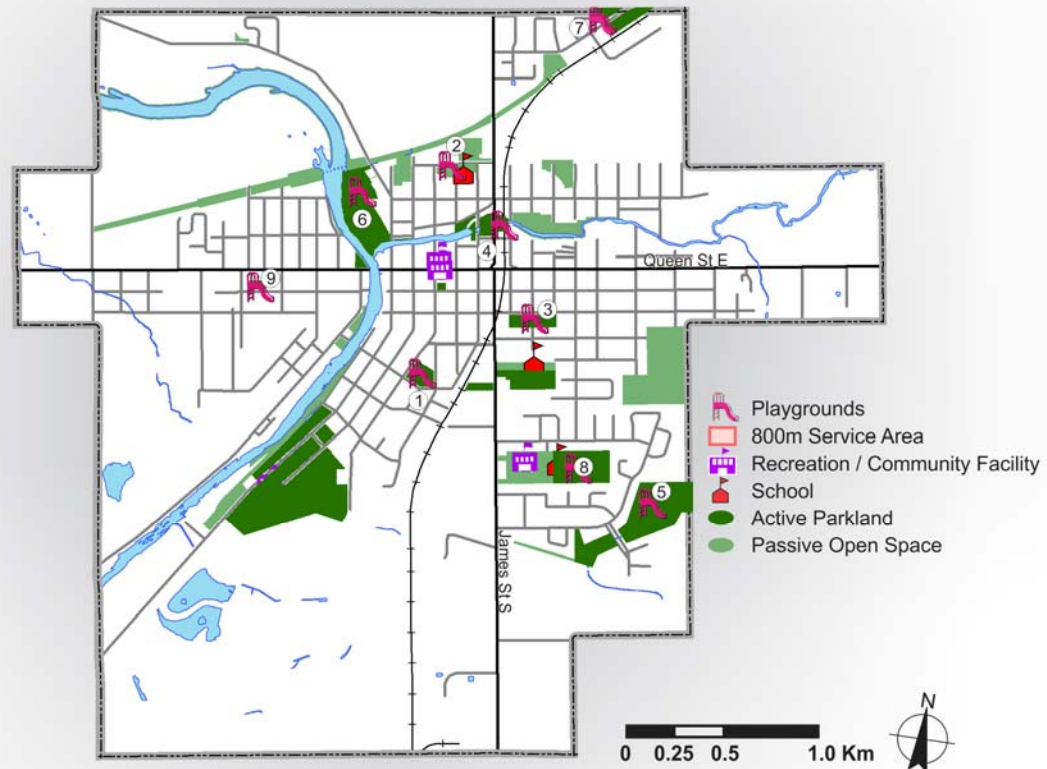
Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 41% of responding households used a playground in the past 12 months, which was the 5th most popular activity. Playgrounds tends to be a popular facility in municipalities and as a result, they are highly desirable and sought after. 80% of respondents supported additional spending in playgrounds in St. Marys, which was the third most popular facility. This suggests that investment in playgrounds in St. Marys was a high priority for respondents.



Kin Park

Figure 15: Distribution Map of Playgrounds



Playgrounds

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Cadzow Park | 6. Milt Dunnell Field |
| 2. Early Learning Centre | 7. North Ward Park |
| 3. East Ward Park | 8. Solis Park |
| 4. Kin Park | 9. West Ward Park |
| 5. Meadowridge Park | |

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

5.17 Lawn Bowling Facilities

Supply

The Town has one lawn bowling location at Milt Dunnell Field, which is operated in partnership with the Parks Lawn Bowling Club of St. Marys.

Market Trends

Lawn bowling is largely popular among seniors, although there is evidence that suggests that the sport is gaining interest among younger demographics. This is largely due to its social nature and the Ontario Lawn Bowling Association's (O.L.B.A.) buddy program that partners younger or entry-level players with experienced veterans. The O.L.B.A. estimates that there are approximately 8,800 members and 155 clubs across the Province.⁸

Public Consultation

Very limited input was received relevant to the provision of lawn bowling. The online community survey reported that only 2% of responding households participated in the sport in the past 12 months, suggesting that it is not a commonly played sport compared to other recreation and leisure activities.



St. Marys Lawn Bowling Club

⁸ Bowls Club. Bowls Canada Boulingrin. Retrieved from <http://bowlsclub.org>

6.0 Program and Services Overview

This section provides a high level look at the programs and services currently offered by the Town of St. Marys, which will provide the baseline content that will form the basis for the program and service assessment in Phase Two of the Master Plan. The Program and Service Overview will enable further analysis of utilization, costs to provide services, market penetration, strengths, gaps and most important to the needs of the Master Plan, potential cost reductions and efficiencies without compromising service and participation levels. It should be recognized that data that will support this component of the Master Plan is currently being collected by Town Staff or will be requested and will be integrated in the subsequent phase.

