

# Community Services Master Plan



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# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of the Town's first Community Services Master Plan. This strategy is a product of the vision and dedication of the community, the Project Team, and Council. We also extend our thanks to the many residents and community groups within Ingersoll whose feedback has made the Plan a document that embodies the core values, beliefs, and priorities of the community.

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## Town Council (2018 – 2022)

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<b>Mayor</b>	Ted Comiskey
<b>Deputy Mayor</b>	Fred Freeman
<b>Councillors</b>	Mike Bowman
	Rick Eus
	Gord Lesser
	Brian Petrie
	Kristy Van Kooten-Bossence

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## Master Plan Project Team

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Director of Community Services	Kyle Stefanovic (Project Manager)
Community Services Coordinator	Jessica Elliott
Manager of Fusion Centre	Craig Boddy
Manager of Parks	Darryl Capern
Recreation Program Manager	Nancy Nadalin
Aquatics Manager	Amy Nelder
Manager of Facility Operations	Joe Sym
Administrative Assistant	Carol Sharpe

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## Project Consultants

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Monteith Brown Planning Consultants	Steve Langlois, Cole Roddick
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Master Plan Overview

With a growing emphasis on personal health and wellness, environmental and economic sustainability, and community vibrancy, the provision of high-quality leisure services has never been more important. In this regard, Ingersoll is a small, progressive Town that offers a wealth of direct parks, recreation, and culture opportunities that complement offerings from community partners and other service providers.

**This Community Services Master Plan serves as a framework to guide the Town over a ten-year period. The Master Plan identifies needs related to parks, recreation, and culture services and facilities in Ingersoll and identifies key strategies to meet these needs.**

To ensure that the Plan is responsive to community needs, it is grounded in extensive public and stakeholder input and research into best practices, trends, demographic shifts, growth forecasts, service gaps, and park and facility requirements. Full implementation of the Plan will require ongoing community engagement, flexibility in approach, partnerships, and funding from a variety of sources.

Recognizing that many things can change over the course of the next ten years, the Plan contains several recommendations that will help the Town to explore and evaluate new opportunities as they arise. It is a living document that will be reviewed and updated regularly to respond to new opportunities and changing needs in the community. In doing so, the Plan assists the Town in prioritizing corporate initiatives and departmental budgets, and supports the search for external funding, partnerships, and alignment with related initiatives.



## 1.2. Objectives

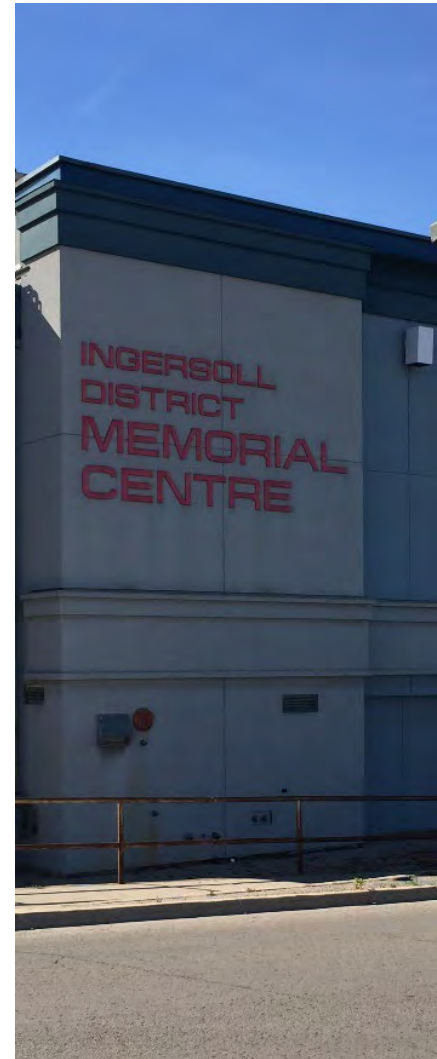
The Community Services Master Plan serves several purposes:

1. The Plan engages the public and stakeholders to help shape the future of community services in Ingersoll.
2. The Plan contains a comprehensive examination of the current state that the Town of Ingersoll may use as a reference manual and to benchmark against in the future.
3. The Plan describes an ideal future state that can be used to develop organizational mandates, policies, practices and services.
4. The Plan makes the case for sustainable investment in parks, recreation and culture – key components of individual and community quality of life.
5. The Plan identifies short- and long-term needs to guide capital planning and enable the Town of Ingersoll to become “funding-ready”.
6. The Plan consolidates existing strategies and directions into one document that will enhance coordination.
7. The Plan establishes the foundation for parkland policy development and asset management.
8. The plan creates a focus and momentum for future opportunities that may leverage community partnerships.
9. The Plan provides Town Council, staff and partners with a work plan that supports community priorities.
10. The Plan serves as a living document containing decision-making frameworks that can be used to guide and evaluate emerging requests and initiatives.

More specifically, the Master supports the Town’s decision-making through the following strategic directions:

### Developing a Vision for Parks, Recreation and Culture

This is Ingersoll’s first comprehensive Community Services Master Plan. While past decisions were supported by the best information available at the time, most did not have the benefit of a thorough review of community priorities and decision-marking frameworks. The Master Plan’s extensive internal and external engagement process is structured to identify community expectations, while current research allows us to understand the influence of key demographic, growth and participation factors.



Alignment with leading practices and guiding documents (e.g., Framework for Recreation in Canada) will support the creation of a municipal mandate for service delivery and investment that is linked to equity and healthy, vibrant communities.

### Preparing for and Managing Change

Ingersoll is growing. With growth comes increased expectations for services and need to plan ahead through the dedication of parkland and sustainable funding models. Ingersoll's population is also changing, along with the needs of local residents. Ingersoll is witnessing growth in the older adult population in addition to many couples, families and retirees moving to the town. In addition, emerging park, recreation and culture interests are straining existing resources and there is a need to evaluate community needs and future directions. For example, there is growing demand for unstructured and inclusive activities that support healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

It is important for the Town to lay the groundwork to manage and support its evolution, including the creation of forward-looking policies, procedures and strategies that allow the community to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

### Establishing Effective Service Models and Appropriate Service Levels

The parks, recreation and culture sector is becoming increasingly sophisticated, with a need to evaluate and respond to requests in a timely, transparent and consistent manner. Establishing progressive service levels for park and open space maintenance, asset management, customer service, program delivery and community development are just some of the initiatives being championed by growing municipalities. This also means a heightened focus on items such as new funding approaches, staffing models, business practices, policy development, communication and marketing, volunteer support and partnerships. Recently the Town of Ingersoll has been working to formalize its policies and practices, but more work remains to strengthen relationships and ensure the efficient and effective delivery of service.

### Supporting Existing Parks and Infrastructure

The age and quality of municipal parks, infrastructure and equipment varies across the town. The Town has worked hard to maintain its assets and offer safe and fun leisure opportunities to its residents, such as the splash pad, playground, and washroom in Victoria Park. Other assets require added attention due to deterioration or changing needs, such as the Memorial Centre (arena), 50+ Activity Centre, and the bandshell in Memorial Park. Design and accessibility standards have also evolved considerably over the years. Lifecycle plans and long-term replacement strategies that reflect the needs of the community and its financial capabilities are required.

## Addressing Emerging Needs and Opportunities

The Master Plan's engagement program identified a desire amongst residents and stakeholders for new parks, facilities and programs that are not currently available in Ingersoll, such as an indoor walking track, pickleball courts, a pump track, and more. Other requests are lower cost and support the creation of an age-friendly community, such as the provision of seating, shade, washrooms and pathways. Needs will be evaluated further through the next phase of the Plan, with recognition of activity trends, alternate providers and regional supplies. Partnerships with others are a great way for municipalities to extend their reach and improve accessibility for residents.

### **1.3. Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Culture**

Parks, recreation, and cultural services and facilities are integral to our community's success and wellbeing. They contribute in a significant way to our social, economic, and environmental priorities by providing spaces for services and programs that benefit residents and support community-building. Universal access to leisure opportunities that address diverse needs and offer affordable, high-quality opportunities is vital to individual and community health and prosperity.

Specifically, parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities:

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing;
- Enhance social wellbeing and promote engagement and inclusion;
- Help build strong families and communities;
- Help people connect with nature;
- Help people develop critical and creative thinking skills; and
- Provide wide-ranging economic benefits.<sup>1</sup>

The Town is commended for recognizing these benefits and investing in this Community Services Master Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing" and "Ontario Culture Strategy (2016)"



## 1.4. Master Plan Process

This Master Plan project began in Spring 2021. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants led the development of this Master Plan with assistance and oversight from a Project Team consisting of Town staff. Input was also sought from the public, stakeholders and Town officials at key points in the process.

Directed by a Terms of Reference prepared by the Town, development of the Plan was divided into four phases.

Phase	Deliverables
<b>Phase 1</b> <b>Research Demographics and Future Use</b>	n/a
<b>Phase 2</b> <b>Conduct Public Consultation</b>	Communications Strategy Draft Consultation Report
<b>Phase 3</b> <b>Review Current Programs &amp; Service Delivery &amp; Usage</b>	Draft Community Services Master Plan
<b>Phase 4</b> <b>Final Community Services Master Plan</b>	Implementation Strategy Final Community Services Master Plan

## 2. Community Context

Several inputs are considered through the master planning process so that future directions are reflective of broad trends and best practices while remaining cognizant of the unique characteristics of Ingersoll.

### 2.1 Community Profile

Understanding Ingersoll's demographic profile and how it is anticipated to change informs current and future parks, recreation, and cultural services. The demographic information presented in this Section is largely based on the 2016 Statistics Canada Census; data release dates for the 2021 Census are staged throughout 2022.

#### Geographic Context

The Town of Ingersoll is located in Oxford County, in the core of Ontario's southwest. Ingersoll is situated along the busiest highway in Canada – Highway 401 – and is within easy driving distance to both Woodstock and London. The town offers visitors and residents a unique blend of leisure services set against an environment that is rich in history and natural landscapes. The town is encompassed by numerous trails and parks, and offers a variety of recreational and cultural experiences at several locations such as Victoria Park and the Victoria Park Community Centre, Ingersoll District Memorial Centre (arena), Fusion Centre, and 50+ Activity Centre.

**Figure 1: Regional Context Map**



Historically, the Town of Ingersoll was an agricultural community, but over the years has grown to be a leading industrial community. Ingersoll is home to approximately 14,240 residents and hosts CAMI Automotive and over 250 other businesses that employ roughly 7,200 people, of which there is a large commuter population from surrounding communities.

## Historical and Projected Population Growth

The 2021 Census reported a population of 13,693 for the Town of Ingersoll, growing steadily over the past twenty-plus years. Based on the County of Oxford's *Phase 1 Comprehensive Review Report (2020)* it is estimated that Ingersoll's **current 2021 population is 14,240**, a figure that is used as the baseline for this Study.

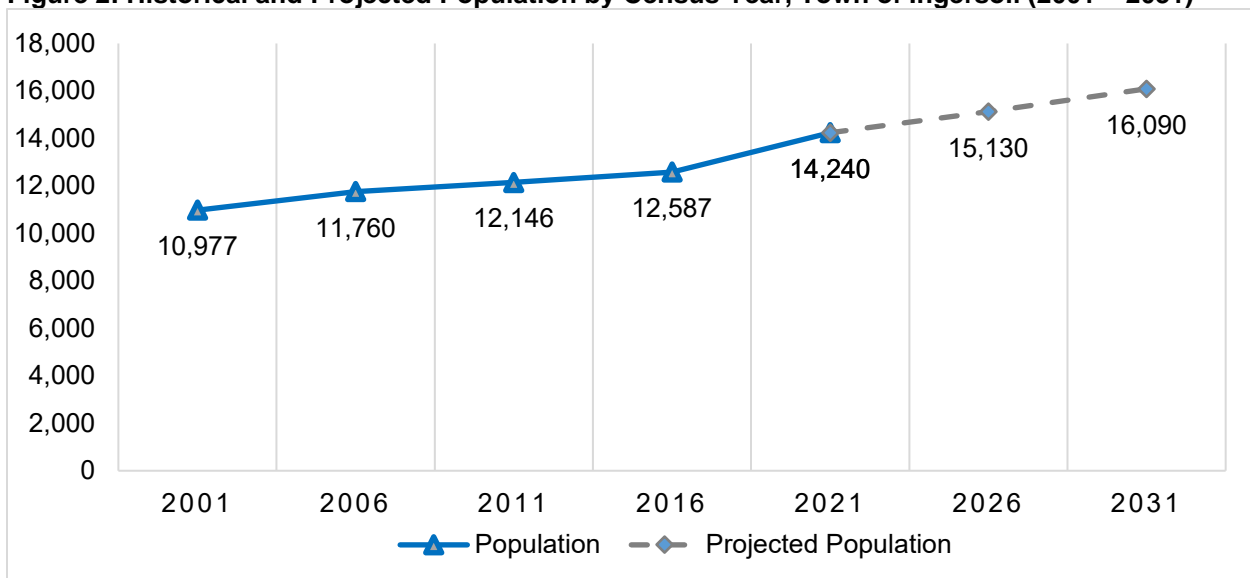
The population forecast suggests that Ingersoll's steady rate of growth will continue into the future, with the population estimated to reach **16,090 by 2031** (the ten-year timeframe of this Master Plan) and 18,960 by 2046. As Ingersoll's population will grow in both developing and established areas over the next ten years, consideration will need to be placed on where recreation facilities will be most effectively sited to service the needs of the community.

**Table 1: Population Projections, Town of Ingersoll (2021 – 2031)**

2021 Estimate	2031 Projection	2021 – 2031 Forecasted Growth	2021 – 2031 Forecasted Change
14,240	16,090	1,850	13%

Source: Oxford County, Phase 1 Comprehensive Review, 2020

**Figure 2: Historical and Projected Population by Census Year, Town of Ingersoll (2001 – 2031)**



Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2001, 2006, 2011, & 2016 (excluding undercount), Oxford County, Phase 1 Comprehensive Review, 2020.

Residential growth is predominantly taking place at the eastern and southern edges of the Town as there are vacant and/or underutilized greenfield lands in these locations. Active and planned subdivisions include:

- HarrisView in the south end – Phase 4 and 5 development is ongoing;
- Golf Estates in the south end – currently in Phase 2 of development;
- A draft plan of subdivision in the east end – approximately 60 units at this time;
- Ingersoll Golf and Country Club in the south end – proposed development consisting of roughly 500 units, including one multi-use apartment block consisting of a proposed 280 units; and
- several smaller infill residential developments within established areas are in various stages of approval and development.

### Age Composition

Age is an important factor for the planning of parks, recreation and culture services. Meeting the diverse needs of families with children and aging populations is a primary concern for many. Younger populations tend to frequent parks and recreation facilities at a higher rate and prioritize programs for children and youth, while older populations may favour more passive forms of recreational and cultural activities and flexible schedules.

Overall, the Canadian population is aging as the baby boom generation enters their senior years. The following table illustrates that all age groups experienced varying levels of growth between 2006 and 2021, with the exception of mature adults (ages 35 – 54), which declined slightly. The number of older adults (ages 55 – 69) experienced significant growth, followed by seniors (age 70+) and young adults (ages 20 – 34).

**Table 2: Population by Age, Town of Ingersoll (2006 – 2021)**

Age Category	2006	2021	Change (2006-2021)	Proportion of 2021 Population
<b>Children (0-9)</b>	1,455	1,580	125	11.5%
<b>Youth (10-19)</b>	1,690	1,700	10	12.4%
<b>Young Adults (20-34)</b>	2,070	2,480	410	18.1%
<b>Mature Adults (35-54)</b>	3,755	3,545	-210	25.9%
<b>Older Adults (55-69)</b>	1,610	2,800	1,190	20.4%
<b>Seniors (70+)</b>	1,175	1,595	420	11.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,755</b>	<b>13,700</b>	<b>1,945</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2006 & 2021 (excluding undercount).

The town's population is aging as Ingersoll's median age increased from 36.8 years to 40.8 years between 2001 and 2021, which is slightly lower compared to the Province (41.6 years) and Oxford County (41.6 years). The population in both Ingersoll and



Oxford County became a younger between the 2016 and 201 Census periods as both the median age figures declined slightly.

**Table 3: Median Age (2001 – 2016)**

Location	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Ingersoll	36.8	38.8	40.2	41.0	40.8
Oxford County	37.7	39.8	41.2	42.3	41.6
Ontario	37.2	39.0	40.4	41.3	41.6

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data, 2001 to 2021 (excluding undercount).

As national aging trends suggest, Ingersoll's demographic profile is expected to continue to age. With an increasing proportion of older adults, the town can expect a greater demand for parks, recreation, and culture services and opportunities oriented towards this age group.

In considering indoor recreation and culture services for older adults, research has indicated that the needs and expectations of emerging older adults (who have proven to be healthier and more active than previous generations) may be very different than past generations. For some, "seniors" programs or services may appear unattractive because they may not yet identify as "seniors". Many older adults continue to be engaged, active, and working longer than other generations. For others, there may be barriers to accessing indoor recreation and culture services and programs due to health challenges and disabilities.

While Town-specific age structure forecasts are not available to inform the Master Plan, Ontario's Ministry of Finance projections for Oxford County can provide an indication of future trends.

**Table 4: Age Cohort Forecasts for Oxford County**

Age Group	Proportion of 2021 Population		Proportion of 2031 Population		Change
	#	%	#	%	
Children (0-9)	14,715	12%	15,742	11%	7%
Youth (10-19)	14,592	12%	17,144	12%	17%
Young Adults (20-34)	22,816	18%	26,236	18%	15%
Mature Adults (35-54)	30,466	24%	36,217	25%	19%
Older Adults (55-69)	24,711	20%	24,858	17%	1%
Seniors (70+)	17,149	14%	24,546	17%	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>124,449</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>144,743</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16%</b>

Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2020-2046 Population Projections (2021) – Oxford County.

These projections suggest that all age groups will experience growth as a result of the County's overall growth; however, the number of children (0-9 years) and older adults (55-69 years) are not expected to keep pace with overall growth, thus making up a declining proportion of the overall population. The greatest rate of growth can be anticipated for seniors (aged 70+) with a 43% increase between 2021 and 2031.

### Income, Employment, and Education

Income and education are indicators of participation levels in parks, recreation, and culture pursuits. Generally speaking, higher participation levels are typically correlated with greater income or level of education. This correlation suggests that those with higher incomes participate to a greater degree than those with lower incomes, presumably due to greater disposable income and time. According to the 2016 Census, the median income for individuals over the age of 15 years in Ingersoll was \$37,120 in 2015, which is higher than the Oxford County figure (\$36,025) and Provincial median (\$33,539). The median income for households during the same period was \$73,882, higher than the County figure (\$72,294) but lower than the Provincial (\$74,287) median.

**Table 5: Median Income (2005 – 2015)**

Location	2005	2015
<b>Ingersoll – Individuals</b>	\$32,248	\$37,120
<b>Oxford County – Individuals</b>	\$29,189	\$36,025
<b>Ontario – Individuals</b>	\$29,335	\$33,539
<b>Ingersoll – Households</b>	\$60,107	\$73,882
<b>Oxford County – Households</b>	\$58,870	\$72,294
<b>Ontario – Households</b>	\$60,455	\$74,287

Source: Statistics Canada 2006, & 2016 Census (excluding undercount).

In 2016, 10.8% of households in Ingersoll were categorized as Low-Income Median After Tax (LIM-AT). This is the same as the County (10.8%), but lower than the Province (14.4%).

The Town of Ingersoll's unemployment rate was similar to Oxford County's in 2016, and lower than Ontario's. Since 2006, labour force participation in the Town of Ingersoll has declined, and unemployment has increased.

**Table 6: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment (2006 – 2016)**

Location	Participation Rate		Unemployment Rate	
	2006	2016	2006	2016
<b>Ingersoll</b>	71.8%	68.4%	4.9%	5.8%
<b>Oxford County</b>	69.3%	66.7%	4.8%	4.8%
<b>Ontario</b>	67.1%	64.7%	6.4%	7.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

In 2016, Ingersoll's population had very similar education levels as the population of Oxford County. However, Ingersoll has a lower percentage of residents with a post-secondary education (45.8%) compared to the provincial average (55.1%).

**Table 7: Educational Attainment (2006 – 2016)**

Employment	No certificate, diploma, or degree		High school diploma, or equivalent		Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	
	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
<b>Ingersoll</b>	28.8%	21.7%	31.0%	32.4%	40.2%	45.8%
<b>Oxford County</b>	29.3%	23.5%	29.7%	31.3%	40.9%	45.3%
<b>Ontario</b>	22.2%	17.5%	26.8%	27.4%	51.0%	55.1%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

These findings may suggest that Ingersoll residents may have a slightly greater ability to participate in parks, recreation and culture activities than others in Oxford County, but a slightly lower ability compared to the average Ontario resident, irrespective of cost of living and other participation barriers. It is important the Town continues to actively promote affordable recreational opportunities so all residents are able to derive the benefits of participation.

### Immigration and Ethnicity

The Town of Ingersoll's population is predominantly Canadian-born (94%), although the advancement of Canada's immigration policy suggests that this may change gradually over time. Different cultures value recreation and culture differently, or may be interested in non-traditional recreational and cultural services. As of 2016, 1.6% of Ingersoll residents identifies as a visible minority and 2.5% identified as Aboriginal.

**Table 8: Immigration, Town of Ingersoll (2006 – 2016)**

Immigration	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Non-Immigrant</b>	10,705	92.3%	11,300	94.4%	11,660	93.7%
<b>Immigrant</b>	890	7.7%	665	5.6%	790	6.3%
<b>Non-Permanent</b>	0	0%	10	0.1%	0	0%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount), & National Household Survey 2011

Mother tongue language has become more homogeneous within the Town of Ingersoll over time, with 95% of residents identifying their mother tongue as English. Other mother tongue languages among Ingersoll residents include Dutch (1.0%), French (0.8%), German (0.5%), and Polish (0.4%).

**Table 9: Mother Tongue (2006 – 2016)**

Mother Tongue	English		French		Other	
	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
<b>Ingersoll</b>	93.2%	94.7%	1.2%	0.8%	5.5%	4.1%
<b>Oxford County</b>	88.7%	90.2%	1.1%	1.0%	10.2%	8.8%
<b>Ontario</b>	68.6%	68.8%	4.1%	3.8%	27.3%	27.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

### Transportation and Mobility

The Town of Ingersoll historically has a large modal split pertaining to travel to work. As of 2016, this was still the case with 93.3% of the workforce taking their own private vehicle or as a passenger in another private vehicle to work (an increase of 2.6% from 2006). In 2016, 5.5% of Ingersoll's workforce population walked or biked to work. Seeing as how Ingersoll is a car-oriented community with very limited public transit, most residents are comfortable driving to access the parks, recreation, and culture services that they take part in the most.

**Table 10: Transportation Modes (2006 – 2016)**

Transportation Mode	Private Vehicle		Public Transit		Walked/Biked	
	2006	2016	2006	2016	2006	2016
<b>Ingersoll</b>	91.7%	93.3%	0.2%	0.3%	7.1%	5.5%
<b>Oxford County</b>	90.8%	92.8%	0.7%	0.9%	7.1%	5.4%
<b>Ontario</b>	79.2%	77.9%	12.9%	14.6%	6.8%	6.5%

Note: Totals may not add to 100% - "Other" not listed.

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

## **2.2 Key Trends in Parks, Recreation and Culture**

This section highlights trends related to the parks, recreation and culture sector. Trends observed at the national and provincial level are identified, along with their implications in the local context. Most of these trends reflect a pre-COVID-19 participation lens, in anticipation that they will remain relevant as the recovery continues. The last section contains an discussion on the potential long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector, recognizing that this is an evolving discussion.

### Lifestyle and Socio-Demographic Trends

**Population Growth:** While the Town of Ingersoll's population has been steadily growing over recent years, the Town is expecting significant future growth up to 13% (or 1,850 people) over the next ten years. This level of growth can be expected to result in demand for new or expanded leisure opportunities while creating opportunities to optimize existing facilities and programming. The Town is in a unique position as there has recently been significant growth pressures throughout the Oxford County area.