The outcome of this section in the final Master Plan will ensure that the Town of St. Marys continues to meet the needs of residents and reflect the elements of a high performing organization. This review places importance on service delivery through the most efficient and effective operations. The assessment will include a comparison of existing program and service provision approaches to industry standards, trends, and best practises alongside the community, Council, public, opinion leader and staff input garnered through the consultation process. The review and assessment process that will be undertaken is graphically articulated in Figure 16 and is described in more detail below.

Figure 16: Program and Service Review Process



Step One: Service Delivery Model – Identifying the current Service Delivery Model considers the collective of recreation and leisure providers with commentary on current strengths and challenges. A set of draft Guiding Principles for the provision of recreation and leisure programs and services will be developed and informed by the background information, trends as well as public and stakeholder input. The principles will speak to inclusion, efficient delivery, market penetration, individual and community benefits at a minimum and will be used to evaluate any proposed service delivery model changes. Guidance will be taken from the St. Marys Strategic Plan to ensure that inclusive and realistic service delivery are considered as well as cost containment and revenue enhancements.

Step Two: Clear Departmental Vision, Mission and Goals – A review as to how goals and targets are currently planned, synthesized, supported and measured in alignment with community and strategic priorities will be undertaken. A draft vision, mission, goals and performance measures will set the basis of recommended focussed work of the department. Future directions will consider the strategic plan priorities, community input, demographic shifts and trends in recreation and leisure. The vision, mission and goals will reflect citizen-centred recreation and leisure needs.

Step Three: Understanding Current Performance – An assessment of the current performance of the department will include high-level costing of programs and services, cost recovery levels,

market penetration, capacity and utilization of rooms and programs, rates and fees as compared to local providers and summary of strengths and gaps.

Step Four: Program and Service Assessment – The predominant gaps in program and service delivery will be identified and assessed as to potential remedies and alternate approaches. Elements of the review will include cost reduction and revenue enhancements opportunities, partnerships, volunteerism, policy development, current and proposed performance measures, etc. Each feasible delivery method will be analyzed as to the potential impact on service delivery, participation, resource allocations, etc. Governance model options will be assessed and a recommendation will be based on the go forward actions in the service delivery assessment and reflect the skills and competencies needed to aptly advise Council and Senior staff (should an advisory body be deemed value added).

Step Five: A Summary of Recommendations and Suggested Timing – A summary of the recommendations will be prioritized and mapped out for implementation in short, medium and long-term timeframes.

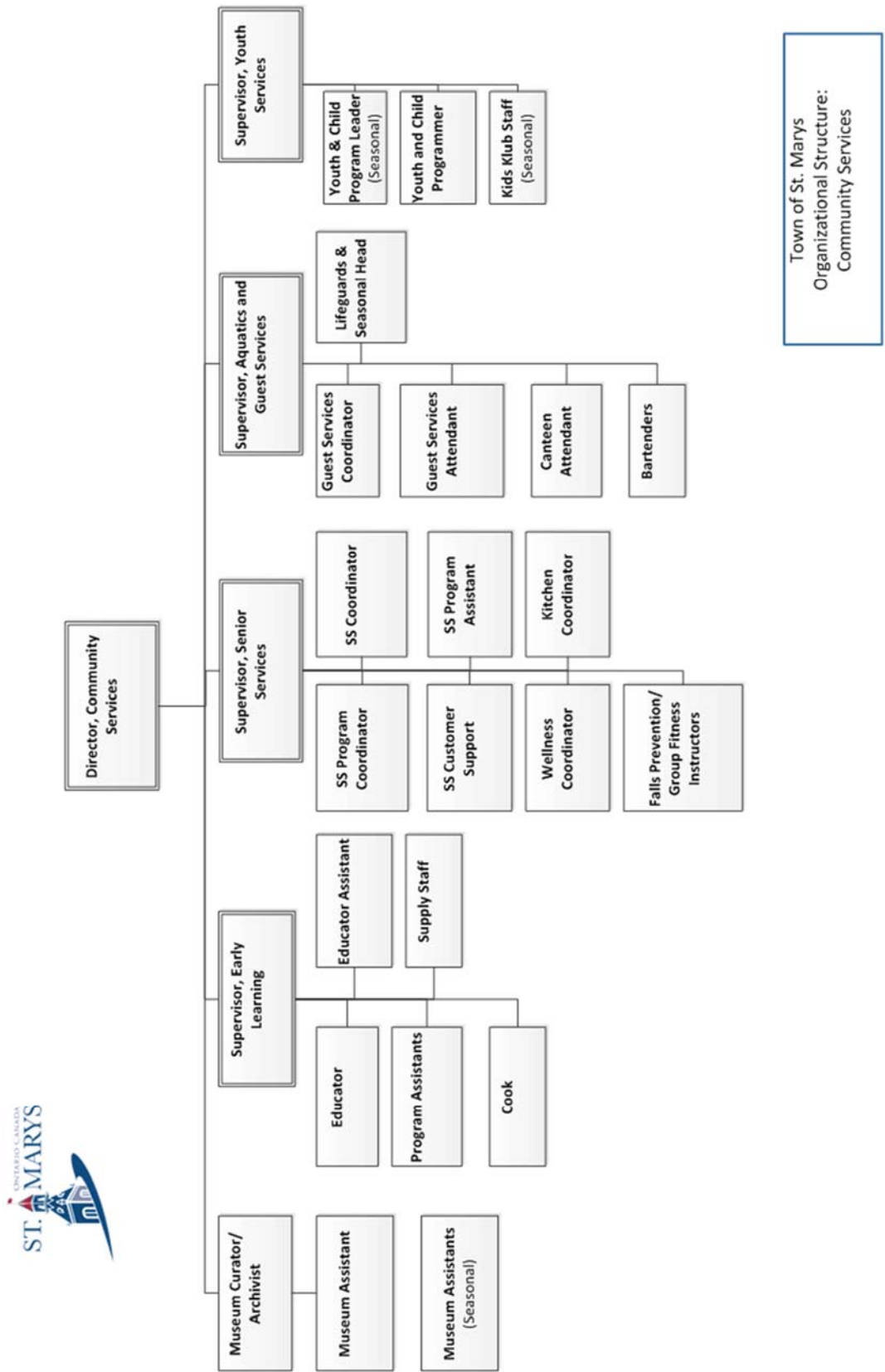
6.1 Existing Programming Structure

The Town currently provides a host of recreation and leisure programs that appeal to all age groups. Some of these programs are delivered directly by the Town or in collaboration with its community partners and other municipal departments such as the St. Marys Public Library and St. Marys Museum. The Town's program offering is contained in the St. Marys Recreation & Leisure Program Guide, which categorizes program into three age categories: Preschool, Child & Youth, Adult & Senior. Registered and drop-in programs are available and the types of opportunities that are available are broad in scope to respond to a variety of interests from passive activities such as painting and writing to active pursuits such as fitness and pickleball. It is recognized that the Town is continuing to evolve its program offerings and the next phase of the Master Plan process will examine current participation rates and will provide insights into potential programming gaps and opportunities.

6.2 Organizational Structure

Recreation and leisure facilities, programs, and services are delivered by the Community Services Department, which has a staff complement of 28 full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions. Some positions may have multiple staff members to support programs and activities such as fitness instructors, programmers, and bartenders. The organizational structure of the Community Services Department is illustrated in Figure 17. The Department is also supported by members of the Building and Development Services Department including a Facilities Supervisor, Facilities Team Leader, three Facility Operators, Arena Assistances, custodian, and seasonal labourers. The next phase of the Master Plan process will evaluate organizational effectiveness of the Community Services Department and will identify opportunities to maximize the delivery of recreation and leisure programs and services.

Figure 17: Community Services Department Staff Organization



Appendix A – Master Plan Launch Event

The following is a transcription of input received from the Master Plan Launch Event held at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on February 23, 2017.

Community Values

- Fortunate to have the facilities and programs for a Town of this size
 - Swimming pool
 - Skateboard park
 - Have services that aren't available elsewhere
 - Excellent seniors program
- Facilities are well operated and well used
- Very proud of the trail system and green spaces
- People are friendly

Improving Parks and Outdoor Recreation/Leisure Facilities

Parks

- Improved lighting along all trails, specifically the South End of loop trail.
- Have equipment for adults to use at all outdoor trails and/or playgrounds.
- Have a walking path, washrooms, adult fitness equipment at Cadzow.
- Accessibility to trails in the North End.
- Better signage on the trails for the “loop”
- Exercise activities on the trails
- Trail from Lions Park up to the Grand Trunks trail must be made a high priority for repairs and maintenance from a safety and accessibility standpoint.
- Maintaining walkability and trails for new developments in the North Ward and everywhere else.
- Keep existing trails well signed and connected—like the trail running in the Meadowridge area.
- Cross-country skiing on trails
- Maintain sights of the loop.

Outdoor recreation facilities

- Skateboard park improvements
 - To improve safety and visibility of the skate park, it needs enhanced lighting. It is still very hard to see users at night (2)
 - Vandalism at skate park needs to be brought to public's attention.
- Tennis court improvements
 - Tennis courts could be multi-purpose surface (to accommodate basketball, pickleball and badminton)
 - Have tennis court lights on a timer or have someone turn them off (2)
 - Could tennis courts be shared with pickleball players?