**Aging Population:** The aging of Canada's population is significantly influencing parks, recreation, and culture opportunities. This trend is driven by older adults wishing to remain active as they age, including those seeking lifelong learning opportunities, and persons managing chronic illness, disease, and/or those that are seeking low-impact, therapeutic, and rehabilitative programs. The Community Services Department and 50+ Activity Centre offer a broad range of fitness, culture, and drop-in programs geared towards older adults and seniors including, trails, aquafit, and other activities to ensure that these key age groups continue to lead healthy, and active lifestyles.

**Economic Trends:** Income disparity is a growing concern in Ontario, causing a shift in recreational and cultural offerings to include more low-to-no cost alternatives. Participation rates are declining among many registered activities in response to increasing costs of participation, such as registration, equipment, and travel. With 10.8% of households being classified as low-income, Ingersoll has taken further steps to minimize financial barriers through its Community Services Financial Accessibility Program to offset costs to participate in a program/membership.

**Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities:** To comply with the 2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), municipalities have renovated public spaces to meet barrier-free standards, provided AODA-specific customer service training, and are continuously seeking opportunities to offer inclusive programs and services, regardless of ability. Ingersoll's Accessibility Plan demonstrates the Town's commitment to promoting inclusion and removing accessibility barriers from all public spaces. The Town has taken several steps to improve accessibility, guided by their Accessibility Advisory Committee and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

#### Participation Trends

**Participation in Sport:** Demand for prime-time access is also evolving. The after-work hours of 5:00 to 9:00 pm are traditionally reserved for child and youth programming. However, residents' lives are becoming increasingly busy and as a result adults, older adults and seniors are seeking opportunities to recreate during the same peak operating hours. One example of this can be found in communities where indoor pickleball has seen tremendous growth; a growing population of adults still in the workforce want to play in the evenings. Adult recreational sports are growing in general, particularly activities such as co-ed softball and soccer.



**Youth Engagement:** While most communities offer a broad range of sport programming, the majority of youth (all genders) do not play organized sport. Further, recent ParticipACTION Report Cards indicate that Canadian children and youth are not meeting recommended daily and weekly physical activity levels. Today's youth are intrinsically tied to technology and social media that can contribute towards sedentary lifestyles, social isolation and mental health issues. Municipalities and private service providers are combatting these challenges by offering dedicated spaces and programs to encourage youth to gather, socialize and recreate in activities that are safe, comfortable and of interest to them. Ingersoll understand this – the Fusion Centre was established through a youth-directed vision and local leadership and has grown to become one of the leading youth service providers in the Province.

**Health and Wellness:** A holistic and multi-faceted approach to health and wellness (including health promotion, socialization, mindfulness, and management of stress and anxiety) is significantly influencing active living. Another trend influencing how programs are structured and delivered is the adoption of Sport for Life's Long-Term Development Models and the introduction of physical literacy in programs and training. The Town and community organizations provide a variety of active and passive leisure opportunities such as skating and swimming programs, baseball leagues, cultural experiences at the Creative Arts Centre, and opportunities to get outside and explore nature through trails and parks.

**Physical Inactivity is Increasing:** Research has found that physical activity levels are low and have not improved in the past number of years due to high reports of increasingly busy lifestyles and the rise of sedentary behaviours. To combat this, many service providers are working together to increase communications, modify programs and service levels, encourage participation, and support healthy and active lifestyles. The Town attempts to curb physical activity through providing various opportunities for recreation and physical activity, whether it be structured (e.g., skating and swimming programs, camps, etc.) or unstructured (e.g., drop-in programs, use of parks and trail systems) as well as by highlighting various physical opportunities on the Town website.

**Active Transportation:** Active transportation is becoming a core element of complete communities. Human-powered modes of travel that are undertaken for utilitarian (day-to-day) purposes such as cycling, walking, or skateboarding are common forms of active transportation. Examples of active transportation facilities may include dedicated cycling infrastructure, signed pathways and trails, or wayfinding and navigation assistance. Guided by local and County master plans, Ingersoll boasts a growing off-street trail network and is seeing rising interest in on-street cycling.





## Programming and Policy Trends

### **Increased Demand for Unstructured Activities:**

Participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set participation schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured, and self-scheduled times to participate. This is compounded by changes in demand for prime-time access – more adults and seniors are seeking activities in the evening, a shift from traditional daytime or late-evening provision. Participation in adult activities is also growing and youth engagement is being embraced in many communities. Ingersoll has numerous parks with ample open space where unstructured activity can take place and the Town offers several drop-in type activities such as public swimming and skating.



### **Inclusion – Serving All Ages, Abilities and**

**Backgrounds:** Inclusion and access is a key goal for Ingersoll’s Community Service Department. To ensure access for all, the following barriers to participation should be considered: economic (e.g., costs associated with participation); information (e.g., knowledge and information sharing about available opportunities); geographic (e.g., equitable distribution of facilities and services), and attitudinal (e.g., ensuring all participants feel welcomed and supported). The Town’s Accessibility Plan outlines several ways Ingersoll has responded to ensure that programs and spaces are inclusive to all residents and visitors.



**Use of Technology:** Technological advances have enabled both service providers and users to be more aware of the parks, recreation, and culture opportunities in their communities. This may include websites that summarize facilities, services and program offerings, online portals for program registration, synchronization with smartphone applications, and more. The Town has embraced the use of technology in a number of ways to improve communication with the public. For example, residents can register for programs online, and the Town is connected with over 2,700 followers on Facebook, and growing following on

Twitter. In addition, the pandemic has led to increased demand for virtual programming, with some municipalities piloting initiatives aimed at keeping residents active and engaged.

**Leveraging Partnership Opportunities:** Collaborations with private or non-profit organizations are becoming increasingly common in Ontario municipalities. These help to distribute financial costs and benefit from economies of scale and shared expertise. Community access to schools (especially gymnasiums) is also encouraged though reliable and cost-effective access is frequently cited as a barrier to use. The Town has also partnered with groups such as the 50+ Activity Centre and Creative Arts Centre to make better use of under-utilized buildings within its portfolio.

### Facility Provision and Design Trends

**Aging Infrastructure:** Many municipalities in Ontario are faced with aging infrastructure (e.g., arenas, pools, courts, program spaces, halls, etc.) and are pursuing renewal and reinvestment projects often using non-traditional funding approaches. These projects also provide opportunities to rethink provision and consider facility conversion or adaptive re-use options that accommodate emerging activities. Ingersoll's capital budget identifies projects to improve or replace its aging infrastructure like investing in the Multi-Use Recreational Facility project by committing \$250,000 annually to a reserve, as well as continuing to invest in various recreation and culture facilities, sports fields, parks, and trail system within the Town.

**Multi-Use and Multi-Generational Facilities:** Modern recreation and culture facilities provide a convenient “one-stop shop” experience. The community hub model has been applied to indoor recreation and culture facilities as well as parks designed to engage users of all ages and abilities. The Town recently undertook a Multi-Use Recreational Facility Study to determine a strategy to move forward with a multi-use facility that can be used by all (see next section for more detail).



### Parks Planning and Design Trends

**Connecting with Nature:** There is a growing amount of research that highlights the benefits of interacting with nature, especially through participation in physical activity (e.g., walking, hiking, etc.). Some ways that municipalities have encouraged residents to spend time outdoors are through the provision of community gardens, and establishing partnerships with environmental stewardship groups to educate the public on sustainability and ecologically friendly activities. Emphasis is also being placed on



outdoor play opportunities for children and youth, including natural playgrounds. Ingersoll offers residents and visitors an opportunity to connect with nature through natural environments within and surrounding the Town, as well as the local trail system.

**System of Parks:** It is important for municipalities to provide a variety of parks within varying functions, including active parks and passive spaces. These parks should be animated through thoughtful design (including access to shade, seating, and washrooms, where appropriate) and enhanced site infrastructure (access to hydro, water, etc.) to encourage and promote community activities and events. As the Town grows, it will be important to define the parks system and appropriate amenities within each park type in order to guide new development.

**Environmental Design and Climate Change:** Principles of environmental sustainability and environmentally-conscious facility designs are being ingrained in the sector. Parks are being increasingly recognized for their role in improving air quality, mitigating flooding from extreme weather, and reducing the urban heat island effect. Common standards for environmental sustainability help to guide investment and ensure that new infrastructure includes design features such as low impact development practices, solar panels, geothermal heating, recirculation systems, etc. The Town is committed to making Ingersoll more environmentally-friendly with objectives in past strategic plans to develop an environmental strategy for the Town, develop a recycling strategy, commit to active transportation, and other green initiatives.

### Trails Trends

**Active Transportation within the Trail Network:** Active transportation infrastructure is an important part of an efficient and sustainable transportation system. An interconnected active transportation system consisting of on and off-road trails, pathways and sidewalks offers many personal health and wellness benefits by facilitating outdoor physical activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many municipalities observed a surge in their active transportation systems as residents participated close to home and sought to connect with nature through trails. Active transportation also has an environmental benefit for road users as it alleviates road congestion and minimizes vehicular greenhouse gas emissions, land consumption, and the costs for road construction and maintenance. From a social perspective, active transportation can heighten community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more livable communities where people are more likely to have personal contact with each other.



**Supporting Comfort Amenities:** Comfortable experiences for trail users is paramount to maximizing participation. An effective trail network typically incorporates a number of convenience and comfort-based features at strategic locations along major routes and trail heads. Users often look for amenities such as natural landscaping, signage, shade, benches, washrooms and rest areas, fitness equipment, parking and pavilions. The Town's trail network has shade and rest locations at strategic locations, with benches that offer users an opportunity to stop and take a break.



### Arts and Cultural Trends

**Investing in our Residents and Community:** Nurturing local cultural activity can be considered an “investment” that can reap long-term rewards. For example, arts education helps in child-development and has many positive social impacts. While delivery is typically community-based, municipalities are seeking strategic approaches to support local organizations, including funding and subsidy programs. For example, Ingersoll's Creative Arts Centre offers numerous arts, and cultural activities and the Cheese and Agricultural Museum sheds light on Ingersoll's historically agricultural community. In addition, the Town's 2006 Cultural Strategy outlines plans to support and collaborate with others within the sector to build capacity and maximize the use of existing cultural assets.



**Attendance and Participation:** Research on attendance is broad but highlights growing participation and high levels of appreciation for arts and culture across the country. Residents' value authentic experiences and the unique attributes of communities. People are also experiencing and appreciating arts and culture in less traditional ways and have increasing expectations for programs and events. The Town organizes the annual Festival of Lights and lends support to several providers that facilitate arts and cultural programs and events.

**Economic Value of Cultural Industries:** Increased collaboration among groups and local businesses helps to build grassroots and sustainable support for creative industries. It is critical that municipalities help organizations build capacity and establish a sense of place. Ingersoll's Cheese and Agricultural Museum is an example of how the Town can create a unique sense of place that draws tourists and visitors, potentially creating economic spin-off opportunities.

### Potential Impacts of COVID-19 on Community Services

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



Recognizing that the situation is evolving and new information and guidance is emerging on a regular basis, municipalities (including Ingersoll) must prepare for a wide range of scenarios.

The following are some of the many potential impacts the pandemic may have on the sector in the short- to longer-term:

- Continued population growth in small to mid-size communities (such as Ingersoll);
- Emphasis on health equity and access to parks, trails, and natural areas;
- Growing interest in unstructured, individual and small group activities (including “registered” drop-in activities);
- Desire for outdoor recreation (including all-season use), placing pressure on trails, parks, washrooms, etc.;
- A possible shift in prime-time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteers and events;
- Substantial changes to operations (e.g., touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.), possibly with funding and capacity implications;
- Significant impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – people need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking (or renegotiation) of some third-party partnerships; and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.).



## 2.3 Supporting Documents

This Master Plan has regard for other municipal plans, studies, reports, and policies so that it forms part of an integrated decision-making framework. The pages that follow summarize key documents.

### Town of Ingersoll Strategic Plan (2021 – underway)

The Town of Ingersoll is currently developing a Strategic Plan to establish a clear vision for Ingersoll's future. The Strategic Plan involves public consultation, including workshops and a community survey. When completed, the plan will address internal organizational capacity including the maintenance of existing service levels across all departments and will consider external challenges and opportunities.

### Town of Ingersoll Multi-use Recreation Centre Feasibility Study (2017)

In 2017, the Town of Ingersoll prepared a Multi-use Recreation Centre (MURC) Feasibility Study largely to establish a strategy to replace the aging Ingersoll District Memorial Centre (arena). The arena at the time of the Study was 57 years old (now 61 years old – 2021) and had already undergone two different facility renewals. The existing ice pad is undersized (190' x 85') and an engineering report at the time of this Study determined that the Memorial Centre would require over \$2 million in renewal investments moving forward for the arena. Staff report that this amount is substantially more today.

The purpose of the MURC Study was to determine whether or not a multi-use recreation centre would be a feasible replacement for the existing arena based off usage and costs to continue to maintain and operate the existing arena, in addition to housing other recreation facilities/opportunities (e.g., an indoor pool, fitness centre, gymnasium, etc.). The study determined that a new arena with the potential of adding a second pad was needed based off the primetime ice usage (96%) and projected growth in ice sport participation. It was determined that girls and boys minor hockey and the adult league(s) could collectively utilize an additional 20 to 30 hours per week of primetime ice to support their programs, bringing the second pad to 40% to 50% primetime capacity. The minor hockey clubs indicated a willingness to pay a surcharge over a ten-year period to assist with the construction of a new facility.

The report noted that multi-use recreation facilities were being developed in some surrounding communities (e.g., Dorchester, Komoka, etc.) showcasing how these facilities can operate and how the various spaces can be used by different user groups and activities. Other reasons why these facilities are popular are their increased destination/activity integration opportunities, operating cost efficiencies, and enhanced support for tournaments and meets. Additionally, these facilities allow for municipalities to build their own gymnasiums and not rely on school facilities and the various challenges associated with them.



The MURC Study recommended replacing the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre with the following:

- **Phase 1 (Core Components)**

- Single pad arena, with a possible 40' x 40' second ice surface for shooting, clinics and public skating.
- Indoor walking track
- Multi- use space with meeting rooms for banquets, fundraising events, conferences, meetings and related uses, with an initial capacity level of 300 to 500 people, possibly integrated with a gymnasium
- Double gymnasium, possibility integrated with a multi- use space
- Seniors Activity Centre
- Possible fitness/wellness centre
- Possible soccer and baseball fields

- **Phase 2 (Future Considerations)**

- A second indoor ice pad
- Replacement of the existing indoor swimming pool at VPCC (long-term)
- Possible indoor soccer facility



The 2017 Study identified a number of potential partnerships that could be explored to assist with the funding of a multi-use facility, such as:

- Township of Zorra – indicated interest if a complex was developed. Would look at the possibility of decommissioning the Thamesford Arena. This partnership would require a twin pad facility and be focused on that activity space.
- Ingersoll District Curling Club – could work off the arena’s ice equipment and could have a new and expanded facility to meet evolving needs.
- Southwest Oxford – not viable; however, a possible capital grant could potentially be available based on proportionate use by Southwest Oxford residents.
- Creative Arts Centre – could be considered, but there is a five-year time constraint, and the group has preference for their existing site due to the natural environment within Victoria Park. They would also need \$1.5 million to replace and expand their current facility.
- YMCA – Pursue discussions with the YMCA and/or other service providers on a possible expanded fitness/wellness centre

The Town’s Multi-Use Recreation Centre Ad Hoc Committee has examined potential locations and funding strategies for this project. Two sites remain under consideration: 200 Clarke Road at the Town’s south end (Town-owned industrial lands); and 99 North Town Line Road East at the Town’s northern edge (privately-owned and in the Township of Zorra).

The Town’s 2019/20 application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program was not successful. The Town continues to seek financial strategies that will move this project forward. The proposed multi-use recreation complex is estimated to cost \$24.9 million (2020 estimate).

#### County Official Plan (1995)

The Section 9 of the County of Oxford Official Plan (1995, Consolidated 2021) contains land use policies for the Town of Ingersoll. Several goals are identified with applicability to parks, recreation, and culture:

- To promote a variety of community services in a co-ordinated manner which are appropriate to available resources and responsive to the needs of all members of the community.
- To provide recreational and leisure time activities and facilities for its residents of all ages.

Furthermore, the Plan outlines the following relevant objectives:

- Satisfy the year-round leisure needs and choices of Ingersoll residents by providing ample and sufficiently varied leisure resources.
- Protect and enhance the existing leisure resources of the Town while planning for future leisure needs by providing a policy framework for the delivery of such services.

- Ensure the proper distribution, siting and design of leisure resources by establishing the guidelines for the development, acquisition and/or disposal of such resources.
- Optimize the use and accessibility of leisure resources by encouraging multiple uses, by providing convenient and secure access to leisure uses, and by siting leisure resources in proximity to related land uses such as schools.
- Increase participation in leisure pursuits by enhancing existing facilities and providing new facilities which promote a varied, stimulating and secure leisure environment.
- Augment those lands and facilities provided by the Town for leisure services by requiring on-site recreational amenities and/or open space linkages in new development.
- Promote the development of Smith's Pond for conservation and recreation purposes.
- Promote the full utilization of the lands along the Thames River for leisure purposes.

#### Oxford County Trails Master Plan (2014)

The County's Trails Master Plan was developed as a result of the increasing demand for active transportation and recreation opportunities for a variety of uses such as: walking, cycling, hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing, etc. The plan is intended to answer emerging community trends and the increasing demand for an interconnected system of off-road trails linked by on-road cycling routes within rural and urban areas. The plan: builds on existing trails and on-road cycling infrastructure; bridges gaps in the existing system; highlights potential opportunities for destination trails; and outlines roles, responsibilities, and priorities for future consideration and implementation. The plan encompasses the following long-term vision for trails within Oxford County:

*"Oxford County understands the quality of life and tourism benefits associated with trail development, and supports connecting key community destinations found in the County's rural areas and urban centres through a continuous and connected system of off-road trails and on-road cycling linkages."*



The vision is supported by six goals:

1. Build upon the work that has previously been completed by the Oxford County Trails Council, local municipalities, Conservation Authorities and other trail related interest groups and stakeholders;

2. Improve connectivity between population centres;
3. Improve and provide on and off-road connections between existing trail systems
4. Accommodate a range of on and off-road trail users (i.e., pedestrians, hikers, cyclists, etc.) of all ages and abilities;
5. Identify roles and responsibilities for trail design, implementation and maintenance; and
6. Identify funding and partnership opportunities to facilitate the implementation and operations of the trails network.

Built-up areas such as Ingersoll are often limited in off-road connections. On-road linkages provide a solution for this since they can be more easily implemented and improve the overall trail system's connections. Some municipalities in Oxford County (such as Ingersoll) have developed policies, plans, and initiatives to design and implement on-road cycling facilities on municipal roadways. One example of this is the bike lane that was added on Clarke Road in Ingersoll. All of the priorities identified for Ingersoll involved the development of on-road signed routes and paved shoulders – no additional off-road trails or trail extensions were proposed by this plan.

#### Oxford County Cycling Master Plan (2021 – underway)

The County's Cycling Master Plan is currently being developed with the following objectives in mind:

- Better connect significant community areas and key destinations through municipal cycling and trail networks that also align with provincial cycling initiatives, such as the province-wide cycling network;
- Plan for multi-modal connections between cycling and public transit, carpool lots, and passenger rail service, and identify commuter cycling routes to support travel by bike to and from work or other major trips; and
- Support education and promote tourism opportunities to create a stronger culture of cycling in Oxford County.

To date, the Cycling Master Plan (Phase One Report) identifies that there are many busy roads and a lack of safe, connected cycling routes between destinations, as well as an overall lack of cycling infrastructure. Ingersoll – along with Woodstock and Tillsonburg – has some of the highest demand routes, meaning that the routes experience significant usage. Often times these routes are aligned with existing facilities, however sometimes they are long-distance rural routes that connect communities, such as Beachville Road between Ingersoll and Woodstock.

Work on this plan is ongoing, including refinement of the recommended cycling network.



## Town of Ingersoll Cultural Strategy (2006)

The purpose of the Cultural Strategy was to prepare a community-supported strategy that generates social and economic benefits for residents in Ingersoll and the surrounding area. It is an overall strategic plan that developed the foundation for a vibrant and healthy cultural sector with goals to achieve maximum participation of Ingersoll's cultural organizations. It was a ten-year plan that included:

- A cultural policy and cultural facilities needs assessment;
- A Master Plan for ongoing downtown improvements, as well as the museum, Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts, and arts centre enhancements;
- A management system to help guide individual organizations in more effectively cooperating and working together; and
- A granting structure to secure contributions and prioritize cultural initiatives.

The Cultural Strategy established priorities intended to guide and position the Town to achieve the following vision:

*"Ingersoll residents and visitors alike enjoy Ingersoll's rich, diverse and well-presented cultural resources. Residents of all ages are heavily engaged in a healthy and a balanced lifestyle of lifelong learning, community pride, heritage/artistic appreciation, and respect for the environment."*

Guiding principles from the 2006 Cultural Strategy included:

- local cultural resources deemed as important to the residents of Ingersoll;
- cultural resources play an important economic role;
- cultural vitality is essential to Ingersoll's health and sustainability as a community;
- cultural resources attract visitors, residents, and businesses;
- the community welcomes creative individuals and organizations;
- the community has the responsibility to introduce culture to its youth;
- all cultural organizations need to work together;
- all levels of government investment in Ingersoll's culture are welcomed; and
- cultural resources are supported and promoted.



### 3. Public and Stakeholder Input

Targeted engagement with residents and stakeholders (e.g., service clubs, community organizations, Town officials and staff, etc.) offers an understanding of current issues and future opportunities for enhancing community services in Ingersoll. For this Master Plan, a comprehensive community engagement strategy was developed to promote public dialogue throughout the process.

*Note: The information and suggestions presented in this section has informed the analysis contained within subsequent sections, but should not be interpreted as recommendations. Community input has not been altered, even in instances where comments may incorrectly reflect the Town's actual policies, practices, or provision.*

#### 3.1 Approach to Community Engagement

The Master Plan project included a blend of in-person and virtual/online community engagement tactics due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This created new opportunities for the public and stakeholders to become involved in the planning process.

Engagement tactics for this Master Plan included:

- Project Webpage and Email for written submissions
- Public Input Session #1 (in-person and virtual)
- Community Survey
- Stakeholder Focus Groups (4)
- Council and Key Informant Interviews
- Staff Workshop
- Regular Meetings with the Project Team
- Presentation to Council
- Public Input Session #2 (in-person)

#### 3.2 Community Survey

To support the development of this Master Plan, the Town hosted an online community survey that was available over a period of four weeks during summer 2021. The survey was promoted by the Town in a variety of ways. More than half (55%) learned over the survey from the Town's social media accounts and 14% found out about it through signs in Town parks and buildings. The survey was also promoted through the municipal website, traditional media, community groups, and word of mouth.

A total of **634 unique responses** were received; being a voluntary, self-directed survey, response rates varied by question.



The survey response rate is excellent for a community of this size and represents the opinions of an estimated 2,200 residents – approximately 15% of Ingersoll's population.

Specifically, the survey gathered information regarding: participation rates in organized and unorganized activities; barriers to activity; facility use and suggested improvements; support for investment; and opinion/agreement with various statements. Finally, the survey helped establish a profile of parks, recreation, and culture users in Ingersoll by collecting relevant demographic information. Tabulated survey response data has been provided in **Appendix A**.

Although the survey was self-selected, the correlation analysis assumes a significant sample with a 95% confidence level (correct 19 times out of 20). The margin of error varies by subset according to the number of responses. Based on these parameters, the following findings are noted.

Participation in Parks, Recreation, and Culture Activities

To understand what residents like to do with their leisure time, the survey asked which of parks, recreation, and cultural activities households participated in since 2019 (the period both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic) in Ingersoll or elsewhere. Listed below are the five most **popular activities** respondents participated in. A common element among the most popular activities – such as enjoying parks, open spaces, and natural areas; walking or hiking for leisure; use of playground equipment; and dog walking – is that they are unstructured and can generally be self-scheduled, which is consistent with participation trends observed across Ontario.



The full list of parks, recreation, and cultural activities and their respective participation levels (at the household level) are shown on the following chart. Other notable activities include:

- 52% use of splash pads;
- 44% swimming (recreational);
- 34% ice sports – the most common team sport, higher than baseball (29%) and soccer (19%); and
- 8% skateboard and 5% pickleball – individual or small group sports that appeal to certain age groups tended to have lower reported participation.