- Parking lot south of tennis courts needs to be larger and have lighting (benefit to shufflers, curlers, tennis players and swimmers).
- Cadzow Park
 - Cadzow Park needs to be developed as soon as possible to provide a picnic area (roofed) with provision area for the addition of washrooms and food preparation area for groups. Location must be where the existing services are located and an area for a splash pad must be included.
 - A plan for Cadzow Park- Can we get a swim area for young children?
- Increased checks at playgrounds/outdoor facilities in spring/summer for damage, glass, litter etc.
- Easier access to Quarry for those who cannot jump or dive.
- Splash pad improvements.
- Shade for baseball diamonds in East Ward Park.
- Baseball Hall of Fame needs a pavilion for their league participants.

Improving Indoor Recreation/Leisure Facilities

General Improvements

- Library space to increase program space.
- Indoor walking track within the Pyramid Recreation Centre (2)
- Gymnasium accessible for all ages to use to further available programs.
- Multi-purpose play space more frequently and available for indoor sports (i.e. pickleball, badminton, basketball, walking track).
- Wooden floor for dry ice surface.
- Pickleball Court (permanent!)
- Indoor area for green gym equipment

Access and Comfort

- All facilities must be financially accessible for all users.
- Rental fees must be kept reasonable.
- Keep what we have maintained
- Town hall auditorium needs heating and air conditioning
- Climate control in the change rooms needs to be warmer (the warmer pool is appreciated)
- Viewing for the blue rink needs improvement
- More capacity for pool viewing; more people want to watch then there are seats
- Pool and change room areas have salt damage—can these be made to withstand the pool atmosphere?

Improving Programs and Services

Advertising and promotion

- More awareness of what's available.
- Need to advertise the programs available for all age groups
- More advertising to improve the pool's use for all age groups

- Show a printed schedule of what is going on at ball diamonds to make public aware
- Less ‘areas’ of advertisement—just one internet page.

Increase programs

- Increase family programs, especially outdoor programs in the summer (i.e. campfire nights similar to seniors one, or communicate that it is a community campfire)
- More family events not just family skate/swims (i.e. Foam Fest/Mud runs at Boler Mountain).
- Have older adult programs in other locations such as parks and other facilities (i.e. exercise in the park).
- stage areas or places to have performances (music/dance) indoors or outdoors (i.e. bandshell)
- Break the barrier of stigma of the word ‘senior’; redefine what ‘senior’ means.
- Economical and flexible programs.
- Mom and tots skating.
- Is the mobility bus sufficient and affordable to provide access to facilities for those who cannot drive or walk? (now and in the future).
- Take care with scheduling swimming lessons that age groups and skill levels are able to share the correct areas of the pool.
- More open leisure swim and skate sessions (perhaps with earlier or later hours).
- Accessible times for adult programs (sport and non-sport variety) that take into account working hours.
- Town provision of services should be customer-focused. Sometimes people asking for help or information feel like nuisances.
- Geo-caching/scavenger hunts for older youth in Town or on the trails? What about an architectural or historical scavenger hunt, maybe with an app?
- Summer ice-time—existing deadlines to commit to use ice are too early; February would be better than November.
- There seems to be a good variety of programs for seniors
- Minor ball is currently using the Baseball Hall of Fame parking lot; need more parking
- Make sure that all people have access, regardless of income.
- More activities such as cross-country skiing, more outdoor winter activities.
- Scuba diving in the Old Quarry.
- Paddleboat/kayak/other rentals on the river by the flats.

Future Priorities

- Continue maintenance (5)
 - lighting, signage and usability of existing trails and parks and extending those trails and parks into newly built communities.
- Continuing on senior focus—friendly and accessible programs (3)
- Financially accessible (3)
 - Strive for equitable rates of subsidy between different programs; give preferential support to groups less able to afford their own recreation.
 - Consider a higher rate of fees for out-of-town users.
- New facilities (3)

- Multi-purpose gymnasium space with accessories (i.e. basketball, pickleball etc.)
 - Indoor walking track.
 - Lighting and washroom facilities of outdoor facilities and trails.
- Revitalize Cadzow Park (2)
- Communication of local parks, trails, events and programs (2)
- Inter-generational programs; ‘learn to’ programs for sports and leisure.
- More partnerships with high school and senior public school to assist in programs as part of their 40 hour requirement

Appendix B – Online Community Survey Summary

1. In the past 12 months, which of the following recreational activities have you or anyone in your household participated in, in St. Marys or elsewhere? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participate (which does not include attending an event or watching others), either at home or in public.

| Activity | # | % | Activity | # | % |
|---|-----|-----|--|------------|-----|
| Walking or Hiking for Leisure | 470 | 80% | Organized Hockey, Ringette, or Figure Skating | 136 | 23% |
| Swimming (Recreational) | 294 | 50% | Soccer | 107 | 18% |
| Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-training | 264 | 45% | Tennis | 89 | 15% |
| Dog Walking (on or off leash) | 243 | 41% | Organized Youth Programs (e.g, summer camp, youth club, etc.) | 81 | 14% |
| Use of Playground Equipment | 240 | 41% | Organized Older Adult and Seniors Programs (e.g., cards, dancing, luncheons, etc.) | 81 | 14% |
| Swimming (Instructional or Aquafit) | 197 | 34% | Basketball | 51 | 9% |
| Cycling or Mountain Biking | 187 | 32% | Pickleball | 46 | 8% |
| Use of Splash Pad | 176 | 30% | Lawn Bowling | 10 | 2% |
| Recreational Skating | 153 | 26% | Skateboarding | 12 | 2% |
| Running or Jogging | 143 | 24% | None of the above | 13 | 2% |
| Baseball or Softball (or other forms) | 140 | 24% | Total Respondents | 586 | |

2. Where does your household primarily participate in recreation activities?

| Response | # | % |
|--|------------|-----|
| Public park or facility in the Town of St. Marys | 464 | 83% |
| At home | 237 | 42% |
| Public park or facility in another municipality | 137 | 25% |
| School | 47 | 8% |
| Total Respondents | 559 | |

3. Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation pursuits (e.g. sports, physical wellness, outdoor play, etc.) as often as you would like?

| Response | # | % |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|
| Yes | 367 | 67% |
| No | 178 | 33% |
| Total Respondents | 545 | |

4. Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in recreation pursuits as often as you would like?

| Barrier | # | % |
|--|------------|-----|
| Lack of personal time / Too busy | 65 | 38% |
| Program not offered at a convenient time | 58 | 34% |
| Lack of money / Too expensive | 51 | 30% |
| Lack of desired facilities or programs | 44 | 26% |
| Health problems / Disability / Age | 25 | 15% |
| Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities | 24 | 14% |
| Lack of transportation / Facility too far away | 8 | 5% |
| Lack of Child Care | 8 | 5% |
| Not interested in participating in recreation pursuits | 2 | 1% |
| Total Respondents | 172 | |

5. Generally, what proportion of your household's recreation needs are met within the Town of St. Marys?

| Proportion | # | % |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|
| All (100%) | 95 | 17% |
| Most (67-99%) | 226 | 42% |
| About Half (34-66%) | 122 | 22% |
| Some (1-33%) | 90 | 17% |
| None (0%) | 10 | 2% |
| Total Respondents | 543 | |

6. What activities do you or members of your household typically participate in outside of the Town of St. Marys and where do you participate in them?

| Top 10 activities participated in outside of St. Marys | Top 10 locations to participate in activities |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming (e.g., outdoor swim, public swim, aqua fit, paddleboard, etc.) Walking, Hiking, Running Fitness training, Weight-training, Aerobics, Yoga, Crossfit Gymnastics Dancing Ice sports (e.g., hockey, ringette, figure skating, etc.) Soccer Cross Country Skiing / Skiing Baseball / Softball Performing / Fine Arts (e.g., theatre, art classes, music) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stratford London Mitchell Waterloo / Kitchener Kirkton Provincial Parks Thames Centre United States Woodstock Exeter |

7. Why does your household participate in these activities outside of the Town of St. Marys?

| Response | # | % |
|--|------------|-----|
| Facility/program is not available in the Town | 171 | 56% |
| Quality of facility/program is superior | 74 | 24% |
| "Connected" to other community/used to live there | 63 | 21% |
| Less expensive | 58 | 19% |
| Facility/program not available at the preferred time | 51 | 17% |
| Tournaments / Special Events / travel teams | 43 | 14% |
| Closer to home | 35 | 11% |
| Closer to work or school | 23 | 7% |
| Total Respondents | 307 | |

8. Are there any recreation facilities/activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Town of St. Marys that are not currently available?

| | # | % |
|--------------------------|------------|-----|
| Yes | 226 | 62% |
| No | 136 | 38% |
| Total Respondents | 362 | |

9. What facilities/activities would you like to see offered?

| Top Facilities | Top Activities |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness studio • Indoor walking track • Outdoor pool • Squash courts • Indoor playground • Pickleball courts • Outdoor skating rink • Splash pad • Indoor soccer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gymnastics classes • Fitness classes (Crossfit, yoha, tai chi, etc.) • Dance classes • Volleyball • Canoeing / Kayak / Paddleboarding • Recreational soccer • Archery • Rock climbing |