Respondents living in **South Ingersoll** were more likely than respondents living in other areas to participate in **dog walking (on or off leash)**.

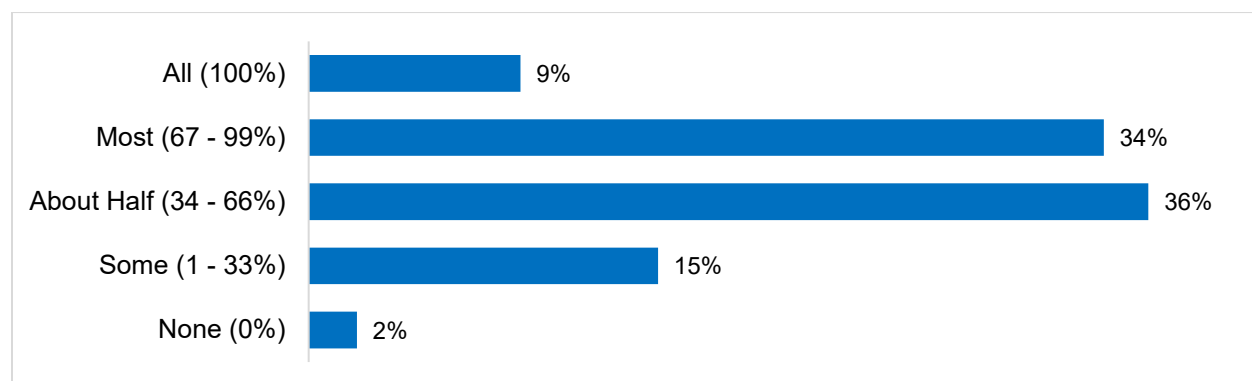
**Figure 3: Households Participating in Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Activities (before and during the COVID-19 pandemic) (n = 634)**





The survey asked **where** respondents were participating in their leisure activities. More than two-fifths of residents (43%) have “all” or “most” of their needs met locally, while less than one-fifth (17%) have “some” or “none” of their needs met locally.

**Figure 4: Proportion of Leisure Needs met within the Town of Ingersoll (n = 623)**



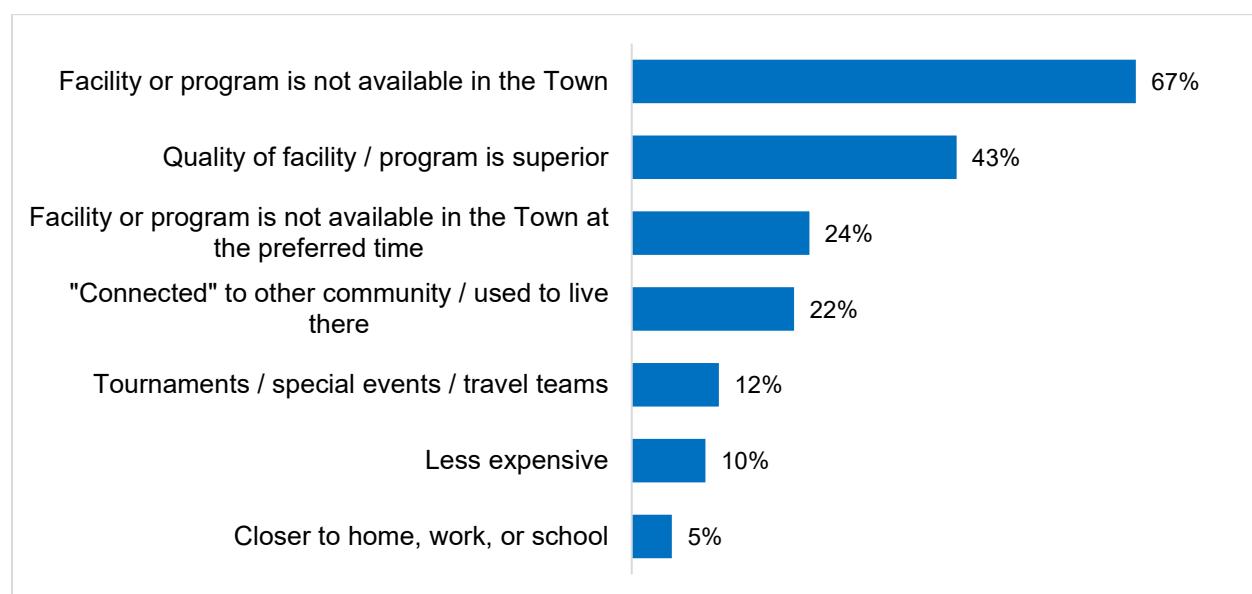
Note: ‘Don’t know’ responses are excluded.

The top activities that respondents participated in **outside of Ingersoll** (since 2019) include:

- hiking, walking and use of trails;
- special events and concerts;
- hockey and skating;
- biking;
- swimming;
- performing arts activities; and
- golfing.

Respondents participated in activities **outside of Ingersoll** for a number of reasons. For those that do not have all of their leisure needs met locally, most (67%) travel beyond the town because the facility of program is not available locally.

**Figure 5: Reasons for Participating in Leisure Activities Outside of Ingersoll (n = 447)**



Note: ‘Don’t know’ responses are excluded.

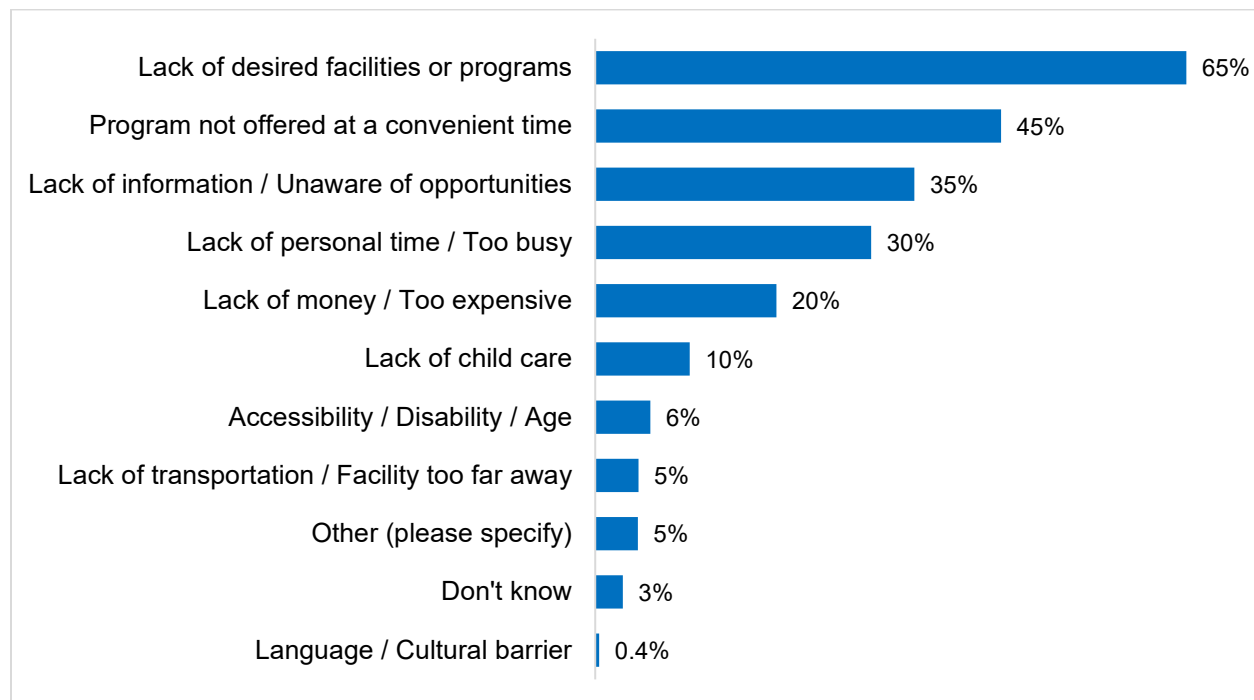
## Barriers to Participation

Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents were unable to participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities as often as they would like. The lack of desired facilities or programs was the number one participation barrier (65%) suggesting that the provision of opportunities could be improved. Programs not being offered at convenient times was another common reason (45%).

Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents were unable to participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities as often as they would like.

The following figure illustrates the **most common barriers** to participating in parks, recreation, and culture activities (excluding the COVID-19 pandemic) that were identified by respondents.

**Figure 6: Participation Barriers to Parks, Recreation, and Culture Activities (n = 223)**



Further analysis reveals that respondents that indicated they are unable to participate as often as they would like were more likely to:

- have “some or none” of their parks, recreation, and cultural needs met within Ingersoll;
- identify a “lack of programs/facilities” or “quality of programs/facilities” as being a reason why they participate outside of Ingersoll; and
- indicate lower levels of satisfaction with parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities for all age groups, including most Town-directed programming (except for youth programs at the Fusion Centre).

Conversely, respondents that indicated no barriers to participation were more likely to:

- have all or most of their parks, recreation, and cultural needs met within Ingersoll;
- indicate that they are informed about the Town's parks, facilities, programs, and events; and
- indicate that the Town's parks, recreation, and cultural programs are affordable for their household.

A broad range of suggestions were offered when respondents were asked what **additional parks, recreation, and culture opportunities** they would like to see offered in Ingersoll. Top suggestions included:

- improved and safer trails and paths;
- more special events;
- improved park spaces;
- additional programming, including children's programming, and increased availability of programs and classes;
- outdoor skating;
- a new arena;
- improved playgrounds; and
- an additional splash pad.

### Importance and Satisfaction

Levels of importance and satisfaction with respect to various aspects of the Town's parks, recreation, and culture system are illustrated below. Expectations are not being met when levels of importance are high and levels of satisfaction are low. This was the case for all listed programs and activities. The most significant gaps are in the following areas, although the differences between most choices was not substantial:

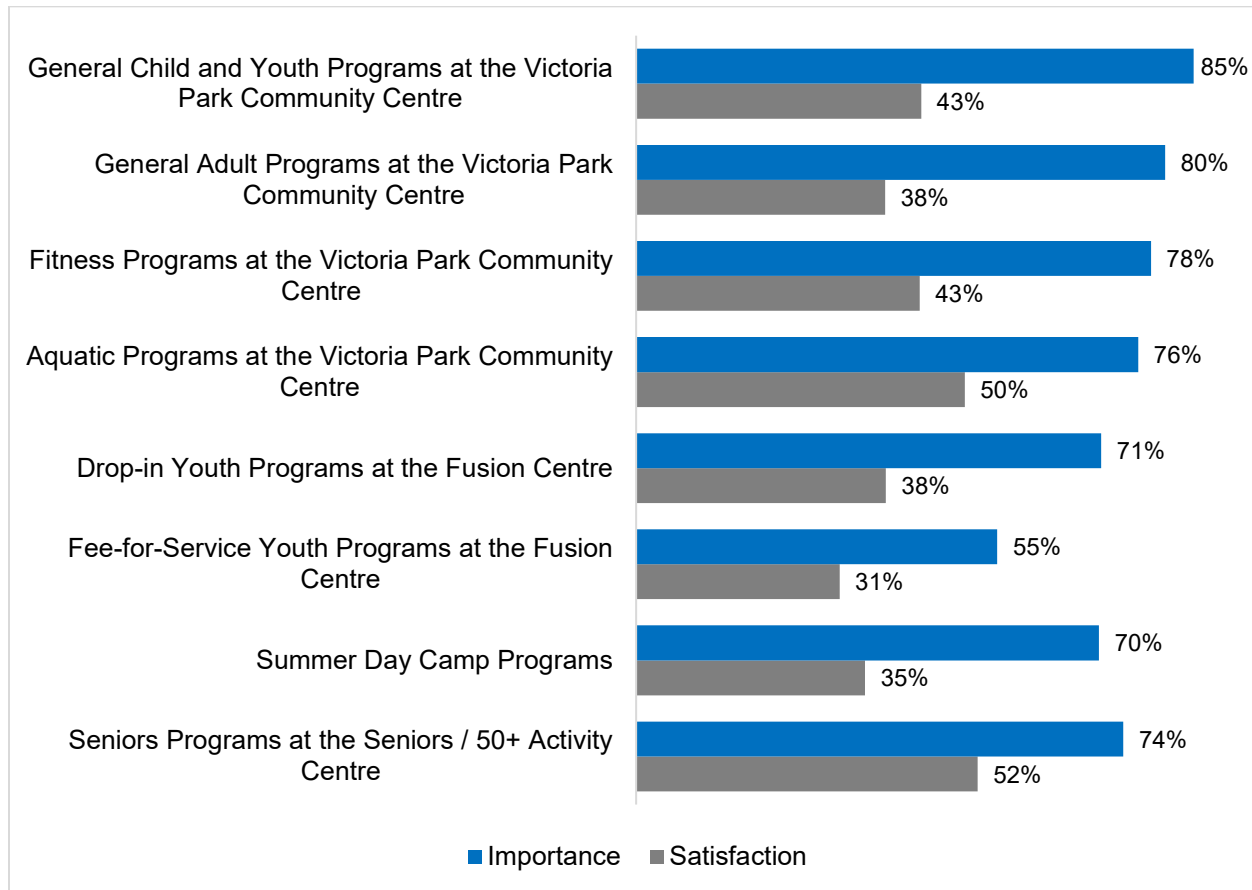
- general child and youth programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre; and
- general adult programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre.

Highest satisfaction levels were expressed for the Seniors Programs at the Seniors/50+ Activity Centre (52%) and the Town's aquatic programs (50%). "Dissatisfaction" levels for all activities ranged from 7% to 18%, meaning that most respondents offered a neutral response – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

It bears noting that the levels of satisfaction appear to be driven more by perception than reality. This is based on the finding that respondents with children at home were more likely to be satisfied with general child and youth programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre and fee-for-service youth programs at the Fusion Centre. Further, respondents without children at home (many of which are older adults) were more likely to be satisfied with seniors' programs at the Seniors/50+ Activity Centre.

Respondents living in **North Ingersoll** were more likely than respondents living in other areas to be **less satisfied** with parks, recreation and culture opportunities for adults and older adults/seniors.

**Figure 7: Importance and Satisfaction of Parks, Recreation, and Culture Facilities and Programs in the Town (n = 210-471)**

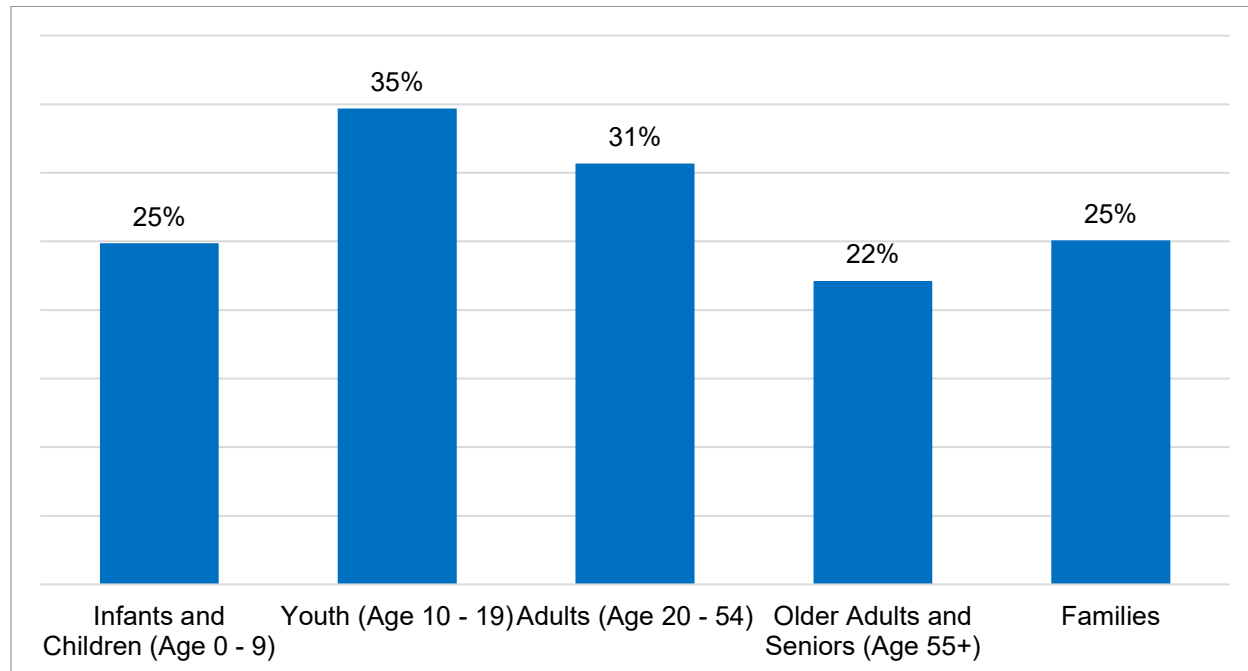


Note: 'Don't know' responses are excluded, and 'Neutral' responses are not shown.

The following figure illustrates levels of dissatisfaction with parks, recreation, and culture opportunities by **age group**, with the highest levels being associated with youth (35%) and adults (31%). It is noted that many respondents chose to complete this question whether they did or did not have members of each age group within their household, suggesting that some responses may be based more on perception than reality. It is typical in these surveys to see requests for more youth programming due to the bias commonly associated with the problem behaviours of some teenagers.



**Figure 8: Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation, and Culture Opportunities by Age Group**  
(n = 443-639)



### Priorities

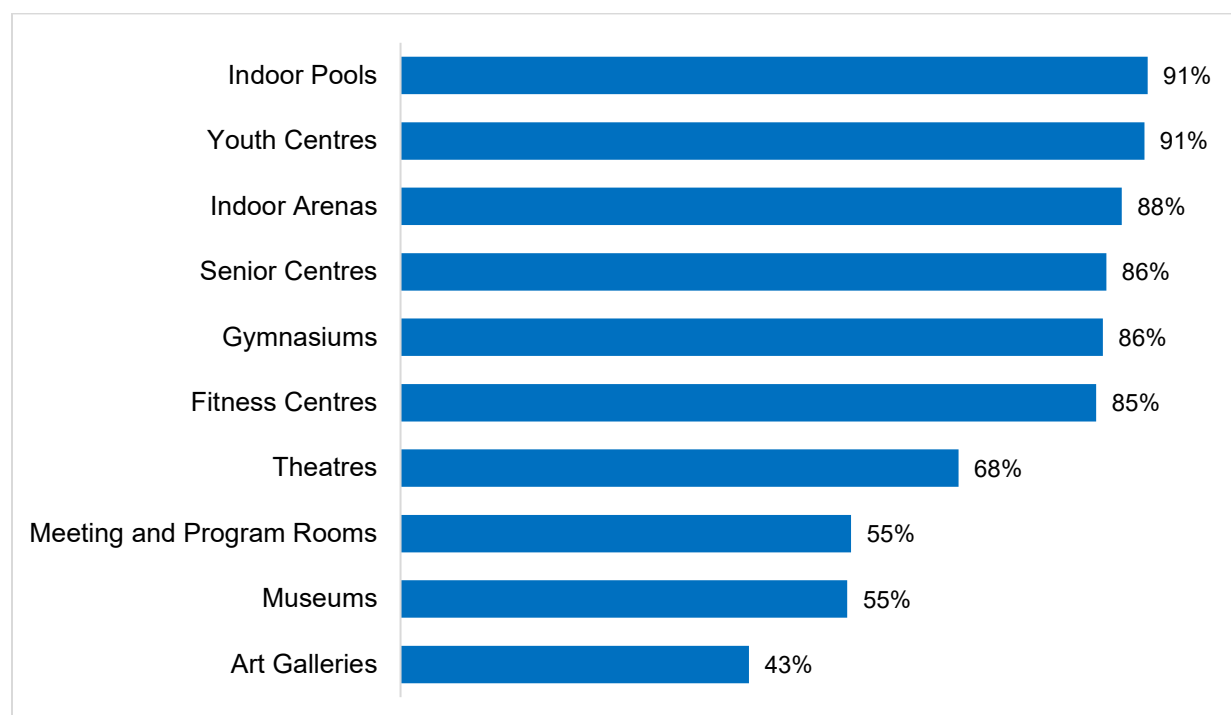
Respondents were asked to identify their **level of support for various statements** with respect to parks, recreation, and culture in the Town of Ingersoll. The survey found that:

- 88% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that “parks, recreation, and cultural services should be a high priority for Town Council”;
- 63% agreed/strongly agreed that “the Town’s parks, recreation, and cultural amenities are well maintained”;
- 61% agreed/strongly agreed that “the Town’s parks, recreation, and cultural programs are affordable for their household”; and
- 40% agreed/strongly agreed that they “feel well informed about the Town’s parks, facilities, programs, and events” – 24% disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement.

**Nine out of ten respondents (88%) agree that “parks, recreation, and cultural services should be a high priority for Town Council”.**

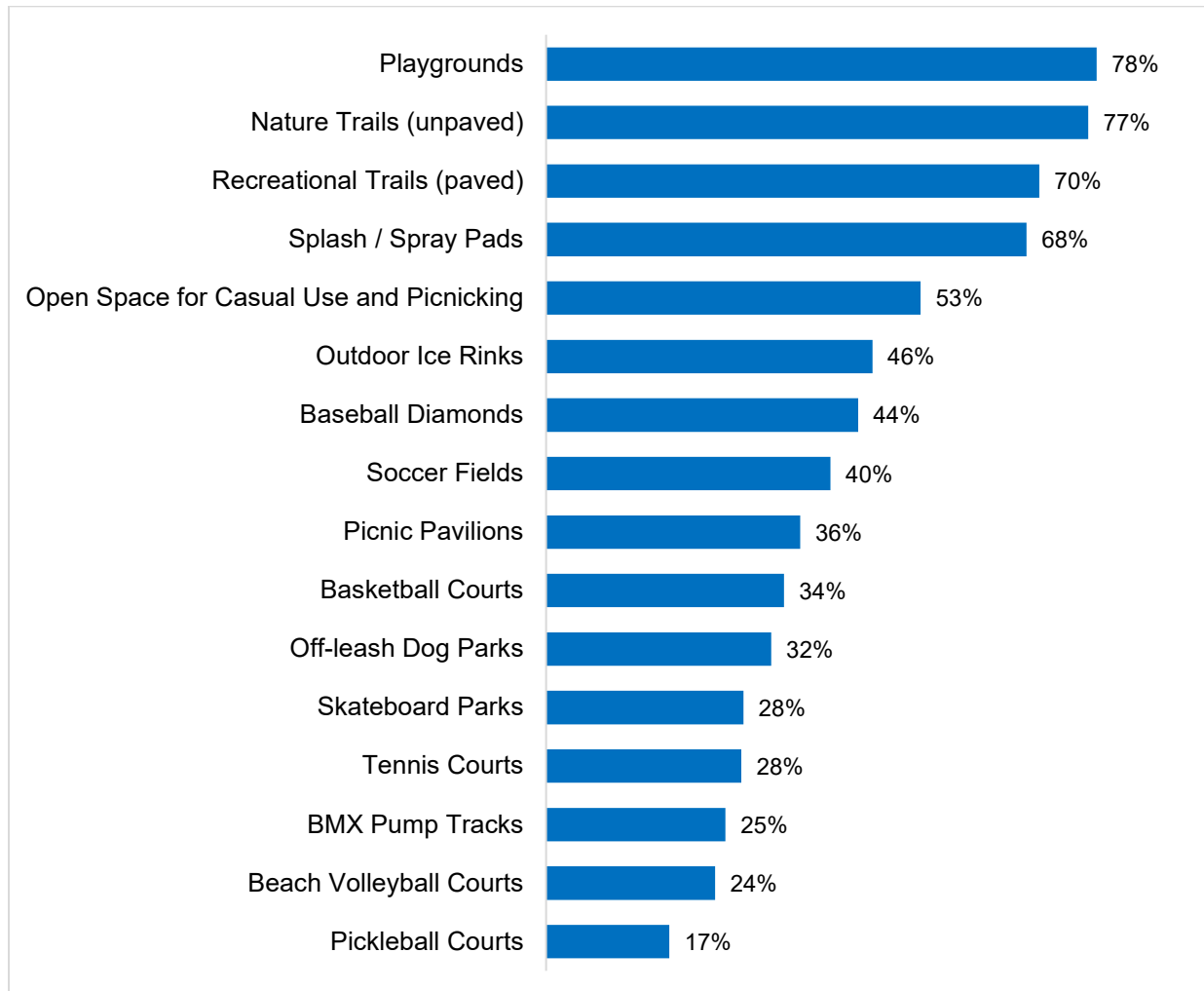
Respondents were asked about their **highest priorities for additional spending on indoor facilities** (either for upgrades or new construction). A high priority was placed on active recreation spaces, such as indoor pools (91%), youth centres (91%), arenas (88%), senior centres (86%), gymnasiums (86%) and fitness centres (85%). The Town currently offers most of the priority spaces within their inventory, with the exception of theatres (68%).

**Figure 9: Support for Spending on Constructing or Improving Indoor Facilities (n = 430-464)**



The following figure summarizes the **highest priorities for additional spending on parks and outdoor facilities** (either for upgrades or new construction). Top priorities include playgrounds (78%), nature trails – unpaved (77%), and recreational trails – paved (70%), splash pads (68%). Most of these spaces can be used by people of all ages and abilities and aligns with the most common activities that residents participate in.

**Figure 10: Support for Spending on Constructing or Improving Parks and Outdoor Facilities  
(n = 322-461)**



Respondents living in **North Ingersoll** were more likely than respondents living in other areas to place a higher priority **playgrounds and splash pads**.

Respondents **with children** at home were more likely to assign a higher priority to improving or developing **playgrounds and splash pads**.

Respondents **without children** at home were more likely to assign a higher priority to improving or developing **art galleries, museums, theatres, pickleball courts, and tennis courts**.

## Additional Comments

A variety of open-ended comments were received regarding Ingersoll's parks, recreation, and culture system. The following points summarize **key themes** from the comments:

- There is strong desire to cleanup and develop trails along the Thames River since the river cannot currently be enjoyed by residents.
- The trail network should continue to be expanded and enhanced, subdivisions – especially newer – should tie into the existing trail network.
- There are concerns that the town is losing greenspaces to development. Natural areas and walking spaces need to be maintained and preserved. More tree planting is also desired.
- The northern portion of the Town does not have as many recreation and culture services as elsewhere in the Town.
- Benches and other support amenities should be located throughout the Town so that people can sit and rest or just sit and enjoy the outdoors. Washrooms and additional shade areas should be prioritized by the Town in parks.
- All buildings and facilities should be accessible for persons with disabilities.

*"I would love to see the Thames cleaned up and developed like other Towns have done so it could be enjoyed for water access, hiking, animals, etc."*

-Survey respondent

*"I believe all outdoor amenities should be high priority in our Town. The pandemic has shown us that it's better to be outside than in."*

-Survey respondent

*"Ingersoll's motto is 'prosperity through progress'. Investment in community services is imperative for Ingersoll to be a progressive and prosperous community."*

-Survey respondent

*"The Town's arena is in poor shape and in need of a new facility."*

-Survey respondent



## Profile of Survey Respondents

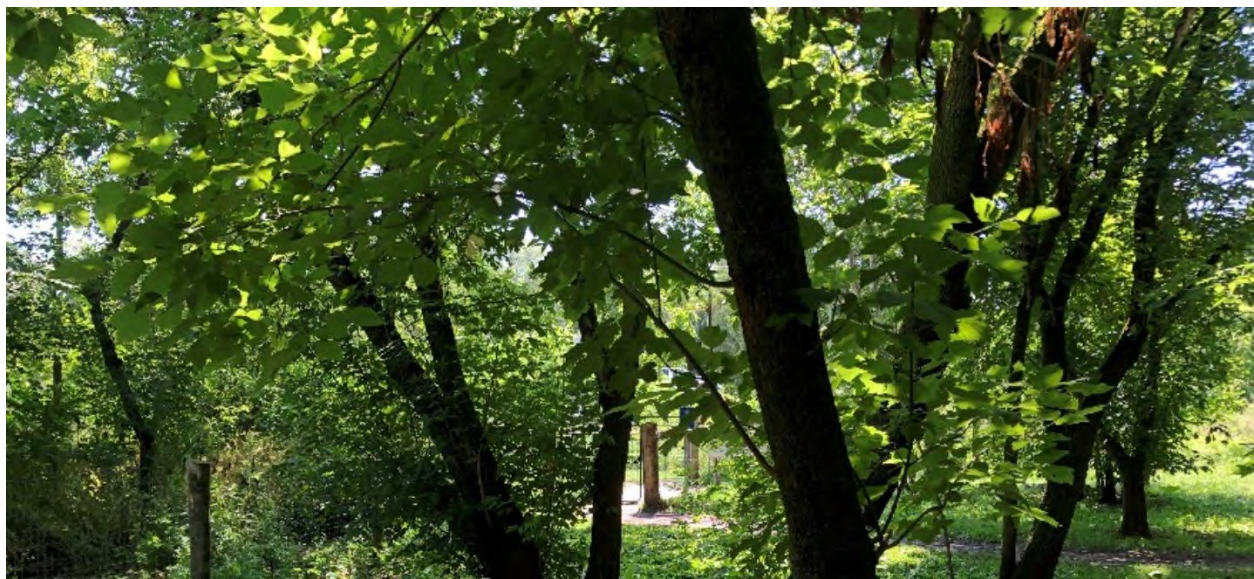
Demographic characteristics of the survey sample include:

- 97% of survey respondents live in Ingersoll. Of this,
  - 31% live north of the Thames River;
  - 46% south of the Thames River and east of Thames Street South; and
  - 23% south of the Thames River and west of Thames Street South.
- Of the 3% of respondents who do not live in Ingersoll, 54% indicated they reside in South-West Oxford and 23% in Zorra.
- As shown in the table below, all age groups were represented in the survey. Representation was greatest amongst families with children. The average household size was 3.4 persons. As is typical with surveys of this nature, older adults and seniors were under-represented in the sample.

**Table 11: Age Composition of Survey Respondent Households (n = 444)**

Age Group	Survey (2021)		Census (2016)	
Under 10 years	325	21%	1,530	12%
10 - 19 years	233	15%	1,605	13%
20 - 34 years	323	21%	2,250	18%
35 - 54 years	418	27%	3,490	28%
55 - 69 years	189	12%	2,380	19%
70 years and over	40	3%	1,330	11%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,528</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12,585</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: The survey data is from 70% of the 634 total respondents reporting



### 3.3 Public Input Sessions

#### Input into Draft Master Plan

The first set of public input sessions were held August 2021. The sessions were led by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants in order to introduce the project to the public and offer an opportunity for residents to provide their input for the Master Plan.

Two sessions were held to support the Phase 2 analysis: (1) a drop-in in-person event at the Victoria Park Community Centre to capture the voices of those attending morning programming at the centre; and (2) an evening virtual event intended to solicit input from interested residents. The same information and list of questions was presented to both audiences. This section summarizes the comments collectively received from both sessions, which were attended by approximately 25 residents.

*What do you like most about parks, recreation, arts and culture in Ingersoll?*

Multiple comments were made about the abundance of outdoor facilities and how well maintained they are. There was also a strong appreciation for the range of recreation facilities (both indoor and outdoor) that exist within the Town. Additionally, the Fusion Centre was cited as a strength, along with the Town's trails and the splash pad and new park washroom in Victoria Park.

*How can outdoor activities and facilities be improved?*

Suggestions were received for expanding the trail network, improving connectivity, and ensuring safety (e.g., lighting). Some sought better cycling infrastructure (i.e., safer cycling lanes along streets, parking facilities, etc.) and improved cycling connectivity to facilities. Additional shade areas around the splash pad at Victoria Park were requested, as well as more parkettes within neighbourhoods, and an arboretum. It was suggested that volunteers could be used more to move new projects forward, such as in the development of new park amenities.



### *How can indoor activities and facilities be improved?*

Several suggestions were received for a new arena and an additional ice pad; some indicated that the facility should also have an indoor walking track around the ice pad. Some requested more programming (e.g., programs for young children, such as gymnastics, and more for active older adults that are not ready for the 50+ Activity Centre) and funding for staff training. Earlier lane swim times at the pool was another request, as well as the creation of an indoor diving well. It was also suggested that the remaining squash courts at the Victoria Park Community Centre are under-utilized and should be repurposed.

### *How can arts and culture activities and facilities be improved?*

A desire was expressed for more events that would promote education and awareness of different cultures (e.g., Canadian culture, Indigenous culture, etc.). Advertising was also identified as something that could be improved – not just for arts and cultural services, but for indoor and outdoor facilities and programming as well.

### Feedback on Draft Master Plan

The Draft Master Plan was presented to Town Council in March 2022 and subsequently posted on the project website for public review in April 2022. Email submissions were encouraged and an in-person open house was held on April 20, 2022 at the Victoria Park Community Centre.

Public feedback on the draft report was positive. Specific suggestions includes:

- support for additional trail development, including cross-country skiing trails; and
- more community gardens, tree planting (native species), and beautification of parks.

## **3.4 Stakeholder Consultation**

Ingersoll boasts numerous organizations that offer services to the community through sports, recreation and the arts. Some have competing needs for space, resources, and funding while desiring to increase their programs and services.

Approximately 30 community groups were invited to provide feedback through virtual workshops and an online questionnaire. Several attempts were made to solicit their input, with the following thirteen groups participating:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| • 50+ Activity Centre                       | • Ingersoll Kiwanis Club          |
| • Big Brothers and Sisters of Oxford County | • Ingersoll Skating Club          |
| • Cheese and Agricultural Museum            | • Ingersoll Speed Sharks          |
| • Girl Guides                               | • Ingersoll Support Services Inc. |
| • Ingersoll BIA                             | • Ingersoll Trails Committee      |
| • Ingersoll Cycling Club                    | • Oxford County Library           |
|   | • United Way Oxford               |



The following high-level summary synthesizes common themes that emerged from stakeholder feedback, organized by subject area. Little interpretation or fact-checking of statements made by stakeholders has been completed and thus the summary may not represent final themes or directions for the Master Plan.

### Strengths of Parks, Facilities, and Services

- It was recognized that the **Community Services Department** has undergone a major transition in recent years. This has led to improvements particularly in asset management and policy development. Conversely, it was suggested that communication and coordination with stakeholders can be improved.
- Many groups agreed that the **Fusion Centre** was a major strength of the Town. They indicated that recreation does not only belong on a sports field or in an arena. Groups also explained that the relationships and services that are offered at Fusion Centre exceed what you would typically expect in a community the size of Ingersoll. Council should be commended for their support of this facility.
- **Programming** is good, with a wide variety of programs available. However, some felt that offerings can always be expanded upon.
- Municipal facility and program **staff** are pleasant and helpful.
- The **splash pad** and **accessible playground** at Victoria Park are well used and a community destination, as is the Victoria Park Community Centre **pool**.



### Requests for New or Improved Parks, Facilities, and Services

- Many suggested the development of paved trails, including a **trail along the Thames River**. It is understood that this has long been a priority for the Town; however, land ownership and active rail lines have made it difficult to achieve this vision.
- Several groups commented on the lack of **public washrooms in parks** (available year-round), which also found considerable support in the community survey.



- It is understood that the community has been considering the creation of an **arts, culture, and heritage hub** for some time. It was suggested that a feasibility study be prepared in cooperation with the Cheese and Agricultural Museum, Creative Arts Centre, Public Library, and others.
- An **indoor walking track** with a smooth, flat surface was requested by the 50+ Activity Centre since it would be an ideal space for them to run programming, in addition to a safe, consistent space for seniors to be physically active.
- The **50+ Activity Centre** expressed concern over the long-term viability of their facility, which is leased by the Town from CAMI and subleased to the Activity Centre. Should they remain at this location, the group requested an **elevator and/or chairlift** to assist seniors with disabilities. It was also suggested that the Centre be included on Town **wayfinding signage** to direct residents/visitors to the site.
- The humidity and air quality on deck at the **Victoria Park Community Centre pool** could be improved.
- Additional **activity space** where community groups (e.g., Girl Guides, Big Brothers and Sisters, etc.) can get together and hold meetings or socialize was requested. For a long time, community groups met in St. James Church, which has since closed. While the Fusion Centre is available, there is still a need and desire for groups to have their own meeting space.
- There was a request to reinstate the **Snoezelen Room** at the Fusion Centre as there are a lot of children and adults in the community that would benefit from this kind of space.
- The Kiwanis Club identified a possible donation of new parkland within the Town ("**Kiwanis Park**") capable of accommodating trails and a playground.
- The Cycling Committee indicated interest in the development of a **pump track**.
- The **bandshell** in Yvonne Motte Memorial Park was identified as having potential for a variety of opportunities if it were to be restored.
- There is a desire for more **public art installations** in parks and along trails.
- Building on the success of the Victoria Park splash pad, additional **splash pads** at other locations were requested; ideally with different amenities and experiences.



## Other Pressing Issues and Priorities

- The Cycling Committee and others emphasized the need to account for **trails and cycling** within the development approvals process. Groups indicated that there are currently efforts being made to establish the Cheese and Agricultural Museum as a regional cycling hub, with the possibility of a bike-share program.
- Several groups suggested the need to promote the **benefits of getting outside**, using greenspaces, active transportation, accessibility, increased shade areas in parks, safe lighting of facilities, etc. to the general public.
- Groups agreed that moving forward they need to, as well as the Town, be cognizant of the fact that there are **newcomers to Canada** moving into Ingersoll that may have differing interests. Not all residents are going to want to play traditional Canadian sports – some may want to explore other contemporary opportunities. In addition, it has been seen that many new residents are arriving with greater expectations due to higher service levels commonly seen in larger municipalities.





- Concerns were expressed over the lack of **accessibility** of parks, facilities, and services. Although the Town has made several strides towards becoming more accessible to persons with disabilities, all spaces and services need to be accessible, including existing infrastructure.
- **Communication and awareness** have historically been a challenge for many groups. It is difficult to raise awareness of programs, services, and facilities to the public as there is not one local radio station or newspaper that everyone listens to or receives. It was also expressed that, in the past, communication between Town Departments has not always been effective due to organizational “silos”.
- Several groups indicating that **affordability** is an ongoing issue, and that they anticipate it will continue to be a concern in Ingersoll moving forward (especially as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic). For example, the Ingersoll Skating Club indicated that ice fees need to continue to remain affordable so that the group can continue its operations.
- There is a desire for improved coordination between the Community Services Department and the 50+ Activity Centre. One option that was suggested was the establishment of a **Seniors’ Advisory Committee** that could help to coordinate roles and responsibilities regarding older adult services, programs and events across Ingersoll. The Centre expressed an interest in offering more outreach/off-site programming and being part of the proposed MURC, but would like to ensure that they can retain their own unique identity for their approximately 800 members.
- More access to **pool time** is a pressing need for the Ingersoll Speed Sharks as they continue to grow and expand their programming.



### 3.5 Input from the 2017 Multi-use Recreation Centre Study

In 2017 a study was completed by F.J. Galloway Associates Inc. on the viability of a multi-use recreation centre, supported by various public engagement tactics. Given the recency of this study and its relevance to this process, the stakeholder input has been summarized for consideration within this Master Plan.

The community survey for the 2017 MURC Study determined the following to be the main activities that respondents participated in:

- 57% - walking, hiking, cycling, and using an indoor walking track
- 48% - aquatics and aquafit
- 38% - ice sports
- 29% - Zumba, yoga, fitness classes, and dance
- 23% - baseball
- 20% - senior programs
- 17% - arts, music, theatre, and movies

The survey found that 80% to 90% of survey respondents identified a new multi-use facility as very much needed/needed and as a significant to moderate priority. The survey found support for the following MURC components:

- Indoor walking track (68%)
- Arena (62%)
- Gymnasium (49%)
- Wellness/fitness area (48%)
- Community hall (47%)
- Older adult programs (42%)
- Ball diamonds (42%)
- Arts and culture program spaces (30%)
- Outdoor soccer fields (29%)
- Indoor soccer field (23%)



The MURC Study also contains substantial input from stakeholders, user groups and potential partners. This input has been reviewed and considered as part of the Master Plan assessments.

### 3.6 Internal Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with Town Council and staff involved in the management of parks, recreation, and culture facilities and services. Input from these sources was wide-ranging and has been used to inform the Master Plan.

### 3.7 Summary of Input

Key themes from the initial public engagement phase are summarized below. These findings have been assessed along with the community profile, usage data, and promising practices from other communities to inform the Master Plan's recommendations. They are presented in no particular order.

1. Ingersoll is a **growing community** and resident expectations are rising. More and more, parks, recreation and culture are being seen as essential services and it is vital that the Town keep pace with growth-related needs, including the acquisition of parkland.
2. **Parks and outdoor spaces are very important.** Enjoying these spaces – most notably trails, playgrounds, splash pads, and open space – is among the most popular activity for Ingersoll residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of these spaces, which have supported increased outdoor activity and outdoor facility/space use. Residents are appreciative of the maintenance levels of parks and outdoor facilities.
3. The public values **greenspace** and wants to see more **public parkland along the Thames River**. Priority should generally be placed on tree planting, improving trails and paths so that they are safer, as well as continuing to build out the Town trail network.
4. Replacement of the aging **Ingersoll District Memorial Centre** is top of mind for many and was the subject of a feasibility study and ongoing funding strategies. The community is supportive of a new multi-use recreation centre and wants to see it realized sooner than later. Residents also value the Victoria Park Community Centre and recognize that not all small towns have access to a local indoor pool.
5. In addition to the arena, the Town also has other needs relative to **aging infrastructure**, most notably the 50+ (Seniors') Activity Centre. Despite its many limitations, this is a well used facility that requires additional investment in the short-term, as well as a long-term strategy.
6. The **Fusion Centre** is highly regarded for its youth activities, community uses, and innovative programming. Its continued operation is vital for the community and local youth, many of which would not participate otherwise.
7. **Accessible spaces and services need to remain a focal point.** Existing infrastructure (e.g., buildings, park equipment, trails, etc.) should be retrofitted to promote accessibility wherever possible, including the provision of more support amenities (e.g., benches, washrooms, etc.).
8. **A lack of programs and program times** was identified as a significant barrier to participation. A wide range of suggestions were received, such as additional



fitness programming, arts classes, dance, outdoor programming, and more. The Town's resources and facilities are generally used to capacity, suggestion that additional space or partnerships would be required in order to offer more programming. Coordinating older adult programming with the 50+ Activity Centre was identified as one opportunity.

9. **Affordability** is an ongoing concern more many. Two out of every five households (39%) do not feel as though Town parks, recreation, and cultural offerings are affordable to their household.
10. Efforts are needed to bridge **communication divide** – 60% of survey respondents indicated that they do not feel well informed about the Town's parks, facilities, programs, and events. Several community organizations also identified awareness and marketing as pressing challenges.
11. Most local **arts and cultural services** are delivered by volunteers and community partners. This model appears to be working well and is responsive to needs, but as the community grows, additional support (administrative, financial, etc.) may be required. The Town plays a significant role in supporting major events (Festival of Lights, etc.) and these are highly valued by the public.
12. In terms of **implementation**, volunteers have indicated that they want to do more and work with the Town in implementing the Master Plan. The community has expressed a willingness to fundraise and contribute to high priority projects. The Department's staff team is committed to high quality service delivery, but will require additional resources to keep pace with increased workloads resulting from population growth.



## 4. Strategic Framework

This section identifies the strategic framework that will guide the Master Plan's development and implementation.

### 4.1 Vision

Based on supporting documents and public input, the following vision and guiding principles have been established to lead the development and implementation of this Master Plan. This strategy reflects the values and aspirations articulated by the Town and the community as a whole. Together, the framework describes the core directions that the Town and its partners should strive to achieve over time.

Setting a “vision” for the Town in the delivery of community services is the initial step in setting a strategic path forward. A strategic vision depicts how the Town wants to be viewed in the future and compels Council, staff, and the community to work together to achieve their collective goals over time.

The following vision statement has been in place for several years and remains relevant for community services in Ingersoll:

The Municipality will promote and foster a fun, healthy and active lifestyle, and will strive to ensure all citizens have reasonable access to a variety of attractive and well-maintained recreation and leisure programs and facilities.

### **Creating an active and healthy community for all.**

Together, we promote the benefits of participation, foster meaningful wellness opportunities for all ages, support an integrated delivery system, and maintain a high quality system of parks and facilities.



## **4.2 Guiding Principles**

The Master Plan's development and implementation are also guided by a series of principles that have been designed to reflect the expectations articulated by community and the Town's overall commitment moving forward. Together, the guiding principles describe the core objectives that the Town of Ingersoll and community partners should strive to achieve over time.

### **A. Maximize Participation**

We will offer choice for all Ingersoll residents to increase their participation in physical and social activities throughout their lives. We will accomplish this by expanding program offerings, engaging the community, and communicating the many opportunities to get involved.

### **B. Ensure Access and Affordability**

We will encourage community and individual wellbeing through accessible and inclusive leisure opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. We will accomplish this by reducing barriers to participation, maintaining affordability, and ensuring the accessibility of parks, facilities, and services.

### **C. Maintain our Assets and Plan Ahead**

We will keep pace with growth and changing needs by strategically investing in relevant parks, recreation and cultural facilities (both existing and new). We will accomplish this through effective asset management, community partnerships, and multi-use designs that maximize our impact.

### **D. Work Together**

We will establish a coordinated, collaborative and supportive system of parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities. We will accomplish this through continued and high-quality support, investment and capacity-building within our staff, volunteers and partners.

### **E. Commit to Service Excellence**

We will demonstrate leadership, accountability, and high quality customer service. We will accomplish this through effective service practices and responsible fiscal management, including the pursuit of partnerships and outside funding.



## 5. Service Delivery and Programming Assessment

This section examines the Town's service delivery model, including program offerings, service levels, management practices, policies, fees and charges, operating procedures.

### 5.1 Service Delivery

There are numerous providers involved in the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services in Ingersoll, led by the Town of Ingersoll's Community Services Department. This Department is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and operation of public recreation facilities, parks and trails, as well as community programming and events. Key service areas for the Community Services Department include:

- Parks, Arena and Seniors' Centre (note: the 50+ Activity Centre is operated by an independent board, but the Town assumes capital responsibility for the facility);
- Victoria Park Community Centre (including aquatics and fitness);
- Fusion Centre; and
- Museum (now under the responsibility of the Clerk's Department).

Aside from the municipality, other key service providers and stakeholders within the parks, recreation and culture sector include (but may not be limited to):

- Volunteers and community organizations, such as sports leagues and service clubs that help to fund and program municipal parks and facilities (e.g., the Kiwanis Club);
- School boards, which provide spaces that are available for community use outside of school hours;
- Boards of management (e.g., boards that operate the Ingersoll Seniors' Centre, Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum, Oxford County Library and Curling Club);
- Non-profit organizations and agencies, which provide valuable community supports directly and indirectly related to recreation and culture (e.g., VON, Legion and Unifor);
- Conservation Authority, which maintains notable natural areas within the area;
- Private sector, which address needs such as fitness, dance, martial arts, bowling, etc.; and
- Adjacent municipalities, some of which provide higher-order services such as arenas.

The Town acknowledges these other providers and works to address gaps as they emerge, with the goal of maximizing participation in parks, recreation and culture. In doing so, two key approaches are undertaken: (1) the **direct provision** of programs and services by the Town; and (2) the provision of a range of **community development supports** to local organizations and service providers. Consideration must continue to

be given to ensuring that all residents are included, regardless of age, gender, income, background, etc. This illustrates a coordinated approach that emphasizes the provision of a variety of opportunities effectively and efficiently.

Within this context, the following points outline the **core service delivery responsibilities** of the Town's Community Services Department, as proposed by this Community Services Master Plan.