10. In your opinion, which of the following organizations should provide these new facilities/activities?

| Response | # | % |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----|
| A combination of the above providers | 120 | 57% |
| Town of St.Marys | 62 | 30% |
| Community / volunteer organization | 10 | 5% |
| Other (please specify) | 10 | 5% |
| Private sector | 8 | 4% |
| Total Respondents | 210 | |

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

| | Not Important / Not Important at All | | Neutral | | Important / Very Important | | Total |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|---------|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Active transportation facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and bike paths. | 5 | 1% | 18 | 4% | 444 | 95% | 467 |
| Passive parks that preserve natural areas and open spaces. | 15 | 3% | 20 | 4% | 435 | 93% | 470 |
| Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, pavilions, etc. | 18 | 4% | 42 | 9% | 407 | 87% | 467 |
| Indoor facilities such as arenas and aquatics. | 30 | 6% | 55 | 12% | 388 | 82% | 473 |

12. Thinking about those facilities that currently exist in the Town of St. Marys, what is your level of satisfaction with the following?

| | Unsatisfied / Strongly Unsatisfied | | Neutral | | Satisfied / Strongly Satisfied | | Total |
|---|------------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Active transportation facilities such as sidewalks, trails, and bike paths. | 36 | 8% | 68 | 15% | 360 | 78% | 464 |
| Passive parks that preserve natural areas and open spaces. | 29 | 6% | 84 | 18% | 342 | 75% | 455 |
| Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds, pavilions, etc. | 31 | 7% | 80 | 18% | 342 | 75% | 453 |
| Indoor facilities such as arenas and aquatics. | 45 | 10% | 69 | 15% | 347 | 75% | 461 |

13. What is your level of satisfaction with the indoor recreation opportunities in the Town of St. Marys for the following age groups?

| | Unsatisfied / Strongly Unsatisfied | | Neutral | | Satisfied / Strongly Satisfied | | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Children (0-12 years) | 54 | 17% | 77 | 24% | 193 | 60% | 324 |
| Teens (13-18 years) | 39 | 15% | 95 | 37% | 120 | 47% | 254 |
| Adults (19-54 years) | 53 | 15% | 111 | 31% | 196 | 54% | 360 |
| Older Adults (55-69 years) | 25 | 9% | 61 | 22% | 189 | 69% | 275 |
| Seniors (70+) | 8 | 3% | 58 | 24% | 176 | 73% | 242 |

14. What is your level of satisfaction with the outdoor recreation opportunities in the Town of St. Marys for the following age groups?

| | Unsatisfied / Strongly Unsatisfied | | Neutral | | Satisfied / Strongly Satisfied | | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Children (0-12 years) | 53 | 16% | 75 | 23% | 198 | 61% | 326 |
| Teens (13-18 years) | 38 | 15% | 82 | 32% | 138 | 53% | 258 |
| Adults (19-54 years) | 40 | 11% | 102 | 29% | 208 | 59% | 350 |
| Older Adults (55-69 years) | 20 | 8% | 87 | 33% | 157 | 59% | 264 |
| Seniors (70+) | 13 | 6% | 76 | 33% | 141 | 61% | 230 |

15. To what degree do you oppose or support the Town spending additional public funds on developing new or improving existing recreation facility types?

| | Oppose / Strongly Oppose | | Neutral | | Support / Strongly Support | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Unpaved Nature Trails | 16 | 4% | 63 | 14% | 363 | 82% | 442 |
| Paved Multi-use Trails | 21 | 5% | 59 | 13% | 358 | 82% | 438 |
| Playgrounds | 17 | 4% | 69 | 16% | 349 | 80% | 435 |
| Passive Parks and Open Spaces | 16 | 4% | 74 | 17% | 348 | 79% | 438 |
| Outdoor Swimming Pools | 39 | 9% | 79 | 18% | 319 | 73% | 437 |
| Dedicated Youth Centre | 16 | 4% | 102 | 24% | 316 | 73% | 434 |
| Fitness Centres | 35 | 8% | 94 | 21% | 312 | 71% | 441 |
| Indoor Walking Track | 51 | 12% | 79 | 18% | 313 | 71% | 443 |
| Splash Pads | 54 | 12% | 88 | 20% | 299 | 68% | 441 |
| Soccer Fields | 30 | 7% | 113 | 26% | 284 | 67% | 427 |