**Core service delivery responsibilities for the Community Services Department:**

- a) Engaging the community in meaningful participation through planning, decision-making and service delivery;
- b) Working to include all residents and advocating for marginalized individuals and groups, including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income households, etc.;
- c) Assessing and responding to changing demographics, community issues, and emerging trends;
- d) Creating awareness of municipal services, community engagement initiatives, and participation opportunities;
- e) Educating about and promoting the benefits of community services (healthy living/aging, physical and mental wellness, drowning prevention, leadership, environmental benefits, etc.);
- f) Determining service gaps and needed improvements (with an emphasis on enhancing community and individual wellness);
- g) Providing core facilities where gaps exist or the capacity is not present in the community;
- h) Building and fostering partnerships with key providers and stakeholders in the delivery of services;
- i) Playing an ongoing role in supporting community groups, volunteers and partners;
- j) Delivering core programs focused on low-cost activities that promote community and individual health and wellness;
- k) Supporting or facilitating social activities and events that promote community interaction, vibrancy and cohesion;
- l) Advancing opportunities for arts, culture and heritage (often supported by broader corporate initiatives);
- m) Developing effective and meaningful policies and procedures that enhance accountability and transparency; and
- n) Providing exceptional customer service.



In order to effectively fulfill its role in service delivery, it is recommended that decision-making be aligned with the guiding principles of this Master Plan. The Town can create alignment with this strategic framework in several ways, such as:

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

To provide a basis for understanding service levels, a high-level review has been completed comparing Ingersoll to similar municipalities. The Province of Ontario, through the 2019 Financial Information Returns submitted by municipalities, tracks and publishes data on municipal spending, revenue and resources. The data can then be used to assess the resource levels allocated towards parks, recreation and culture services and facilities.

Before examining costs, revenue and staffing levels, it is important to **examine overall levels of service** first. High levels of service can be seen through existing major facilities and capital assets since major venues (e.g., arenas, pools, youth and seniors' centres, etc.) are significant cost centres with notable staffing pressures and obligations.

**Table 12: Tangible Parks, Recreation and Culture Capital Assets – Benchmark Communities**

Municipality	Major Facilities	Net Book Value of Tangible Capital Assets (2019)	Capital Asset Value per Capita
<b>Middlesex Centre</b>	Multi-use recreation centre (twin pad arena, fitness centre, gymnasium), single pad arena, 4 small community centres	\$23,854,610	\$1,382
<b>Stratford</b>	Twin pad arena, 2 single pad arenas, outdoor pool, indoor multi-use field, indoor track	\$37,028,690	\$1,177
<b>Strathroy-Caradoc</b>	Twin pad arena, single pad arena, multi-use recreation centre (single pad arena, gymnasium), aquatic park	\$21,958,651	\$1,052
<b>Thames Centre</b>	Indoor pool, multi-use recreation centre (twin pad, indoor track, gymnasium, seniors' centre), gymnasium	\$14,513,766	\$1,283
<b>Tillsonburg</b>	Multi-use recreation centre (pool, twin pad arena, fitness centre, pump track, skateboard park), outdoor water park	\$13,952,033	\$895
<b>Woodstock</b>	Twin pad arena, single pad arena, indoor pool, outdoor pool, indoor track, gymnasium	\$56,352,419	\$1,378
<b>Group Average</b>		<b>\$20,957,521</b>	<b>\$1,220</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	Single pad arena, indoor pool, fitness centre, Fusion Centre	\$6,906,377	\$541

Source: Schedule 51, Financial Information Returns (2019)

Major facilities sourced from municipal websites

Per Capita Values calculated using the 2019 Financial Information Returns population estimates and/or 2016 Census Profile Statistics Canada contained in Table 13.

Compared to the benchmarked communities, the Town of Ingersoll provides a similar range of parks, recreation and cultural amenities per capita, but fewer arenas (one indoor ice pad compared to two or more in the other communities). This translates into a significantly lower value of tangible capital assets per capita in Ingersoll (\$541 versus the group average of \$1,220). For context, Ingersoll has a similar population to Thames Centre and Tillsonburg, but a much smaller resident base than Stratford and Woodstock.

The following table shows Ingersoll's **average municipal tax amount** for all services per residential household in 2019. The Town's lower-tier average tax requirement was 3% lower than the benchmark average (\$1,991 versus \$2,056). This finding indicates that the Town values the efficient and effective delivery of services and that residents expect value for the taxes they pay.

**Table 13: Municipal Population and Tax Comparison – Benchmark Communities**

Municipality	Population (2019)	Households (2019)	Average Municipal Taxes per Household (2019)
Middlesex Centre	17,262	6,578	\$2,132
Stratford	31,465	14,882	\$2,899
Strathroy-Caradoc	20,867	9,127	\$1,504
Thames Centre	11,313	5,193	\$1,463
Tillsonburg	15,594	7,647	\$1,568
Woodstock	40,902	18,347	\$1,990
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>17,175</b>	<b>7,722</b>	<b>\$2,056</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	<b>12,757</b>	<b>5,090</b>	<b>\$1,991</b>

Source: Schedule 02, Financial Information Returns (2019), and Schedule 22A, Financial Information Returns (2019)

\* lower-tier/residential only

\*\* Schedule 02, Financial Information Returns (2019)

Ingersoll's annual **per capita spending** on parks, recreation and culture was 8% higher than the average of the benchmark municipalities (\$352 versus \$324). This reflects the high level of service that is available in the Town, including an indoor pool, single pad arena, activity centre, and well-appointed parks system.

**Table 14: Annual Spending on Parks, Recreation and Culture**

Comparison	Annual Expenses (2019)	Per Household	Per Capita
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>\$5,570,368</b>	<b>\$721</b>	<b>\$324</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	<b>\$4,493,011</b>	<b>\$883</b>	<b>\$352</b>

Source: Schedule 40, Financial Information Returns (2019)

The Town's annual **per capita revenue** associated with parks, recreation and culture was the same as the benchmark average (\$63 versus \$63). This indicates that Ingersoll's parks, recreation and cultural services are affordable to users and are comparable to the benchmarked communities. It is possible that the multi-pad arenas in

most of the benchmark communities help to support their levels of revenue generation; if Ingersoll were to develop a multi-pad arena, greater revenues could also be expected.

**Table 15: Annual Revenue (User Fees and Service Charges) Associated with Parks, Recreation and Culture**

Comparison	Annual Revenue (2019)	Per Household	Per Capita
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>\$1,078,997</b>	<b>\$140</b>	<b>\$63</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	\$798,264	\$157	\$63

Source: Schedule 12, Financial Information Returns (2019)

As is the case with all municipal community service departments, expenses were substantially higher than revenues. This illustrates the subsidy that is afforded parks, recreation and culture services. In 2019, the Town of Ingersoll recovered 18% of its expenses through revenues, similar to the benchmark group average (19%).

In regards to **staffing levels**, Ingersoll's annual per capita spending on employees for parks, recreation and culture was 27% higher than the benchmark group average (\$203 versus \$149). Conversely, the number of employees (full-time equivalents estimate) in Ingersoll is lower than the benchmark average (29 FTE versus 37 FTE). The number of part-time employees in Ingersoll was much higher than the benchmark average (56 versus 22).

**Table 16: Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities/Programs (subset of total expenses)**

Comparison	Annual Staffing Expenses (2019)	Per Household	Per Capita
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>\$2,559,009</b>	<b>\$331</b>	<b>\$149</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	\$2,590,103	\$509	\$203

Source: Schedule 40, Financial Information Returns (2019)

**Table 17: Employees Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities/Programs**

Comparison	Full-Time	Part-Time	Seasonal	FTE (estimate)	Population per Employee
<b>Group Average</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>502</b>
<b>Ingersoll</b>	17	56	8	29	440

Source: Schedule 80A, Financial Information Returns (2019)

These findings illustrate that the Town's parks, recreation and culture staffing, resourcing and spending levels are – on the whole – similar to the benchmark communities, although they may be constituted and deployed differently.

## Recommendations

1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the **vision and guiding principles** of this Master Plan.
2. Continue to solidify the **Community Services Department's role** as a park/facility provider, program provider and facilitator, and event coordinator through consistent messaging in all communications, budgeting, policies and procedures.
3. Regularly undertake **internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures**, with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.
4. Review **policies and procedures** at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.

## 5.2 Programming and Events

Access to affordable and high-quality parks, recreation and culture programming is essential to a healthy community. Maximizing participation is a guiding principle of this Master Plan and everything the Department does should support resident access to a range of leisure pursuits.

To achieve this, most municipal community services departments provide a variety of programs that promote physical activity and sports, creative pursuits and topics of general interest. This exposes residents to opportunities (typically at an introductory level) and encourages individuals to try new activities while enjoying the added benefits of participation.

The Town's Community Services Department provides a wide-range of inclusive programs and services that enhance the overall quality of life and contribute to the wellbeing of residents and visitors. Ingersoll is committed to being financially accessible to all members of the community and offers financial assistance programs for those who cannot pay full fees for programs (this is supported by funding from both Oxford County Human Services and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charity).

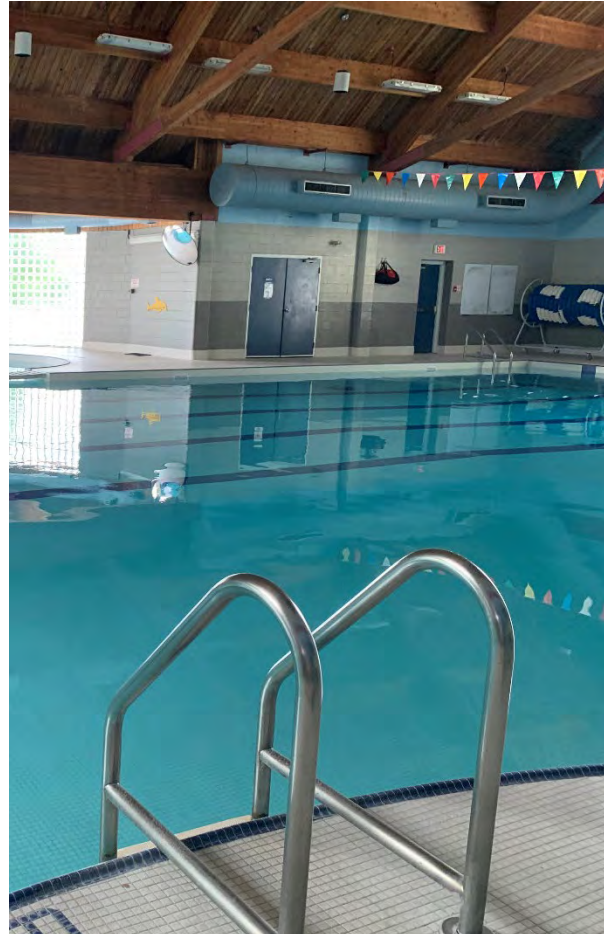
The Town is often the preferred provider of programs due to reasons of accessibility, affordability, safety and/or mandate alignment. It is vital for the Town to continue to evaluate the delivery of services on a regular basis and to consider new approaches that may improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of existing services.

Town programming is delivered mainly through the Victoria Park Community Centre and Fusion Centre although it also takes place in some parks throughout the Town and at the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre. Schools are used quite often by community groups and for Town programming; however, these have been unavailable to the community throughout the pandemic. Some Town program offerings require advanced registration whereas others are drop-in, providing flexible options for participants. The

Town has implemented online registration, making it convenient for more residents to view and sign-up for programs.

Typical municipal programming encompasses the following (not a complete list):

- **Aquatics** – swimming lessons, bronze classes, leadership, aquafit, synchro, parent tot, preschool, etc.
- **Camps** – holiday camps, mini camps, junior camps and senior camps.
- **Public Skating**
- **Youth Programs** – various drop-in, technology, music, leadership, culinary, sports/fitness/recreation programs at Fusion Centre.
- **Recreation Programs** – volleyball, basketball, karate, aikido, group fitness classes, personal training, orientations, squash/wallyball, children and adult programming, shuffleboard, baseball, etc.
- **Special Events** (some in partnership with the Cheese and Agricultural Museum) – Festival of Lights, Santa's Village, Harvest Fest, Pumpkin Fest, etc.



A review of the offerings in Ingersoll suggests that there is a broad variety of opportunities that are not always found in communities of this size, largely due to the availability of the Fusion Centre and indoor pool. With that being said, as Ingersoll continues to grow and we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town can expect to see a need for more and new activities that respond to emerging community needs.

Through the Master Plan survey, 74% of Ingersoll households indicated that Town programming is important, but only 41% are satisfied with the existing offerings. While some of this may have been a result of the pandemic and the various restrictions, the survey findings suggest that residents are also seeking improvements, most notably around program times, awareness and – to a lesser degree – affordability.



Additional consultation identified the following specific program requests:

- Special Events
- Outdoor Skating
- Aquatics (different times, specialized programs)
- Arts programs (children, adults)
- Pre-school programs
- Fitness programs (different times, specialized programs)
- Programs for persons with disabilities
- Inter-generational programs
- Programs for youth – identified through the Corporate Strategic Plan
- Outdoor programming (response to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- General programs (sports, gymnastics, cooking, outdoor activities, etc.)



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

- a) Maintain or enhance the existing level of service;
- b) Focus on children/youth, older adults/seniors and persons with disabilities;
- c) Are affordable and accessible;
- d) Incorporate physical literacy into child and youth activities;
- e) Support healthy living and healthy aging;
- f) Strengthen community partnerships;
- g) Support unstructured and self-scheduled activities;
- h) Promote the appropriate use of parks and facilities for special events;
- i) Optimize the use of municipal parks and facilities; and
- j) Allow people to connect with nature and be good stewards of their environment.

Some specific opportunities to achieve this mandate through programming include:

- **Focusing on children, youth and older adults.**  
Interest is strong for activities that engage children/youth and older adults and is something the Town has done well over the years. As we begin to recover from the pandemic, service to these age groups will be more important than ever in order to address growing issues of social isolation, physical inactivity, and mental wellness. Furthermore, a wider range of programming may be needed to address the needs of today's older adults, many of whom are more active than previous generations and are making better use of municipal parks and facilities in response. Efforts should be made to accommodate the needs of older adults and seniors and to better serve them, within existing facilities moving forward.
- **Offering convenient, drop-in activities.**  
A lack of time is often a main barrier to participation for all ages. Activities that are convenient, accessible, affordable and relevant – like drop-in activities – have proven to be popular prior to the pandemic. Across the Province, exercise and fitness classes, sports such as pickleball (mostly for older adults, but not exclusively), and drop-in activity times for pre-school children and caregivers have been on the rise. Drop-in activities must continue to be emphasized and adapted to emerging trends.
- **Expanding low-cost outdoor programming within parks.**  
Communities are increasingly animating their park spaces through programming and new forms of community engagement. Some examples include (but are not limited to) fitness in the park, food trucks, and cultural events like music, concerts and plays. Viewing parks as “outdoor living rooms” helps to broaden their scope of use and engages a wider audience, leading to experiential learning, participation and community mobilization. This also helps to support the initiative to move “indoor activities” outdoors as a strategy to respond to public health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Town implemented new registration software in 2019 just prior to onset of the pandemic. Historic registration data is not available to assess the capacity or participation levels in past programs; however, it is expected that the new software system will allow for improved tracking. The Town should establish performance metrics to set a baseline for continuous improvement. Furthermore, analyzing participation rates annually provides useful indicators and may highlight any existing gaps. Strategies should be developed to build on participation rates and maximize social and health outcomes for all participants.

## Recommendations

5. Work with community organizations to **maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities** through affordable and inclusive programming (drop-in and registered) for children, youth and older adults. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new program offerings.
6. Develop an **Inclusion and Access Policy** to demonstrate the Town's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the intentional actions that are or will be taken to include all residents that may face barriers to participation.
7. Measure **service performance**, track **facility utilization**, and collect **registration data** annually from all organizations that use Town parks and facilities to assist in understanding trends, changing demands and allocation. Report to the public annually on the results of parks, recreation and cultural service delivery in Ingersoll to illustrate the value to taxpayers.
8. Work with community partners to promote the **importance of physical activity** and engage more residents in embracing active lifestyles.
9. Work with the Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre Board and other partners to reduce duplication, share resources and jointly focus on enhancing **recreation program opportunities for older adults**.

### 5.3 Pricing and Cost Recovery

Inclusive and affordable access to parks, recreation and cultural services improves individual, social and economic wellbeing. However, user fees (along with transportation) can be a barrier to participation for some residents. Reducing barriers to participation is a foundational goal of municipal service providers everywhere. Coordination and communication within and between municipal departments and community agencies is paramount in creating a supportive environment for inclusive and universal access.

The Town strives to offer programs, parks, and facilities that can be used by all, but challenges still exist. Through Oxford County, the Town facilitates an affordable access policy that helps to offset the cost of participation for lower-income households. Demand for financial assistance programs should be monitored and reported on annually, with pooled funding adjusted accordingly to ensure that participation barriers are mitigated.

As noted earlier, fees and rental rates for the Department's programs and facilities do not recover their full costs. Recognizing the broader community benefits of participation, they are typically subsidized by general taxation and other funding sources, while still ensuring that a portion of direct costs are borne by users. In 2019 (pre-COVID-19), the Community Services Department's operating budget included \$2.5 million in net

expenses (less major capital). Approximately 29% of expenses were recovered through direct revenues (user fees, rentals, leases, donations, etc.); these figures may differ slightly from the data presented in Section 5.1 due to different reporting requirements.

**Table 18: 2019 Community Services Department Budget (excluding Museum)**

Division	Expenses	Revenues	Net Operating Expense*	Recovery
<b>Parks, Arena and Senior Centre</b>	\$1,449,641	\$351,003	<b>\$1,098,638</b>	24%
<b>Victoria Park Community Centre</b>	\$1,379,930	\$439,952	<b>\$939,978</b>	32%
<b>Fusion Centre</b>	\$678,287	\$239,722	<b>\$438,565</b>	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,507,858</b>	<b>\$1,030,677</b>	<b>\$2,477,181</b>	<b>29%</b>

\* less major capital and transfer to reserves

The Town's Fees and Charges By-law outlines the specific user fees for the Department. The overall goal is to recover a fair portion of the maintenance and program cost of relevant programs and services through user fees, taking into consideration the economic situation of the community. The rate structure may be adjusted for inflationary factors and is sensitive to rates charged by other providers and surrounding municipalities. Rates may vary depending on the type of use/user, time of day, day of week, season, etc.

A high-level scan of facility rental rates was undertaken to understand how Ingersoll's fees compare with benchmark communities within the area (i.e., Middlesex Centre, Stratford, Strathroy-Caradoc, Thames Centre, Tillsonburg and Woodstock). The following table summarizes the findings from the rates and fees scan, while a more detailed comparison can be found in **Appendix B**.

The scan was limited in certain aspects such as direct comparisons to multi-purpose spaces, particularly meeting rooms and halls/auditoriums, and sports fields as a result of varying quality and size of fields and facilities as well as the rate structures that are established in each community. Due to this, rental rates may vary significantly and should be interpreted with discretion. For example, Strathroy-Caradoc charge per team/per child field rates, Thames Centre charges per game, and Woodstock charges per hour. Some benchmark communities also have different rates for the various multi-purpose spaces that exist. As a result, an average was calculated to determine a single comparator figure.

For the most part Ingersoll's rental rates are below or similar to the benchmark average for most rate categories. The exceptions – those rates that are above the benchmarked average – include shinny/pick-up hockey fees, gymnasium rental fees, adult baseball diamond rental fees (both lit and unlit), aquafit and swim program fees. The Town is currently in the process of modifying its fee structure for sports fields/diamonds.



These findings should be examined at the time rates and fees are reviewed to ensure that they are affordable to residents. Any adjustments to the Town's recreation rates should consider recovering a sustainable portion of the cost to operate Town facilities.

**Table 19: Review of Fees, Charges and Revenues with Benchmark Communities (2021)**

Rate Category	Benchmark Average	Ingersoll	Difference
<b>Arenas</b>			
Adult Prime (per hour)	\$173.80	\$163.72	BELOW
Adult Non-Prime (per hour)	\$112.31	\$110.62	AVERAGE
Minor Prime (per hour)	\$149.63	\$125.66	BELOW
Minor Non-Prime (per hour)	\$98.62	\$84.07	BELOW
Adult Summer Ice (per hour)	\$139.81	N/A	N/A
Minor Summer Ice (per hour)	\$139.81	N/A	N/A
Dry Pad – Adult (per hour)	\$67.91	\$48.67	BELOW
Dry Pad – Minor (per hour)	\$66.23	\$48.67	BELOW
Public Skate Admission – Adult	\$3.30	\$2.65	BELOW
Public Skate Admission – Child	\$2.31	\$2.65	AVERAGE
Public Skate Admission Family (per family)	\$7.20	N/A	N/A
Public Skate Admission – Senior	\$2.77	\$2.65	AVERAGE
Shinny/Pick-up Hockey Adult	\$5.28	\$6.19	ABOVE
<b>Multi-Purpose Spaces</b>			
Hall/Auditorium (per hour)	\$48.27	\$44.25	BELOW
Meeting Room (per hour)	\$29.10	\$25.40	BELOW
Gymnasium – Adult (per hour)	\$42.89	\$45.13	ABOVE
Gymnasium – Minor (per hour)	\$42.89	\$45.13	ABOVE
Non-Sport Rental Youth/Senior (per hour)	\$14.16	N/A	N/A
<b>Soccer</b>			
Unlit Adult	N/A	N/A	N/A
Unlit Minor	N/A	\$5.00 per child	N/A
Lighting Fee	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Ball Diamonds</b>			
Unlit Adult	N/A	\$39.82	N/A
Unlit Minor	N/A	\$8.00	N/A
Lit Adult	N/A	\$48.67	N/A
Lit Minor	N/A	\$8.00	N/A
<b>Pool</b>			
Admission – Child	\$2.57	\$2.65	AVERAGE
Admission – Youth	\$3.05	\$2.65	BELOW
Admission – Adult	\$4.01	\$2.65	BELOW
Admission – Senior	\$3.34	\$2.65	BELOW
Admission – Family	\$9.54	N/A	N/A
Aquafit (per hr)	\$4.77	\$6.64	ABOVE
Swim Programs	\$61.54 – \$146.66	\$3.13 – \$226.50	ABOVE
Pool Rental (per hour)	\$116.25	\$112.00	BELOW

Note: HST excluded.

## Recommendations

10. Identify the **true cost** to deliver parks, recreation and culture services (e.g., direct and indirect costs) to support evidence-based decision-making and tracking of performance over time.
11. Review **facility and sports field rental rates** at minimum every three years to help inform future rates and fees. Any increases greater than the rate of inflation should be phased in.
12. Continue to encourage **long-term financial sustainability** through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate application of user fees, and the pursuit of external funding.

### 5.4 Volunteers and Partnerships

Volunteers are vital to community services as they support the delivery of many sports programs, special events (such as those at the Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum), and community-building initiatives (such as the Recreational Trails and Safe Cycling Committees). Canada-wide trends indicate that volunteer involvement has peaked, with younger generations lacking the same level of commitment as those that came before them. In addition, increasing regulation and administrative requirements are restricting many groups. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified this and put many volunteer-run organizations at risk of closing. In cases where volunteer involvement diminishes, the community will look to the Town to take on many of the responsibilities, ultimately leading to increased costs and the rationalization of service.



Input from the community suggests that the value and contribution of volunteerism in Ingersoll is not always encouraged or recognized. To better leverage community expertise and fundraising, there is a need to ensure that volunteerism is nurtured and properly directed in Ingersoll. This requires a proactive commitment to volunteer management (e.g., recruitment, screening, training, recognition, etc.) from the Town and its partners. The development of a Volunteer Charter that recognizes these contributions and outlines the Town's commitment to supporting volunteer efforts is recommended. A Volunteer Policy was also identified as a priority action in the 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan.

Additional strategies may include expanding volunteer opportunities so that they have an inter-generational focus (e.g., youths volunteering with seniors), creating a leader-in-training program for youth, and developing a recognition program for individuals that go above and beyond in their volunteering. Engaging younger volunteers must continue to be a priority as it not only helps to build skills, but can also lead to future volunteer and employment opportunities within the sector.

Partnerships also play a crucial role in the provision and delivery of parks, recreation and culture facilities and services within Ingersoll. When properly supported, they can lead to increased service without additional municipal resources. The Town has built a variety of formal and informal relationships with a number of organizations serving the youth, senior, arts, sport, education, and community service sectors. Some examples include land leases (e.g., CAMI soccer park and seniors' centre, Unifor sports fields, etc.), facility improvements (e.g., minor ball, which manages the diamond at St. Jude's Catholic Elementary School), program delivery (e.g., Ingersoll Support Services Inc., Seniors Centre Board, VON, etc.) and more.

To address specific initiatives and one-time projects, the Town also administers a Community Development Grant Program that offers funding assistance to eligible non-profit community organizations. This program is supported by an annual budget allocation and a transparent intake and evaluation process.

The most successful partnerships are often derived from common objectives (e.g., environmental conservation, community improvement, physical activity, etc.), maximizing the strengths of each group, and mitigating risks (e.g., costs, liability, etc.). There are numerous criteria that must be considered before developing a relationship with a third-party wishing to introduce a new level of service with Town assistance. The development of a standardized partnership framework would assist with evaluating and managing partnerships involving parks, recreation and culture services.

## Recommendations

13. Create a **volunteer recognition and awards program** to celebrate outstanding achievements and contributions to parks, recreation and culture services in Ingersoll.
14. Develop a **Volunteer Policy/Charter** that encourages local contributions and outlines the Town's commitment to supporting volunteer efforts, including a formal process to consider and approve volunteer projects.
15. Continue to **seek and support community partnerships** that service, reduce reliance on tax dollars, and increase resident access to needed parks, recreation and cultural services. Use a standard set of criteria to evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests (including a minimum fundraising requirement), informed by the Master Plan's guiding principles and findings.

## Recommendations

16. Ensure that third-party partnerships (e.g., maintenance, lease agreements, etc.) are guided by **written agreements** that address the responsibilities of all parties and protect the public interest.
17. Continue efforts to establish a **reciprocal use agreement** with area school boards to maximize community access to school facilities.
18. Continue to engage **adjacent municipalities** on community service initiatives that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for Ingersoll residents.

### 5.5 Communications and Marketing

While there is broad awareness within the community of parks, recreation and cultural facilities and services, communications and marketing could always be improved. A “lack of information” was indicated by 15% of survey respondents as a barrier to participation in parks, recreation and culture activities in Ingersoll. There was a suggestion that this figure may increase as Ingersoll grows, attracting more newcomers that are not familiar with all the Town has to offer.

The Community Services Department has a respectable online presence, providing program and facility information through the Town’s website, which also supports online registration through the recreation management platform. The Town’s social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) also provide relevant updates and notifications in regards to parks, recreation and culture, in addition to providing information about special events. Print material is more limited, but does exist, such as the seasonal Program Guides that outline recreational and cultural opportunities for residents and non-residents. Marketing and communications are mostly a Departmental function, led by the Community Services Coordinator with input from management staff.

To ensure that these communication and marketing tactics are effective in reaching the desired audiences, the Town should regularly test this through surveys or feedback forms of program participants. Recognizing that Ingersoll is a growing community and that some new/existing residents prefer printed materials, the printed program guides should continue to be provided in some form as we merge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan identified the development of a Town email newsletter for residents as a priority action. Additionally, profiles of registrants through the Town’s new recreation management software (BookKing) may provide a lens that can be used for more targeted marketing. The key to effective marketing is to ensure that messaging is consistent, accurate and in formats that are accessible to as many residents as possible, including continued messaging around the benefits of participation in these services and how they can add to a healthy lifestyle.



An open line of communication with community groups and residents would also help to ensure that issues, ideas and concerns are addressed. It is recommended that the Department hold annual open forums to discuss initiatives and topics of broad appeal within the parks, recreation and culture sector. Furthermore, public and stakeholder engagement should also be a mandatory requirement for all major capital projects and policy decisions that impact the community.

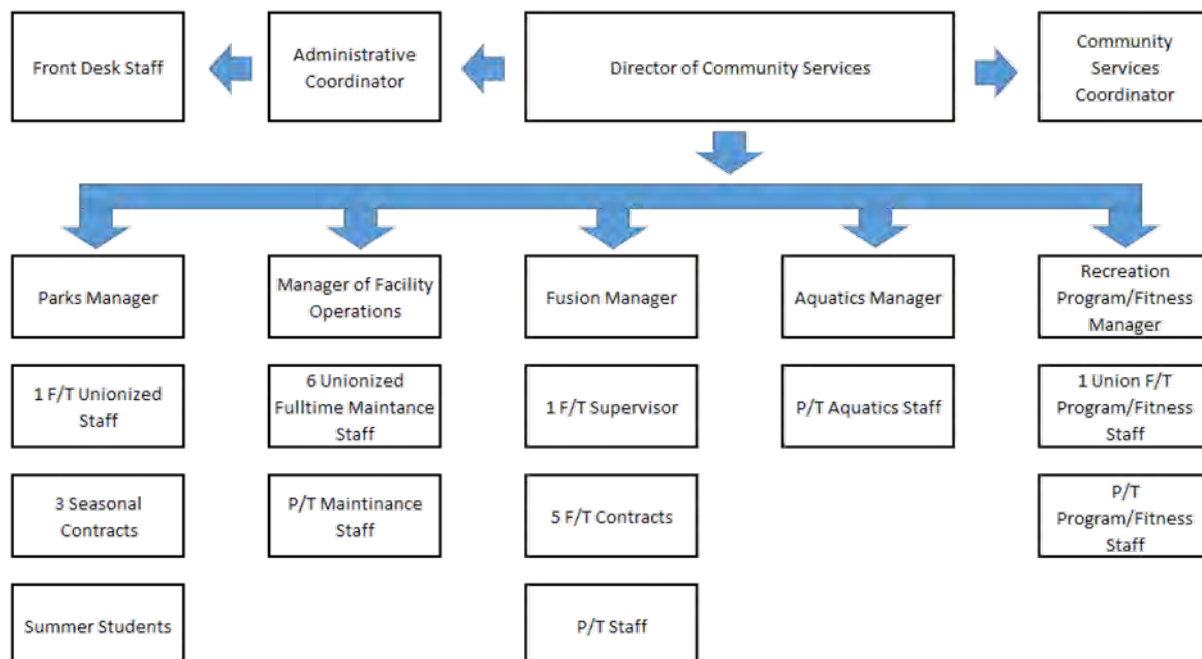
## Recommendations

19. Develop a **Communication and Marketing Strategy** to guide the use of various tools in promoting and gathering feedback on the Department's services and initiatives.
20. Maintain and publicly promote an **inventory** of local parks, recreation and culture programs, events and service providers.
21. Host **annual forums** with community groups and residents to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks, recreation and culture services.

## 5.6 Staffing and Organizational Structure

The Community Services Department is led by a Director (who is a part of the Town's Senior Management Team) and is supported by five managers: Parks; Facility Operations; Fusion Centre; Aquatics; and Recreation Programs/Fitness. The remaining staff team is composed of full-time, part-time and seasonal staff that report to their applicable supervisors.

Figure 11: Town of Ingersoll Community Services Department Organizational Chart



The Corporate Strategic Plan exercise identified that parks and recreation services are a strength of the Town. There is strong employee engagement and satisfaction levels within the Community Services work team. The leadership team has worked to empower staff to readily suggest improvements for their respective disciplines and there is a sense of dedication and belief in the value of their services to strengthening the health of the community. This common vision has served to engage staff and create a strong Departmental culture; however, these values and expectations are not captured in writing. Creating a charter of engagement for current staff would be a worthwhile undertaking in the near future, which can be combined with the recommended volunteer charter to establish broad expectations around customer service and commitment to community.

Looking to the future, a greater emphasis on customer service (e.g., bookings, registration, communications, data/software management, etc.) can be anticipated due to the broadening of services and facilities, as well as the rising expectations of residents. The Town has identified this trend and is working towards improving customer service overall; however, it has been a challenge given the current staff complement. Opportunities to streamline communication and investing in online task management software continue to be explored.

The overall recruitment of part-time and seasonal staff (for parks maintenance, lifeguarding, program instruction, etc.) has also been an issue for the Department as many are seeking full-time positions and finding these elsewhere within the current labour market. This staffing challenge makes it difficult to address public demands for expanded programming and consistent customer service. The 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan identified a few priority actions in this regard. In addition, there may be value in working with the local high school to promote the benefits of part-time municipal work opportunities. Conversion of part-time assignments into full-time positions may also pay dividends in the future through a highly trained and customer-focused workforce.

In terms of governance, the Town has several advisory committees that report directly to Council. Those with mandates involving the Community Services Department include the Recreational Trails Committee and Safe Cycling Committee. Ingersoll also has representation on the Ingersoll Services for Seniors Board of Directors.

## Recommendations

22. Continually review Departmental **staffing levels** to ensure alignment with levels of service. Additional staff will continue to be required as the Town grows. Through future budgets, consideration could be given to conversion of part-time positions to new **full-time positions** with an emphasis on internal staffing promotion/retention.
23. Develop and keep current a **succession plan** to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.

## Recommendations

24. Provide **staff training and professional development** opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to **equity and inclusion** in the delivery of service. Continue to support the Department's staff training plan through an annual budget allocation.
25. Work as a staff team to define the **organizational culture** and respective values and behaviours through the development of a **Charter of Engagement**.

## 6. Facilities Assessment

Recreation facilities and outdoor amenities play an important role in the daily life of Ingersoll residents. The Town invests in infrastructure to promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles, skill development, athletic competition, community building, and economic growth. This section reviews the Town's provision of facilities through a qualitative and quantitative needs assessment focussed on the next ten years.

### 6.1 Current Facilities Inventory

The following table and map provide a summary of existing indoor and outdoor facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Town of Ingersoll.

**Table 20: Town of Ingersoll Indoor Recreation Facility Summary**

Indoor Facilities	Supply	Location(s)	Current Provision
<b>Arena (Ice Pads)</b>	1	Ingersoll District Memorial Centre	1:14,240
<b>Indoor Pools</b>	1	Victoria Park Community Centre	1:14,240
<b>Community Halls</b>	1	Fusion Centre	1:14,240
<b>Meeting &amp; Activity Rooms</b>	Various	Ingersoll District Memorial Centre, Fusion Centre, Victoria Park Community Centre	n/a
<b>Gymnasiums</b>	1	Fusion Centre	1:14,240
<b>Fitness Centres</b>	1	Victoria Park Community Centre	1:14,240
<b>Squash Courts</b>	2	Victoria Park Community Centre	1:7,120
<b>Seniors' Centre</b>	1	Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre (Board-operated)	1:14,240
<b>Cultural Facilities and Museums</b>	2	Cheese and Agricultural Museum (Board-operated), Creative Arts Centre (Board-operated)	1:7,120

**Table 21: Town of Ingersoll Outdoor Recreation Facility Summary**

Outdoor Facilities	Supply	Location(s)	Current Provision
<b>Playgrounds (locations)</b>	13	Centennial Park, Edward Park, Garnet Elliott Park, Jim Robbin's Park, Kensington Park, Lion's Park, Lorne Moon, Yvonne Mott Memorial Park, North Meadows, Scourfield Park, Victoria Park, Westfield Park, Woodhatch Park	1:1,095



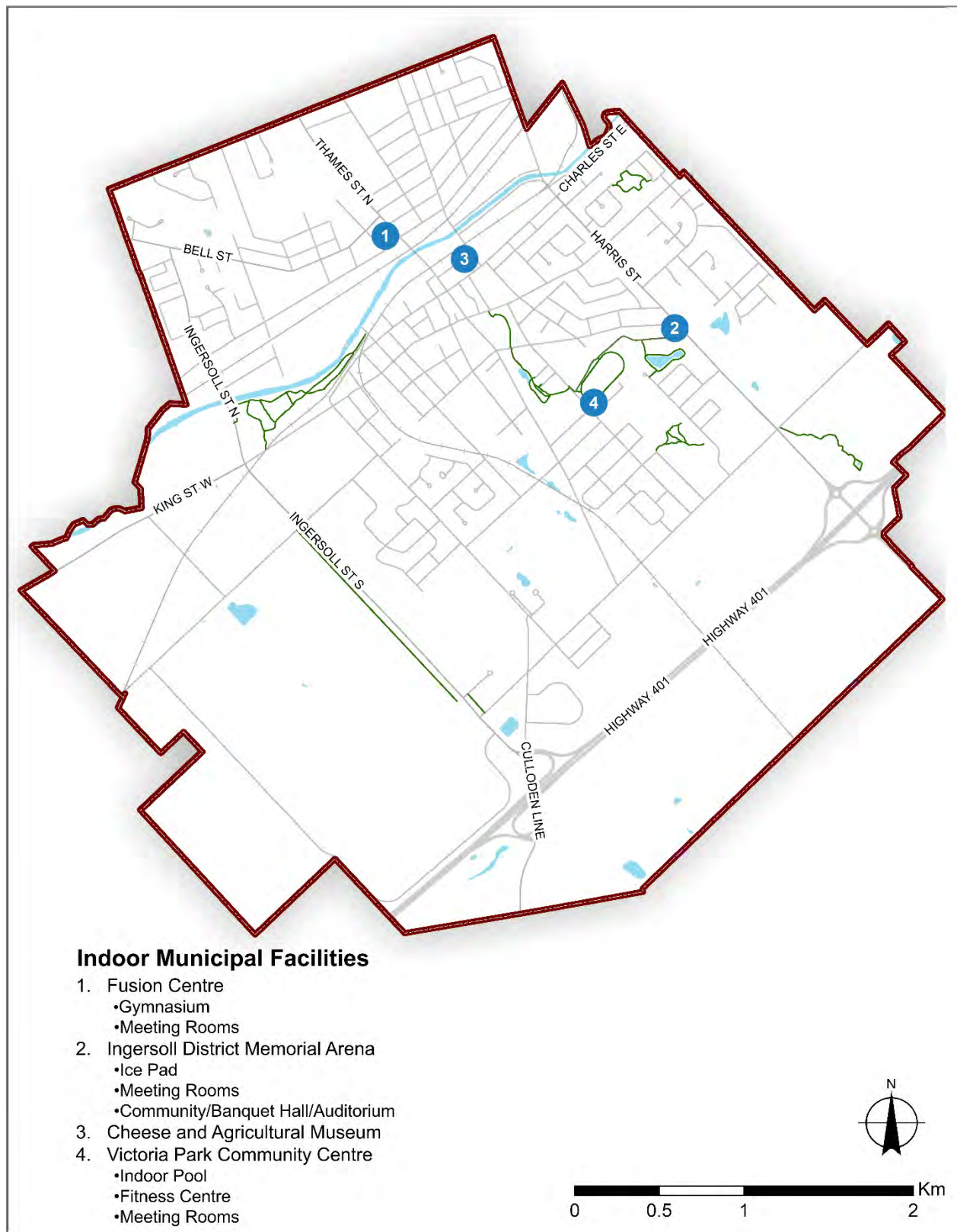
Outdoor Facilities	Supply	Location(s)		Current Provision
<b>Soccer Fields</b>	12 total (12.5 unlit equivalents)	Full (lit)	CAMI Flyer Soccer Park	1:1,140 (unlit equivalents)
		Full (unlit)	CAMI Flyer Soccer Park, Garnet Elliott Park, Unifor Park	
		Intermediate (unlit)	CAMI Flyer Soccer Park (2), Jim Robbin's Park	
		Mini (unlit)	CAMI Flyer Soccer Park (5)	
<b>Baseball Diamonds</b>	8 total (12 unlit equivalents)	Lit	Garnet Elliott Park, Victoria Park (3)	1:1,187 (unlit equivalents)
		Unlit	Currie Park, Garnet Elliott Park, Unifor Park, Westfield Park	
<b>Splash Pad</b>	1	Victoria Park		1:14,240
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	4	CAMI Flyer Soccer Park (2), Westfield Park (2)		1:3,560
<b>Pickleball Courts</b>	0	none		n/a
<b>Skateboard Parks</b>	1	Fusion Centre		1:14,240
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	3	Kensington Park, Lion's Park, Fusion Centre		1:4,747
<b>Outdoor Rink</b>	1	Fusion Centre		1:14,240
<b>Beach Volleyball Courts</b>	1	Fusion Centre		1:14,240
<b>Off-leash Dog Parks</b>	1	Lawson Park		1:14,240
<b>Pavilions (rental)</b>	2	Centennial Park, Victoria Park		1:7,120
<b>Gazebos</b>	4	Heritage Court Park, Lorne Moon, Yvonne Mott Memorial Park, Smith's Pond		1:3,560

Source: Town of Ingersoll, 2021

Current provision based on 2021 population estimate of 14,240 persons.

Notes: To account for extended periods of play for lit facilities, "Unlit Equivalents (ULE)" measure provision levels where every lit soccer field counts as 1.5 unlit fields and every lit ball diamond counts as 2.0 unlit diamonds.

**Figure 12: Map of Town of Ingersoll Indoor Recreation and Cultural Facilities**





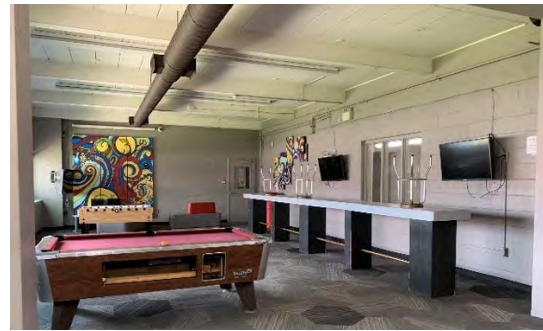
**Ingersoll District Memorial Centre**



**Hall at Ingersoll District Memorial Centre**



**Fusion Centre**



**Lounge at Fusion Centre**



**Gymnasium at Fusion Centre**



**Victoria Park Community Centre**



**Indoor Pool at Victoria Park Community Centre**



**Fitness Centre at Victoria Park Community Centre**





**Robert Walker Memorial Diamond at Victoria Park**



**Playground at Victoria Park**



**Splash Pad at Victoria Park**



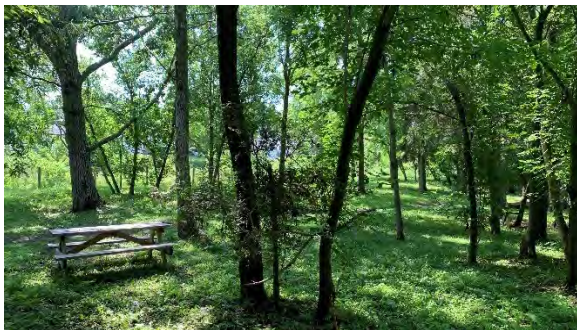
**Soccer Fields at CAMI Flyer Soccer Park**



**Tennis Courts at Westfield Park**



**Skateboard Park at Fusion Centre**



**Off-leash Dog Park at Lawson Park**



**Bandshell at Yvonne Mott Memorial Park**



In addition to these municipal facilities, residents also benefit from a number of facilities owned and/or managed by others (note: some may not be broadly accessible to the public), such as:

- **Schools:** most elementary and secondary schools include gymnasiums, classrooms and outdoor facilities (e.g., sports fields, playgrounds);
- **Non-profit providers:** examples include churches and places of worship, the Legion, service clubs, the Kiwanis Club (Key Putt) Creative Arts Centre (outdoor arts displays), etc.;
- **Private providers:** examples include Unifor Hall, the Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts, fitness clubs, martial arts and dance studios, etc.; and
- **Adjacent municipalities/communities:** arenas and halls, and parks and trails are provided in adjacent and nearby municipalities, such as Zorra, Woodstock, Thamesford, Tillsonburg, etc.

## 6.2 Community Centres, Arenas and Dedicated Space

This section examines several space components that are often typically housed within multi-use community and recreation centres, including arenas, indoor pools, gymnasiums, fitness centres, multi-use space, and dedicated space for specific age groups. The Victoria Park Community Centre (VPCC) and Fusion Centre are multi-use centres that offer several of the aforementioned spaces.

In addition, the Town is pursuing the development of a **multi-use recreation centre (MURC)**, which is proposed to include a single pad arena (to replace the Memorial Centre), gymnasium, community hall, and multi-purpose rooms and fitness/warm-up space. Other potential components (site and funding dependent; may be considered through future phases) include seniors' space, a second ice pad, sports fields, and a long-term replacement of the VPCC indoor pool.



Two sites remain under consideration for the MURC: 200 Clarke Road at the Town's south end (Town-owned industrial lands); and 99 North Town Line Road East at the Town's northern edge (privately-owned and in the Township of Zorra). The proposed multi-use recreation complex is estimated to cost \$24.9 million (2020 estimate). To date,

the Town has been unable to secure senior government funding for this facility. The development of the MURC remains a high priority as it will help the Town address many related objectives (such as aging infrastructure, health and wellness, residential growth, tourism and economic development, etc.) and is supported by the Town's 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan.

### Arenas

The Town currently operates one ice pad at the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre. The pad is undersized by today's standards (80 ft x 180 ft), but is well utilized for various ice activities such as hockey, public skating, figure skating, etc. In summer months shuffleboard and pickleball are played on the arena floor when the ice has been removed. However, the arena is 60 years of age and has exceeded its lifespan, with major capital renewal required for the roof, ice slab, boards and more. If the arena is to remain in service beyond 2024 (estimated), it will require substantial investment (prior conservative estimates were \$2 to \$4 million, but this figure could be much higher).



Even though ice sports like hockey and figure skating are a traditional Canadian pastime, recent trends suggest that participation in these activities is decreasing across the nation. The rising cost of equipment, time commitments for travel, the increasing cost of ice rentals, an aging population and an increase in immigration from countries that do not generally participate in ice sports are fuelling this trend. In addition, many participants have stopped playing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there is concern that some will not resume playing when leagues resume.

These trends can be seen through the results of the community survey which found ice sports to be the 10<sup>th</sup> most participated in activity since 2019, with just over one-third (34%) of responding households indicating they had participated within the time period. Nevertheless, ice sports are important activities in Ingersoll and the community understands the need to replace the Memorial Centre and has shown strong support for this – 64% of Master Plan survey respondents identified arenas as a high priority for municipal investment.

Additional consultation reiterated the pressing need to replace the rink, although many users are more supportive of a new twin pad facility that would expand the local supply and reduce the need to travel to nearby communities (e.g., Thamesford, etc.) to pick-up additional ice times; there are several arenas in the region that have historically had

capacity to accommodate additional usage. It was also explained that the current arena is unable to support ice during the warmer months, which can impact tryouts, training, and season start dates.

The Multi-Use Recreation Centre Study that was completed in 2017 is used as a baseline for usage data. In 2017, primetime ice was 96% used. At the time, public skating hours were reduced and allocated to organizations. Usage of non-primetime hours was lower at 38% (schools, Town programs, casual rentals, etc.).<sup>2</sup> Since this time and leading to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, ice usage levels remained strong.

Looking forward, the pandemic is likely to have a negative impact on team sports at least in the short-term. User groups have had to adapt to evolving public health protocols such as restricted capacities, which has limited their ability to run traditional programming. Concerns over virus transmission have also led to fewer children, youth and adults playing team sports. As ice sports recover from these challenges, there are concerns that the number of active participants may not fully return to previous levels, or will do so at a slower pace. In the short-term, the Town should continue to work with local organizations and adjacent municipalities to monitor ice usage trends to determine approaches to accommodate adjusted demand levels.

The timely development of the MURC is a high priority for Town Council. The Town intends to include one ice pad at the proposed MURC (to replace the Memorial Centre), though the design would allow for the potential to add a second ice pad through a future construction phase. The population data identified in Section 2 of this Master Plan suggests that the number of children and youth aged 5 to 19 years – the primary market for primetime ice – is forecasted to increase by 14% between 2021 and 2031, around the same rate of overall population growth. Although a twin pad would be more operationally efficient, population growth is insufficient on its own to support the need for a second ice pad. However, this growth does have the potential to increase pressure on existing supplies if participation rates remain steady.

The development of the MURC is somewhat time-sensitive, as the Town does not wish to invest heavily in the aging Ingersoll District Memorial Centre. If the MURC development does not proceed within the next two years, additional building assessment studies will be required to inform the decision to replace or revitalize the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre.

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<sup>2</sup> F.J. Galloway Associates Inc. & Nicholson Sheffield Architects Inc. *Town of Ingersoll Multi-Use Recreation Centre*. 2017.

## Recommendations

26. Continue with plans to include a **single pad arena** to replace the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre as part of the first phase of the proposed MURC. The facility should be designed so that it can be expanded to add a second ice pad as part of a future phase, should demand warrant. Monitoring of usage trends and regional arena supplies will help to demonstrate needs going forward.
27. Conduct **building assessment studies** to confirm the status and potential costs of revitalizing the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre, should the development of the MURC be further delayed.