| | Oppose / Strongly Oppose | | Neutral | | Support / Strongly Support | | Total |
|---|--------------------------|-----|---------|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Dedicated Older Adult / Seniors' Centre | 41 | 9% | 115 | 26% | 279 | 64% | 435 |
| Arenas | 100 | 23% | 76 | 17% | 267 | 60% | 443 |
| Indoor Swimming Pools | 103 | 23% | 77 | 17% | 265 | 60% | 445 |
| Off-road Cycling Trails | 35 | 8% | 142 | 33% | 253 | 59% | 430 |
| Tennis Courts | 46 | 11% | 135 | 32% | 246 | 58% | 427 |
| Gymnasiums | 45 | 10% | 138 | 32% | 247 | 57% | 430 |
| Community Halls and Multi-purpose Rooms | 63 | 14% | 127 | 29% | 254 | 57% | 444 |
| Baseball or Softball Diamonds | 59 | 13% | 129 | 29% | 250 | 57% | 438 |
| On-road Cycling Pathways | 49 | 11% | 139 | 32% | 242 | 56% | 430 |
| Basketball Courts (outdoor) | 39 | 9% | 154 | 36% | 229 | 54% | 422 |
| Off-Leash Dog Parks | 70 | 16% | 142 | 33% | 217 | 51% | 429 |
| Skateboard Parks | 70 | 17% | 173 | 41% | 176 | 42% | 419 |
| Pickleball Courts | 59 | 16% | 190 | 51% | 127 | 34% | 376 |

16. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

| | Disagree / Strongly Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree / Strongly Agree | | Total |
|--|------------------------------|-----|---------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| Recreation and leisure opportunities should be a high priority for Town Council. | 18 | 4% | 62 | 14% | 367 | 82% | 447 |
| The Town's recreation facilities are generally well maintained. | 47 | 11% | 59 | 13% | 341 | 76% | 447 |
| My household is generally satisfied with the geographic distribution of recreation facilities in the Town. | 35 | 8% | 86 | 19% | 322 | 73% | 443 |
| The Town's recreation programs are generally affordable. | 57 | 13% | 85 | 20% | 284 | 67% | 426 |
| The Town's recreation facilities are generally affordable. | 75 | 17% | 76 | 17% | 285 | 65% | 436 |

17. Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding recreation facilities in the Town of St. Marys.

Due to the open ended nature of this question, the responses have not been included. However, the key themes expressed by respondents have been considered as a part of this Master Plan.

18. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

| Number of Persons | # |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | 38 |
| 2 | 166 |
| 3 | 68 |
| 4 | 118 |
| 5 | 50 |
| 6 | 14 |
| 7+ | 4 |
| Total Respondents | 458 |
| Average Household Size | 3.1 |

19. Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

| | Number of People | Proportion of Sample | 2011 Census |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Under 10 years | 271 | 19% | 11% |
| 10-19 years | 182 | 13% | 12% |
| 20-34 years | 237 | 17% | 16% |
| 35-54 years | 361 | 25% | 27% |
| 55-69 years | 247 | 17% | 19% |
| 70 years and over | 128 | 9% | 15% |
| Total Persons | 1,424 | 100% | 100% |
| Total Respondents | | | 456 |

20. In what year were you born?

| | # | % |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| 1929 or earlier (88 yrs or older) | 2 | 1% |
| 1930 to 1939 (78 to 87 yrs) | 16 | 4% |
| 1940 to 1949 (68 to 77 yrs) | 65 | 15% |
| 1950 to 1959 (58 to 67 yrs) | 76 | 18% |
| 1960 to 1969 (48 to 57 yrs) | 49 | 12% |
| 1970 to 1979 (38 to 47 yrs) | 89 | 21% |
| 1980 or later (16 to 37 yrs) | 127 | 30% |
| Total Respondents | 424 | |
| Average (Median) Age | 45 (46) | |

21. Are you a resident of the Town of St. Marys?

| | # | % |
|--------------------------|------------|----|
| Yes | 389 | 85 |
| No | 68 | 15 |
| Total Respondents | 457 | |

22. If you are not a resident of the Town of St. Marys. In which community do you reside?

| Other Municipalities | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perth South • Thames Centre • Stratford • Granton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirkton • London • Woodstock • Zorra |

Appendix C – Stakeholder Group Survey Summary

Arena Groups

St. Marys Minor Hockey Association

St. Marys Hockey provides opportunities to develop and hone hockey skills in a positive atmosphere that encourages good sportsmanship and fair play. The group has 372 players for the 2016/17 season, which is decline of about 20 players from the previous seasons. This drop is attributable to older players moving on and fewer newcomers, although it is expected that participation over the future will be stable. The group uses the arena and meeting room at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and suggested improvements included having a dedicated meeting room for all sports groups to use at no charge, a warmup area for players, and a central location for sports groups to report issues to Town staff. The need to improve communication between the Town and all user groups was also suggested and could be achieved by holding annual or biannual meetings to discuss a variety of topics between parties. The greatest challenge identified by the Association is the ability to keep registration costs affordable, although the group offers financial assistance through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program.

St. Marys Model T Hockey Club

St. Marys Model T Hockey Club is an older adult pick-up hockey league that has maintained 25 players over the last three ice seasons. The group uses the ice at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and did not suggest any areas for improvement, although scheduling earlier ice times was requested.