### Indoor Pool

Ingersoll operates one indoor pool, at the Victoria Park Community Centre. The pool is a 4-lane, 25-metre pool with two small teaching pools and a waterslide. A wheelchair ramp access supports the pools. The main pool is very well used during primetime periods and is used for a variety of programs such as public swimming, swimming lessons, aquafit, swim team, etc.

Not all communities the size of Ingersoll have an indoor pool and residents strongly value and support this level of service. The Master Plan survey found that 44% of households swim recreationally and 31% have recently taken swim lessons, making it one of the more popular activities in the community. Additionally, 67% of responding households indicated that the Town should prioritize additional public spending on improvements to the existing pool or the development of a new pool, making it one of the highest priorities. Specific community feedback included requests for earlier lane swim times and improved air quality within the pool enclosure. Opportunities to increase pool usage during non-primetime hours should continue to be a focus for the Town.



Ingersoll is a growing community. As a result, it can be expected that the number of children and youth will continue to grow (though slightly slower than the overall population), adding to the number of potential registrants for swim lessons. With a



growing seniors' population, the demand for aquafit will also increase, and will be an important form of physical activity as we emerge from the pandemic. The Victoria Park Community Centre pool is capable of meeting local needs for the foreseeable future. Should the facility require replacement in the long-term, consideration should be given to replacing it at the proposed MURC where it can benefit from economies of scale associated with the larger facility.

In the shorter-term, the Town should renovate the Victoria Park Community Centre to improve the public service areas, including the lobby and pool changerooms. The renovation should focus on creating fully accessible and universal spaces, with consideration to gender-neutral changerooms with change stalls.

### Recommendations

28. Continue to pursue programs and partnerships that promote **pool usage during non-prime (daytime) hours**.

29. Renovate the public service spaces at the **Victoria Park Community Centre** (e.g., lobby and pool changerooms) to improve universal access and enhance operational efficiency.

### Multi-Use Community Spaces and Fitness Centre

All major Town recreation facilities contain activity and multi-use space that can host a variety of programs, rentals, and community activities. In addition, the Victoria Park Community Centre houses a municipally-operated equipment-based fitness centre, supported by fitness studios for group activities and two squash courts.

The public consultation program found varying levels of demand for these types of spaces. For example, the fitness centre is well supported by the community (48% of survey respondents indicating that investment is a high priority). Demand for general program space and room rentals is driven by local organizations and specific interest groups, and the requests tend to be more unique. For instance, some agencies requested that the Town reinstate the Snoezelen Room at the Fusion Centre to provide a safe place for therapeutic recreation.

Usage levels of multi-purpose spaces and fitness studios often vary throughout the year and there may be potential to enhance usage. Through its new software platform, the Town will be better positioned to track usage levels to identify trends and opportunities. In addition, the wide variety of spaces available at the Fusion Centre tend to offer something for almost every group and the Town is encouraged to continue to seek strategic partnerships that maximize participation and use of this facility.

The two squash courts at the Victoria Park Community Centre are underutilized as interest in this sport has waned over the years. At one point there were three courts, however the third court was redeveloped as a fitness studio to respond to emerging

needs for group fitness (e.g., yoga, pilates, body pump, etc.). The remaining courts are also in deteriorating condition. It is recommended that the Town explore repurposing options for these courts that have broader appeal and improve cross-programming (e.g., mini gymnasium, additional fitness rooms, etc.).

## Recommendations

30. As part of the proposed renovation at Victoria Park Community Centre, explore options to **convert the two squash courts** into a space that offers broader appeal.
31. Continue to seek strategic partnerships that **maximize participation and use of multi-use rooms** at municipal recreation facilities. Monitor usage levels to identify trends and opportunities.

## Gymnasium

The Town offers a small gymnasium at the Fusion Centre, which is used largely to host child and youth basketball, volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, and more. The gymnasium at the Fusion Centre complements the programming at this site very well, but is unable to accommodate broader community use, especially for team sports, and adult and older adult activities.

Municipalities are increasingly including gymnasiums within new recreation centres as they can accommodate many growing sports (e.g., basketball, pickleball, etc.), a wide variety of age groups, and larger community events. The proposed MURC is expected to include a double gymnasium that will address the Town's needs for the foreseeable future.

Should the MURC not be developed as planned, there may be other opportunities to improve community access to gymnasiums, although each has its own challenges:

- Local school gymnasiums are also available on occasion through the community use of schools program, although this access has been eliminated during the pandemic. Prior to this time, it was common for the Town or groups to be bumped by school programs, making access somewhat unreliable and unaffordable for some organizations.
- Adjacent to the 50+ Activity Centre, the CAMI Assembly Plant owns a vacant and unused recreation centre consisting of a gymnasium. Due to its condition and recent vandalism, this facility would require significant repairs and upgrades. As



a stand-alone facility, this would only address a narrower range of needs (e.g., sport rentals) and would not be efficient for the Town to operate.

Furthermore, if CAMI is willing, the Town should explore – through a possible partnership agreement – the potential to use the former CAMI gymnasium, located at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park, which has sat vacant for several years. The gymnasium would require significant repairs and upgrades if the Town were to obtain/use it.

## Recommendations

32. Continue with plans to include a **double gymnasium** within the first phase of the proposed MURC to support expanded and new programming, rentals and community activities.

### Dedicated Space for Youth

The Fusion Centre is a multi-use community hub that is predominately known for its after-school youth opportunities. As a former school, the Fusion Centre offers a range of specialized and multi-use rooms (as well as space for third-party partners) that offer flexibility in programming and use. Meeting the needs of youth (aged 10 to 18 years) and supporting their healthy development is a high priority for the Town.

The Fusion Centre and its programming are a well-regarded core service that provides a safe, inviting space for youth and residents of all ages. The community survey found that 9% of households participated in youth centre activities since 2019, while 63%





support public spending on youth centres as a high priority. Further, the consultation program yielded several comments praising the Fusion Centre programming and staff team.

It is important to recognize that the majority of children and youth do not play organized sports, which are traditionally well provided in most communities. Having a welcoming and inclusive space for youth to hangout with their peers, participate in activities, learn new skills (the Fusion Centre has a youth lounge, recording studio, gaming area, arts studio, and more) are critical to engaging the full range of youth. These services have grown even more important as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic – a time when many young people have been isolated, are dealing with learning loss from inconsistent schooling, and are grappling with higher rates of physical inactivity and mental health challenges.

The Fusion Centre serves a vital role in the community, but – as with all community and recreation services – requires sustainable financial support. The Town should continue to explore a range of internal and external funding opportunities to support the facility’s operations, and ensure that required capital maintenance is properly prioritized.

Recommendations
33. Recognize and celebrate the vital role that the Town plays in supporting youth and providing high quality programming through <b>sustainable funding for the Fusion Centre</b> and its services.

Dedicated Space for Seniors

The Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre offers a traditional range of social, recreational, and educational activities for older adults and seniors; the group currently has about 800 members. This facility is leased by the Town from CAMI and operated by an independent board with some funding from the Province and the Town. Town facilities such as the Victoria Park Community Centre also offer a range of older adult programming, more notably active programs related to fitness and aquatics.





Like many other communities, Ingersoll's population is aging – the median age has increased from 37 years in 2001 to 41 years in 2016. Population forecasts for the County suggest that the number of seniors aged 70 years and over will increase by 43% over the next ten years as many baby boomers reach this milestone.

Recent trends have found that older adults are more active in comparison to previous generations and that this has contributed to demand for more active programming such as pickleball and fitness. Facilities and service providers that can offer extensive programming (e.g., fitness, education, cards, music and dance, and health services) are best positioned to respond to this trend.

Through the community survey, 50% of respondents identified seniors' centres/space as a high priority for future investment. They survey also found requests for additional active older adult programming beyond what is offered at the 50+ Activity Centre.

Through the 2017 MURC Feasibility Study, the possibility of moving the 50+ Activity Centre to the proposed multi-use recreation centre was discussed; this option was deferred to a future phase. The seniors' centre building is an aging asset – it was originally built in the 1980s to serve as temporary accommodations for automotive executives – and it is not fully barrier-free (it lacks an elevator for example). In recent years, Town spending on capital repairs at the Centre has been rising, calling into question the long-term viability of this location. While the Town's lease runs through 2030, there remains merit in integrating the 50+ Activity Centre into the MURC to leverage the potential of shared space and common elements.

Further, there is very little coordination and cross-promotion between the Town's Community Services Department and 50+ Activity Centre board/staff. This can result in duplication, competition, and inefficiency. As agencies that often serve the same customer, greater communication and information sharing (at a minimum) would benefit taxpayers in many ways. As recommended in Section 5, the Town should work with agencies such as the Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre Board on an integrated service model that reduces duplication and jointly focuses on enhancing recreation program opportunities for older adults. To assist in implementing this direction, it is further recommended that the Town consider establishing a Seniors Advisory Committee (comprised of seniors and key service providers) to advise Town Council on issues and policies impacting older adults and seniors, including sharing information, improving awareness of services, creating annual action plans, and more. The mandate of this committee could be broader than just recreation, and could include matters related to transportation, affordability, and overall quality of life.

## Recommendations

34. Re-engage with the 50+ Activity Centre to explore opportunities to **integrate the seniors centre into a future phase of the proposed MURC** through a blend of shared and dedicated spaces.

## Recommendations

35. Consider the establishment of a **Seniors Advisory Committee** to advise Town Council on issues and policies impacting older adults and seniors. Improved coordination and integrated service delivery to this demographic should be a priority and may require additional **working groups** involving key service providers such as the Community Services Department and 50+ Activity Centre.

### 6.3 Arts and Cultural Assets

Like many smaller communities, Ingersoll boasts an active arts and cultural community. There are two notable municipally-owned arts and cultural facilities in Ingersoll:

- **Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum** – This museum offers historical programming that sheds light on Ingersoll's unique history as a community and how it began as an agriculturally-dominated Town. This facility is operated by the Town (reporting through the Clerks Department) with substantial volunteer assistance.
- **Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre** – Located within Victoria Park, this building is leased to a non-profit membership-driven board that offers visual arts instruction, programming, and displays.

In addition, Ingersoll has an active arts and cultural community consisting of private business owners and organizations that are dedicated to enriching the lives of others through creative and performing arts. Many of these individuals and groups use non-municipal arts and cultural space, such as home-based and private studios. These spaces relieve pressure on the Town to deliver programs and services and this approach to community development and indirect service delivery should continue to be supported. A cohesive and coordinated approach to arts, cultural and heritage tourism, events, programs, and promotion is vital to leveraging existing resources and maximizing benefit for all.

The community survey found that 13% to 21% of local households have participated in arts/cultural activities or visited a museum, theatre or gallery since 2019. Support for additional investment in arts and cultural facilities was low compared to most other facility types, with 26% indicating that theatres should be a high priority, followed by museums at 18%, and art galleries at 12%. The community did, however, express a desire for additional arts programming and events, including activities that promote awareness of other cultures such as Canada's Indigenous Peoples. The arts and cultural sector has been hard hit by the pandemic and it is possible that additional requests for funding through the Community Development Grant Program will be seen in the coming years.

Interest has also been expressed for some time in an Arts and Heritage Hub, a concept that was also captured through the consultation for the 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan. To date, the need for an arts centre has not been fully demonstrated. Going forward, the

local arts community is encouraged to expand their programming and seek community partners to provide sustainable financial support to such an initiative. A feasibility study would be required to further define the project and its benefits to the community.

## Recommendations

36. Monitor local demand for an **Arts and Heritage Hub**. The development of a community-led feasibility study is recommended to inform further discussions around public demand, possible operating models, locations, and financial requirements.

### 6.4 Playgrounds

There are thirteen (13) municipal playground locations throughout Ingersoll. The Town's playgrounds vary in design and scale from basic structures (e.g., slides and swings) like at Lorne Moon Park and Jim Robbins Park, to more complex and engaging, barrier-free playgrounds like at Victoria Park. The Town is in the process of converting all playground surfaces to engineered wood fibre.

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that are important for childhood development as they offer interactive, unstructured play that allow users to use their imagination. Playground designs have evolved over time from traditional play equipment (e.g., swings, slides, etc.) to more creative structures that create environments offering their own unique play experiences. This could include design elements such as vibrant colours, interactive play features, thematic designs and components that stimulate the senses.



The community survey found that 55% of responding households have used playground equipment within the Town since 2019 and that 78% view them as a high priority for additional investment. The accessible playground at Victoria Park is especially popular and has become a community destination. Requests have been received for the installation of a swing set at Edward Park, updated playgrounds at Jim Robbins, Woodhatch, and Lorne Moon Parks, and more accessible features throughout all playgrounds.

Maintaining equitable access to playgrounds throughout Ingersoll helps to promote the healthy development of children. Ideally, playgrounds should be located within a 500-metre radius of residential areas – typically equalling a 5 to 10-minute walk without having to cross major, high-volume roadways, rail lines or watercourses.

Potential playground gap areas are shown on the following map. Where possible, new playgrounds may be installed so that they address these areas:

- Higher Priority: the area east and west of Butternut Woods in South Ingersoll is partially served by playgrounds at elementary schools, but gaps exist within this growing area.
- Lower Priority: the area west of the central downtown area along King Street West is a mature neighbourhood, but without any parks to install a playground.

Additionally, playgrounds should be constructed in new residential neighbourhoods to achieve the 500-metre distribution target.

To ensure that the Town's playgrounds continue to be safe spaces that promote play, efforts should be made to ensure that play structures are replaced/updated at the end of their lifecycles (usually 15 to 20 years). In Ingersoll, this is an average of two playgrounds every three years and includes ensuring that capital funding is consistently allocated to fund replacement. New or redeveloped playgrounds must also comply with accessibility legislation and consider barrier-free features such as ramps and firm, stable surfaces.

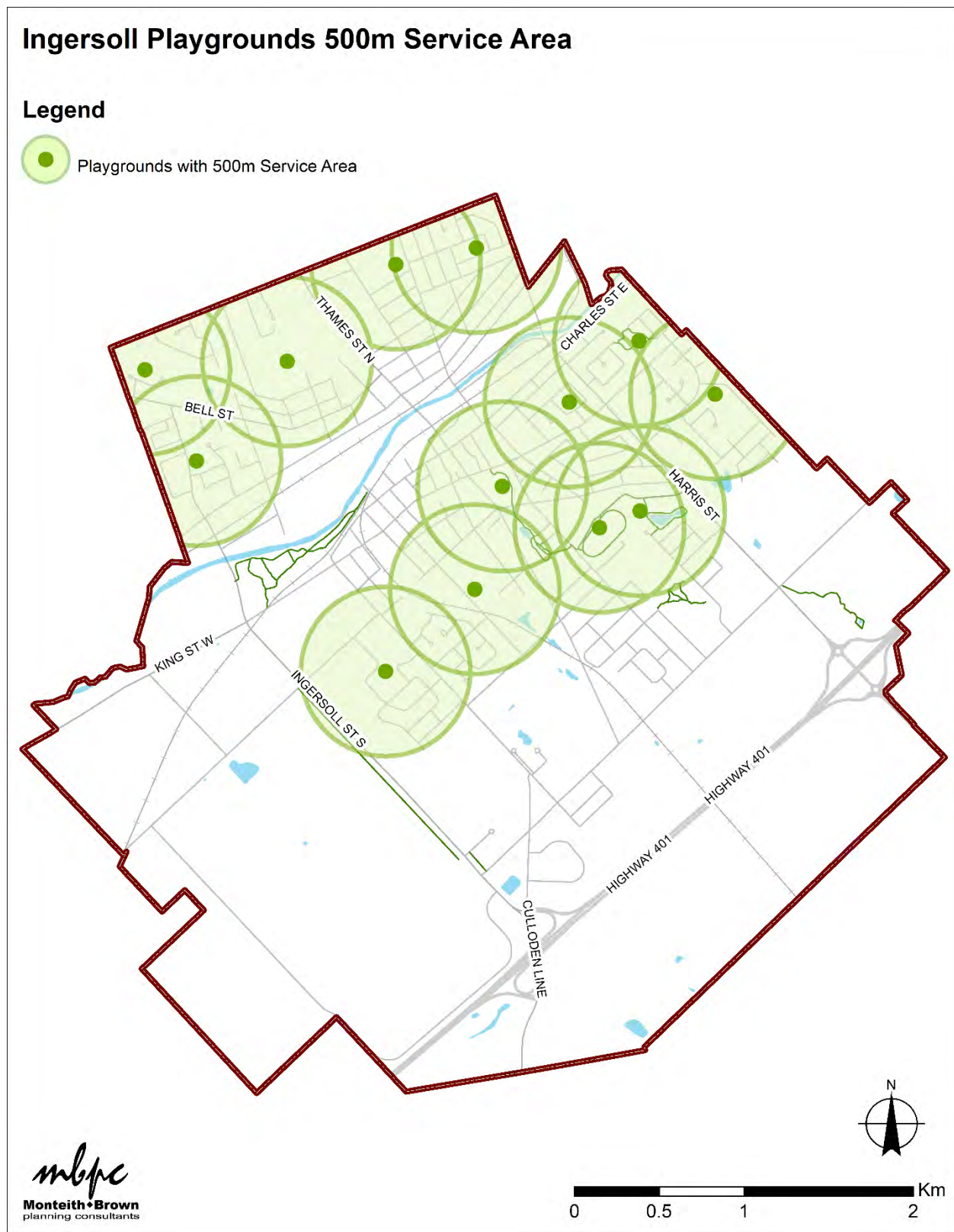
There has been growing interest nationally in adventure and natural playgrounds that provide an enhanced play experience. Research has shown that these playgrounds support "risky play" through climbing, exploring and moving to increase motor skills. The use of natural materials like wood, ropes, boulders, landscaping etc. also provide new playing experiences for users that stimulates creative play through imagination. The Town may consider this type of playground in a future park site.

## Recommendations

37. Establish a target of providing **playgrounds within 500-metres of all residential areas**. Where necessary, install playgrounds in new subdivisions and seek opportunities to address gaps (e.g., South Ingersoll).
38. Create a capital reserve or capital line item in the budget to ensure the timely **replacement of aging playgrounds** (e.g., Jim Robbins, Woodhatch, Lorne Moon and Edward Parks). Establish a **minimum accessibility standard** for new and updated play structures to improve barrier-free access.



Figure 13: Ingersoll Playgrounds 500-metre Service Area



## 6.5 Soccer Fields

The Town maintains a total of twelve (12) soccer fields at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park, Garnet Elliott Park, Jim Robbin's Park, and Unifor Park. One full-size field at the Soccer Park has lights. Ten of these fields are on lands that are leased by the Town.

Although soccer continues to be one of the more popular organized sports due to its broad appeal and low barriers to participation, trends in Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) affiliated programs show that provincial soccer participation peaked in 2007 and has been on a slow decline since. It is believed this is a result of several factors such as demographic trends, introduction of the OSA's Long-Term Player Development model, emergence of unaffiliated clubs and academies, and growing interest in other activities.

The extent to which this trend is occurring in Ingersoll is uncertain as the Town does not currently track this data and the minor soccer club did not participate in the consultation process. From the survey, it is estimated that 19% of households have one or more members that have participated in soccer. Two-fifths (40%) of those surveyed indicated that soccer fields should be a priority for spending.



No specific input was received, suggesting that the existing soccer fields are meeting needs. It is understood that minor soccer operates largely on a Monday to Thursday schedule, with additional field capacity for greater utilization if registration increases. Typical soccer field provision rates range from one field (unlit equivalents) per 80 to 100 regular participants. It is believed that current registration is well below this threshold, but this would need to be verified.

The land lease for the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park – the Town's largest soccer complex – expires in 2030. This site is vital to the success of the minor soccer program and is also used to host tournaments on a regular basis. The long-term availability of these lands cannot be guaranteed. As this date approaches, the Town and Soccer Club are encouraged to develop a long-term strategy to accommodate local soccer needs, including maximization of existing fields and acquisition or lease of additional lands.

Depending on the site chosen for the MURC, there may be the potential to build some soccer fields at this location.

## Recommendations

39. Develop a **long-term strategy to accommodate local soccer needs** in the event that the lease on the CAMI lands is not extended. Options include maximizing existing fields, adding fields to parks or the MURC site, acquiring or leasing additional lands, etc.

## 6.6 Ball Diamonds

Ingersoll permits eight (8) baseball diamonds at various parks throughout the community, including Currie Park, Unifor Park, Westfield Park, Garnet Elliott Park (two diamonds, including one with lights) and Victoria Park (three lit diamonds). The diamonds at Unifor Park (private) and Currie Park (school) are not owned by the Town; minor ball is responsible for maintaining the diamond at Currie Park.



Baseball and softball appeal to both youth and adults. After years of declining interest in Ontario, the sport has experienced a resurgence in recent times, especially in urbanized communities. Participation in small and rural communities has generally been less volatile as the sport has largely maintained its popularity. For youth, interest in skill development and competitive streams is on the rise. The extent to which these trends apply to Ingersoll is uncertain as local baseball groups did not participate in the consultation process.

Local participation in baseball and softball would appear to be greater than soccer, with 29% of Ingersoll's households having one or more member that participates. More than two-fifths (44%) of those surveyed indicated that ball diamonds should be a priority for spending. Suggestions were received for ball diamond upgrades, including replacement of older light standards, bleachers and dugouts, particular those at Victoria Park.

Nearly all of the Town's ball diamonds are undersized for adult play – most outfields are approximately 240 to 260 feet, while contemporary standards are 280 feet. This impacts many men's teams, affects the scheduling of diamonds with overlapping outfields and creates safety hazards that necessitate the use of netting. Furthermore, unlike soccer, there is no one location in Ingersoll with three or more diamonds that can support



tournaments. However, it is not likely viable to expand or add more diamonds to any existing park sites due to their various constraints.

The Town's diamonds are well used and it is possible that demand will increase as Ingersoll grows. The current diamonds are well designed to meet youth levels of play, but are undersized for some adult leagues. It is recommended that the Town monitor usage and registration levels to inform future diamond provision. Typical ball diamond provision rates range from one diamond (unlit equivalents – of which the town currently has 12) per 80 to 100 regular participants. Should additional fields be necessary, it is recommended that two to three full size diamonds (280-foot outfields) be developed at a new site, possibly as part of the MURC should the site be able to accommodate this.

### Recommendations

40. Develop **two to three properly-sized, lit diamonds** in the longer-term to accommodate tournaments and adult play, possibly as part of the MURC project or future park development. Monitor ball diamond usage and participation to confirm long-term needs.

## 6.7 Splash Pads

The Town operates a splash pad at Victoria Park. Splash pads provide opportunities for unstructured play and are a unique, fun way to cool off on a hot summer's day. There is no still water at the splash pad so a lifeguard is not required at the facility. The splash pad has convenient access to the new washroom at Victoria Park, as well as nearby parking, shade, and a playground structure adjacent.

The community survey identified that 51% of respondents have used a splash pad since 2019, ranking it as one of the top activities. Further, 68% felt that splash pads should be a high priority, underscoring their importance within the community. Some residents also requested splash pads at other locations, including one north of the Thames River.





Splash pads are high-cost facilities due to their mechanical features and type of construction, so the Town must carefully assess their provision. Most municipalities make provision decisions based on geographic equity – an effective distribution is important to ensure that they are accessible to residents across the town. Currently, there are no splash pads in the north end.

From our experience, provision targets for splash pads typically range from one per community or between one per 2,500 to 5,000 children in larger urban centres. It is estimated that the current 2021 population of children (ages 0 to 9) in Ingersoll is approximately 1,740. The Town is exceeding this provision target.

Any decision to provide a second splash pad would be founded on the need for greater accessibility and equity. At this time, there is an insufficient population to support another splash pad; however, should the Town decide to provide one in the longer-term, consideration should be given to an appropriate location in the north end.

### Recommendations

41. Revisit the demand for a second **splash pad** (to improve access for those living north of the Thames River) through the next Master Plan update.

## 6.8 Tennis and Pickleball Courts

The Town currently provides four (4) outdoor tennis courts, two at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park (leased) and two at Westfield Park. All courts are available for public use, although the CAMI courts are in poor condition.