St. Marys NBC Hockey

St. Marys NBC Hockey is an adult hockey league that has 116 members for the 2016/2017 season. Participation is expected to remain fairly stable over the future as the group indicated that the number of players who are too old to play is generally offset by the number of newcomers. The group uses the ice at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and reported no areas for improvement.

St. Marys Ringette Association

The St. Marys Ringette Association provides organized ringette for local girls as well as a learn to skate program for girls and boys, with a focus on developing skills and self-confidence on and off the ice. The organization reported 127 members for the 2016/17 year, which is an increase of about 30 players from the previous season. The Association expects that participation will continue to increase over the coming years as they believe that they can continue to attract new participants due to the organization's ability to offer an engaging and high quality experience at an affordable price. The organization is dedicated to keeping registration costs low to minimize financial barriers. The group uses the ice pads and meeting rooms at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and noted a number of areas for improvement including the need for a larger storage room (to accommodate the necessary equipment), a more reliable scorekeeping system, and a smoother ice surface. The Association reported that their biggest concern is that the blackout ice periods impacts the group's ability to schedule practices and games.

Outdoor Sports Groups

St. Marys and Area Minor Soccer Association

The St. Marys and Area Minor Soccer Association provides recreational and competitive soccer to children and youth. The organization has maintained about 250 participants over the past few years and expects to remain stable over the foreseeable future. The group uses the soccer fields throughout St. Marys, including those located at Southvale Park, West Ward Park, and Solis Park. The meeting rooms at the Pyramid Recreation Centre are also used, as well as storage rooms for equipment. Soccer field improvements suggested by the group included reseeding and grading, particularly at Solis Park. The use of a large indoor space to facilitate indoor soccer programs was also suggested, in addition to the desire for additional storage space. A number of ongoing concerns were raised by the organization including securing and retaining volunteers, costs associated with field lining, referees, and associated Town fees.

St. Marys Minor Ball Association

The St. Marys Minor Ball Association provides baseball and softball for local children and youth. In the past three years, the organization has grown to 236 players and the group expects that participation will continue to increase as a result of heightened interest in the sport due to the growing popularity of the Toronto Blue Jays. The Association uses ball diamonds located throughout St. Marys and indicated that the ball diamonds should be designed to be flexible to accommodate a range of players (e.g., movable bases). Washrooms and pavilion at the Baseball Hall of Fame was also suggested. Concerns over adequate diamond time was raised by the group as they are having to compress their practice and game schedules.

St. Marys Social Tennis Club

The St. Marys Social Tennis Club provides a tennis opportunities in a friendly environment. The group has maintained about 45 players over the past three years and they expect that participation will remain stable over the future. The potential for growth was suggested as the group continues to hold events and indicated that their mixed-doubles nights are becoming increasingly popular. As the Town continues to provide lessons and camps, interest in the sport will continue to grow. The group uses the tennis courts in Town and appreciate having access to washroom facilities located near or on site. The greatest concern raised by the group is the ability to continue to raise money to maintain the facilities, while keeping registration costs affordable.

Service Clubs and Other Provider Themes

McConnell Club

The McConnell Club is a social group that partakes in a range of interesting activities with guest speakers, demonstrations, and fund raising initiatives. The group is comprised of 27 members and it is expected that membership will remain unchanged for the next five years. The Club uses the meeting rooms at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and did not suggest any improvements, although the rental cost was raised as a concern.

Rotary Club of St. Marys

The Rotary Club of St. Marys is a local service club that focuses on the betterment of the community. The Club has 31 members and hopes to attract new members over the next five years. The Club uses a number of municipal facilities including the meeting rooms at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and various parks in St. Marys. A number of improvements were suggested to the Town's facilities including upgrading sound equipment at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, constructing a pavilion and washrooms at the Baseball Hall of Fame, and improving the quality of the parks and trails.

St. Marys Community Players

The St. Marys Community Players is a non-profit community theatre group that offers live theatre productions. The theatre company has 125 members with expectations to increase as there are more interest in being involved in productions every year. The Community Players provides 20 shows each year at the Town Hall auditorium, which draws over 2,000 patrons each year. Suggested improvements to the Town Hall auditorium included updating the kitchen and adding more washrooms. The need for air condition was also suggested, which was also the biggest concern raised by the group.

The Friendship Centre

The Friendship Centre provides programs and services to St. Marys' older adults and seniors to allow them to live independently in the community. There are over 340 members at the Friendship Centre and it is expected that membership will grow as the Town continues to age. The group uses a number of facilities including the Pyramid Recreation Centre, Lind Sportsplex, and parks. The Centre suggested that the use of a multi-purpose gymnasium for sports and activities such as basketball and pickleball would be a benefit to its members, as well as the community as a whole.