Tennis has experienced a resurgence over the past several years in many parts of Canada as a result of improved grassroots programming and the success of Canadian tennis professionals. Baby boomers are also driving the popularity and growth of pickleball, which is recognized as the fastest growing sport in Canada. Pickleball uses a smaller court, but is more susceptible to windy conditions and is often played indoors as a result. Many Canadians have turned to tennis and/or pickleball during the pandemic as a way to stay active outdoors while abiding by small-group guidelines.

The community survey found that 10% and 5% of households have played tennis and pickleball, respectively, since 2019. Demand for additional investment in these court facilities was relatively low – 28% for tennis and 17% for pickleball. Older adults and seniors were somewhat underrepresented through the survey, so these figures – especially for pickleball – may be underestimated. A recent study completed for the City of London found considerable interest in both sports, noting that approximately half of all tennis and pickleball players participate multiple times per week.

With four tennis courts, the Town is currently providing a service level of one court per 3,560 residents. A commonly-applied provision target is one court per 5,000 residents. Based on this target, the current supply is sufficient to meet needs for the next ten years.

or more. While no additional tennis courts are recommended, the Town is encouraged to maintain its current supply of four courts as they are best supplied in multiples of two or more at each site. If any tennis courts are removed from service, they should be replaced at another site, ideally in the eastern or northern portions of the town to improve distribution.

There is no industry standard for the provision of pickleball courts, but most Ontario municipalities are gradually adopting strategies to address needs. This includes both painting pickleball lines on outdoor tennis courts and developing (or converting under-utilized tennis courts to) dedicated pickleball courts. The pickleball community is most interested in complexes of four or more courts that can support league play.

The Town recently applied for a grant to resurface the two existing tennis courts at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park to accommodate pickleball. If this project moves forward, consideration should be given to either sharing the courts with tennis or – if dedicated to pickleball – replacing the two tennis courts at a future park in another area of town. We expect that pickleball courts will be well used at this location, particularly given the adjacent 50+ Activity Centre (along with convenient parking and washrooms), but may require the installation of wind screens.

### Recommendations

- 42. Maintain a supply of four **outdoor tennis courts**. If any tennis courts are converted to dedicated pickleball courts, they should be replaced at another site, ideally in the eastern or northern portions of the town to improve distribution.
- 43. Accommodate **pickleball courts** on the existing tennis courts at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park. Resurfacing and other site improvements are required. If not feasible, seek alternatives to support outdoor pickleball within the parks system.

## 6.9 Basketball Courts

The Town provides three (3) full-sized outdoor basketball courts, one each at Kensington Park, Lion's Park and the Fusion Centre. The court at Lion's Park is in poor condition and requires reinvestment. Basketball courts/hoops are also located at several local schools. One-third (34%) of survey respondents identified outdoor basketball courts as a priority for improvement, suggesting low to moderate demand for more opportunities. Some residents suggested adding a multi-use court to Victoria Park.

Nationally, interest in basketball has been increasing for several years, partly driven by the success of the Toronto Raptors. While outdoor hard surface courts are generally used for basketball, some can be also be designed to accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities, such as ball hockey, kick ball, pickleball, or ice skating.

Since basketball courts are typically youth-serving facilities, they are usually provided within reasonable walking or cycling distances to residential areas. The distribution of courts within Ingersoll is good, with two facilities located north of the Thames River. Looking to the future, an additional court could be provided in South or East Ingersoll (possibly at Victoria Park or a new neighbourhood park) to improve access to growing areas. Depending on the park context and desired uses, this amenity may be either a half or full court – while most casual play can be accommodated on half courts, full courts allow for broader usage for other activities and year-round use.

## Recommendations

44. Construct an **outdoor basketball court in South/East Ingersoll** to improve distribution and provide access to growing neighbourhoods.

### 6.10 Skateboard/BMX Parks

Ingersoll provides one skateboard park at the Fusion Centre, featuring a number of ramps, rails and a half-pipe. The skatepark is also well suited to many wheeled action sports such as BMX, scootering and inline skating. There are no dedicated BMX facilities in the town. Ingersoll is currently providing a level of service of one skateboard park per 1,820 youth between the ages of 10 to 19 (estimated) and the youth population is forecasted to grow by approximately 17% by 2031.

Skateboarding and other wheeled action sports are becoming increasingly popular with not only teens, but also adults, many of whom participated in the sport when they were younger or now wish to do so with their children. Skateboard parks are commonly found throughout Canada as they provide a positive, fun and safe space for users to engage in physical activity, while also socializing with others who share similar interests. Skateboarding was recently included in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, further generating interest in the sport and increasing demands for new or improved facilities.

Pump tracks are also gaining popularity. BMX is a sport that utilizes dirt, concrete or asphalt tracks consisting of jumps, berms, banks and other obstacles that are designed with the intention to test the bike handling skills of the rider. Pump tracks can also discourage extreme riding that may take place in more ecologically sensitive areas, ultimately preventing damage and disruption to vegetation. The Tillsonburg or Stratford pump tracks (asphalt) are examples of such a facility in the region.



Figure 14: Pump Track, Stratford ON

More than one-quarter (28%) of community survey respondents identified skateboard parks as a priority for public funding, while 25% supported additional spending on BMX parks. Public requests were received for an expansion of the Fusion Centre skateboard park, as well as for a BMX pump track and/or bicycle playground.

The Fusion skatepark is well suited to intermediate level users and is strategically located adjacent to the Fusion Centre and nearby high school. In cooperation with the skateboarding community, the Town should ensure that this facility continues to address a wide range of needs; improvement and/or expansion may be considered if the site can accommodate it and the park remains compatible with surrounding uses.

To provide younger children and those residing elsewhere in the community with accessible opportunities to learn how to skate, bike, etc., it is recommended that the Town consider smaller-scale amenities such as “skate spots” or “bicycle playgrounds”. These amenities can be designed to meet any budget and location by incorporating basic features such as a rail, kickbox setup or progressive bike ramps that can be implemented into neighbourhood parks (e.g., Jim Robbins Park, etc.) and future park designs, ideally in proximity to growing residential neighbourhoods.

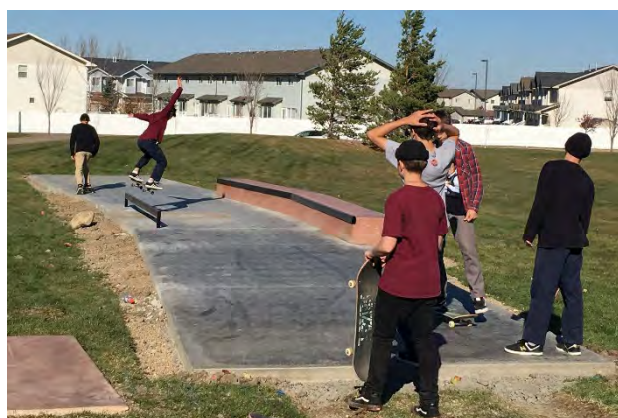


Figure 15: Skate Spot – Medicine Hat AB



Figure 16 Bicycle Playground – Prince George BC

Town staff should engage with local youth to further understand the type of facility that would have the widest benefit and begin to look at locations that could support such a facility. It is possible that local service clubs could assist with fundraising.

## Recommendations

45. Regularly consult with youth to ensure that the Fusion **skatepark** continues to address a wide range of needs. Improvement and/or expansion may be considered if the site can accommodate it and the park remains compatible with surrounding uses.



## Recommendations

46. Consider installing a smaller-scale amenity such as a “**skate spot**” or “**bicycle playground**” through an existing or future park. Consult with youth and potential partners to define options, locations, and funding possibilities.

### 6.11 Outdoor Skating

The Town operates an outdoor ice rink (natural ice) at the Fusion Centre. In the past, an outdoor rink has also been supported by volunteers on a ball diamond infield at Victoria Park.

Outdoor skating, much like indoor ice activities has typically been a popular Canadian pastime. Interest in outdoor skating has increased substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic as people look for more ways to recreate outdoors. However, climate change and the comparatively warmer winters in southwestern Ontario have made it difficult to maintain and construct natural ice surfaces on an annual basis. The operation of outdoor rinks can also create operational challenges, redirecting staff from other duties. Volunteer-led rinks are an alternative, but require municipal oversight and support if on public parkland.

As an alternative to natural outdoor rinks, some larger communities have developed artificial ice surfaces (sometimes covered with a roof) that have helped to provide consistent skating conditions. Others, such as Kitchener and Burlington, have installed smaller synthetic ice sheets (no water or electricity needed) within their parks. Typically, these facilities have a longer operating season, but are more expensive to construct and operate. This option has been considered by the Town in the past but was not supported due to the high costs.

The community survey found that outdoor ice skating ranked 16<sup>th</sup> out of 32 activities, with 26% of households participating. Interestingly, 46% of respondents support additional investment in outdoor ice rinks, suggesting that the current opportunities are not meeting needs.

The Town should explore safe and cost-effective ways to facilitate public outdoor ice skating. This includes ongoing support to the rink at the Fusion Centre and supporting volunteer-led initiatives in appropriate locations (e.g., Victoria Park, etc.). New sport pads (e.g., basketball courts) in parks may also be designed to accommodate outdoor skating. This option requires courts to have curbing, water access, drainage, and – ideally – access to washrooms and off-street parking; so they are not appropriate in all park types. Development of a Volunteer Rink Program may be required to assist volunteers with safely operating and maintaining outdoor rinks.

## Recommendations

47. Consider opportunities to **support outdoor skating** through park development and redevelopment projects, such as new multi-use courts and synthetic ice.
48. Establish an **outdoor rink program** to support volunteer-led ice rinks in appropriate park sites.

### 6.12 Off-leash Dog Park

The Town operates an off-leash dog park in Lawson Park, providing a space for dogs and their owners to socialize in a controlled location. The dog park offers a large, wooded fenced area for small and large dogs. The dog park began as a community-driven initiative, with the Town now assuming operational responsibility.

The community survey found that dog walking (on or off-leash) is a popular activity with 54% of surveyed households participating. Anecdotally, pet ownership has been on the rise since the start of the pandemic. However, less than one-third (32%) of survey respondents support additional spending on off-leash dog parks, suggesting that investment is a low priority and needs are being met by the existing venue. No additional off-leash dog parks are recommended.



### 6.13 Other Facilities not Listed

The Town provides a number of specialty facilities such as a municipal campground and beach volleyball courts. There are no service targets for these types of facilities as there are a number of factors that need to be considered including, but not limited to, park context, geography, market demand, alternate providers, partnership opportunities, and/or available resources.

Requests for municipal participation in capital projects not identified in this Plan can be expected. In the interest of providing facilities and recreation options that support healthy, active lifestyles for residents, the Town should be open to exploring and discussing opportunities for new and emerging activities. The Town may consider low-risk participation in projects that address unmet demands, make use of underutilized resources, promote healthy living/physical activity, encourage public access and support other municipal objectives. The Master Plan may be used as a starting point in determining if a proposal serves a priority need in the community.

More specifically, the evaluation of potential capital partnerships should require the proponent to provide information to the satisfaction of the Town, such as (but not limited to):

- a comprehensive business plan, including a needs analysis and operating and capital costs;
- the organization's financial capacity (including fundraising commitments) and a demonstration of the sustainability of the project;
- detailed evidence of community benefits; and
- full risk analysis.

## Recommendations

49. Require proponents of **unsolicited proposals for municipal capital partnerships** to prepare business plans and funding strategies for the Town's consideration. Use a standard set of criteria to evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests.

## 7. Parks and Trails Assessment

Public parks are important places for sporting events, casual leisure activities, building a sense of community and social belonging. To ensure that the Town keeps pace with land-based demands, this section examines Ingersoll's parks and open space system, along with future requirements and policy considerations.

### 7.1 Parks and Open Space Provision

Parks and open spaces provide the land base for many amenities and activities that are overseen by the Community Services Department, including sports fields, sports courts, etc. The following table provides a summary of active parkland (**18 sites totalling 46.4 hectares**) that is owned and/or maintained by the Town.

**Table 22: Town of Ingersoll Active Parkland Inventory**

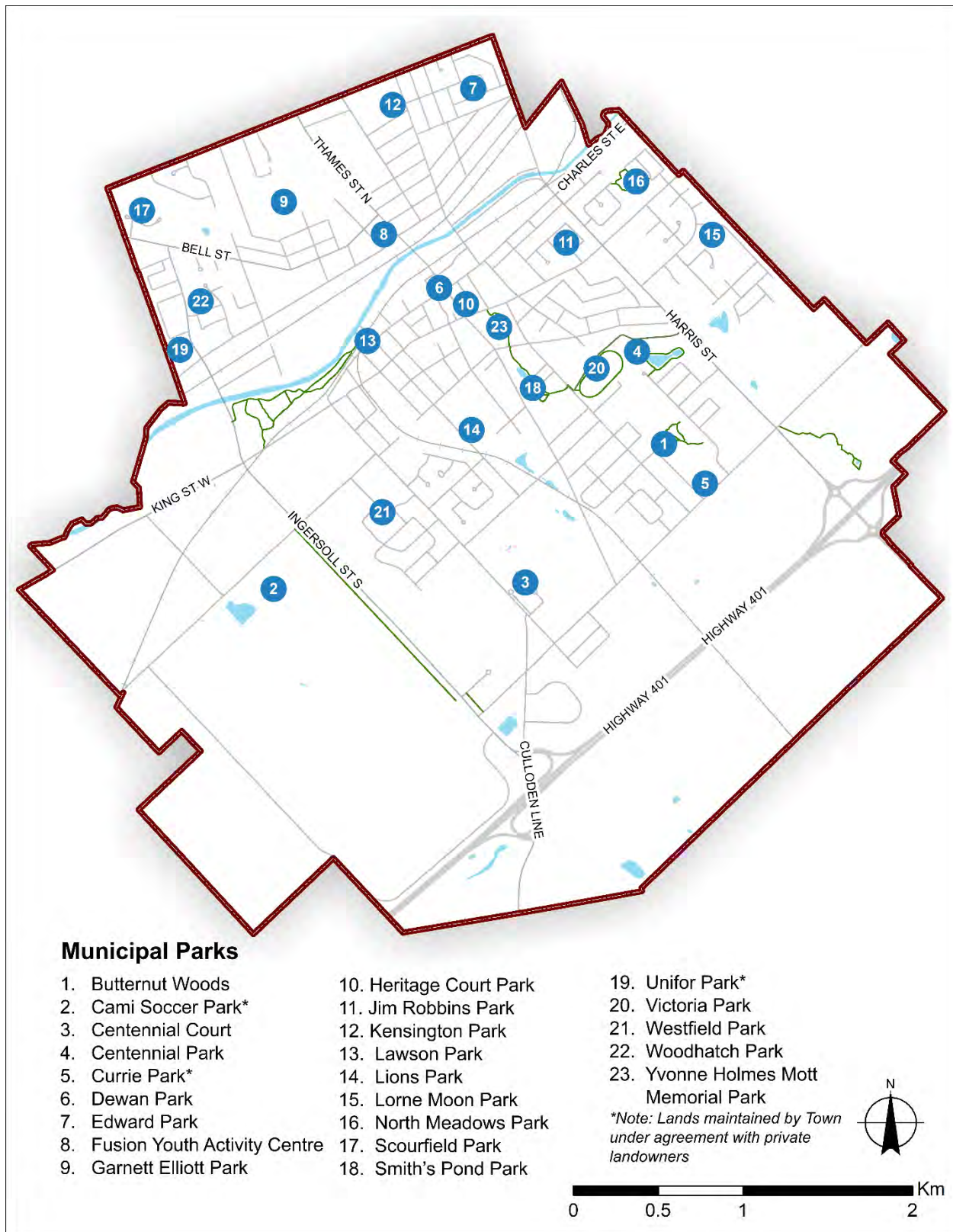
Park Name	Classification	Size (ha)
CAMI Flyer Soccer Park*	Community	7.4
Centennial Park	Community	12
Centennial Court	Neighbourhood	1.2
Currie Park*	Community	1.9
Dewan Park	Parkette	0.2
Edward Park	Neighbourhood	0.5
Garnet Elliott Park	Community	6.0
Heritage Court Park	Parkette	0.2
Jim Robbins Park	Neighbourhood	0.8
Kensington Park	Neighbourhood	0.8
Lion's Park	Neighbourhood	0.6
Lorne Moon	Neighbourhood	1.4
Scourfield Park	Neighbourhood	0.2
Unifor Park*	Community	2
Victoria Park	Community	7.2
Westfield Park	Neighbourhood	1.2
Woodhatch Park	Neighbourhood	0.9
Yvonne Mott Memorial Park	Community	1.9
<b>Total Parkland</b>		<b>46.4</b>
<b>Level of Provision Per 1,000 Residents</b>		<b>3.3 ha/1000</b>

\* Lands maintained by Town under agreement with landholders.

Notes: Totals may not add due to rounding. Some sites include lands containing indoor recreation facilities. Town Natural Parks and Open Space Linkages are excluded from this calculation, such as Butternut Woods (4.8 ha), Lawson Park (1.7 ha), North Meadows (3 ha), and Smith's Pond (4 ha).



Figure 17: Town of Ingersoll Parks





**Centennial Park**



**Garnet Elliott Park**



**Jim Robbin's Park**



**Lorne Moon**



**Yvonne Mott Memorial Park**



**Victoria Park**



**Woodhatch Park**



**Kensington Park**



Parkland classification systems guide parkland development by directing usage, size, form, function and/or level of amenity found within various types of parks. A classification system allows the public to understand what a park may include and positions parkland to be compatible with adjacent land uses.

Summarized in the table below, Section 9.5.2.1 of the County of Oxford Official Plan contains a classification system which defines the function, permitted uses and size of each type of park.

**Table 23: Parkland Classification System (adapted from the County of Oxford Official Plan)**

Park Type	Description
<b>Community Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support recreational activities that serve the Town as a whole and may provide secondary services to surrounding communities, some services provided include major sports fields, picnic areas, swimming pools, water activities and play facilities</li> <li>• At minimum, are 6.0 hectares in size while being appropriately designed for organized sports and recreation facilities</li> <li>• Are often accessible to arterial or collector roads; access to local streets is permitted where it is demonstrated that traffic movements will not flow directly through low residential areas</li> <li>• Have good access for active transportation users and provide on-site parking</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lands in residential areas that are designed to support leisure activities for residents and provide sufficient space for small-scale recreation activities like playgrounds, basketball courts, baseball diamonds and tennis courts</li> <li>• Typically, between 1.2 to 2.0 hectares in size</li> <li>• Are centrally located within the area they serve</li> <li>• Have good access for active transportation users</li> <li>• Have significant street frontage to enhance visibility and safety</li> <li>• Where applicable, are located next to public schools</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-Neighbourhood Facilities (e.g., Parkettes and Linear Parks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lands in residential areas that are designed to provide unorganized play activities for children, quiet seating or rest areas and/or linear linkages between more traditional block-shaped parks</li> <li>• Typically less than 0.6 hectare in size, with a service radius of up to 0.5 kilometre and easily accessible by foot from local roads and pathways</li> <li>• Mostly located in the Central Area, in developed neighbourhoods experiencing deficiencies of Neighbourhood Parks, and in appropriate locations to serve as linear linkages</li> </ul>

Park Type	Description
<b>Town Natural Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consist of naturally significant lands in need of protection or Town parks which Town Council intends to naturalize through tree and other low maintenance planting, managed succession and/or natural regeneration</li> <li>• Lands with topographic variations, ravines and/or with watercourse features may be considered as candidate sites for Town Natural Parks</li> <li>• Where practical and feasible, they are linked to and will incorporate pedestrian and bicycle networks</li> <li>• Generally designed with street frontage for visibility, access and safety</li> </ul>
<b>Open Space Linkages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refers to the system of linked public open spaces, potentially including pathways and bicycle networks, throughout the Town</li> <li>• Includes public components (Town parkland, water courses, ravine lands, utility corridors, abandoned railway rights-of-way, conservation areas, schools and other public facilities) and private lands (such as on-site recreational and pedestrian facilities for multiple family development and pedestrian and bicycle linkages)</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from County of Oxford Official Plan

Current and future parkland demand is influenced by several factors, such as distribution and proximity to residential areas, non-municipal providers, urban density, population composition, amenity needs, existing park types, community objectives, and public input. Community input indicates that the parks system is highly valued by residents and efforts should be made to ensure that provision levels remain appropriate – 81% of survey respondents regularly use parks, open spaces and natural areas.

Most municipalities use population-based targets to calculate and plan their future parkland needs. **The Town's current parkland provision rate is 3.3 hectares per 1,000 residents (excluding open space parcels).** Comparable urban/rural municipalities typically strive to achieve provision rates of 2.0 to 3.0 hectares per 1,000 residents to meet their active recreational needs associated with sports fields, playgrounds, courts and more. The Town is slightly above the upper end of this range, suggesting that its overall supply of parkland should be sufficient to accommodate most needed amenities. Further, a review of existing parkland distribution suggests that all areas of the town have equitable access to parks, though some residents commented on the need for a better distribution of park amenities and recreation facilities.

Looking ahead, it is recommended that the Town seek to achieve a supply of **2.5 hectares of active parkland** (community parks, neighbourhood parks, and parkettes) through future development. Based on this target, there will be a need for 11.8 additional hectares of parkland by 2046 (to serve a population of 18,960).



**Table 24: Current and Projected Parkland Needs**

Current Parkland Supply, excluding open spaces	46.4 ha
Estimated Population (2021)	14,240 persons
Parkland Per 1,000 (2021)	3.3 ha/1000
Projected Growth (2021 to 2046)	4,720 persons
<b>Growth-related Parkland Needs to 2046, based on 2.5 ha/1000</b>	<b>11.8 ha by 2046</b>
Estimated Future (2046) Parkland Supply	58.2 ha (3.1 ha//1000)

To achieve this target, the Town will need to secure additional lands through the development process (and possible other means if parkland dedication falls short). For example, most new subdivision development is likely to generate additional parkland blocks (e.g., Ingersoll Golf Course) and there may be the potential to secure additional land for sports fields through the future multi-use recreation complex.

It is expected that the Town will continue to secure and/or protect selected natural open space properties (e.g., Town Natural Parks and Open Space Linkages) where appropriate. These lands will typically be acquired outside of the parkland dedication requirement in keeping with Official Plan policies.

### Recommendations

50. Maintain an up-to-date **parks and trails inventory** (including park blocks to be conveyed through the development process) to inform the assessment of future parks and trails needs, use of cash-in-lieu, and capital planning.
51. Secure **11.8 hectares of additional active parkland by 2046** (4.6 hectares by 2031) to achieve a growth-based target of 2.5 hectares per 1,000 new residents.

## 7.2 Parkland Policy

Several regulations, policies and guidelines govern the acquisition and use of parkland, starting with the Ontario Planning Act, which sets direction for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives. This direction is applied through the County's Official Plan, which outlines goals for parks and open spaces, in addition to policies for parkland dedication and development.

In order to help achieve these goals, the County's Official Plan for Ingersoll states that "Town Council will acquire lands for use as parkland or leisure through all methods available including dedication, purchase, donation or bequest and expropriation." (Section 9.5.3.2). The Official Plan also references specific provisions, particularly that 5% of any land proposed for development be dedicated to the Town with the purpose of

it becoming a park or public leisure space, pursuant to the provisions of the Planning Act.

Currently, the Planning Act allows for the following options for parkland dedication in relation to development/redevelopment proposals. Each of these options are also supported by the County of Oxford Official Plan.

<b>5% of land</b>  Taking 5% of gross residential land for parkland dedication (or 2% for commercial/industrial developments)	<b>Cash-in-lieu</b>  Accepting cash-in-lieu of the parkland dedication at the rates identified above (5% and 2%); the funds are kept in a reserve and can be spent on the purchase of lands elsewhere or on the improvement of parkland	<b>A blend of 5% and cash-in-lieu</b>  Determining a partial dedication where less than the 2% or 5% of land is taken and the remainder is accepted as cash-in-lieu
<b>Alternative parkland rate</b>  Under certain conditions, a municipality may require the conveyance of one hectare of parkland per 300 dwelling units (or 1 hectare per 500 units when accepting cash-in-lieu) if greater than the 5% is required		

The Town also has a Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law that sets out the specific details relating to the valuation and conveyance of parkland. Of note, this By-law does not establish conditions for the alternative parkland rate (1 ha per 300 units or 1 ha per 500 units when accepting cash-in-lieu). This alternative rate is advantageous for residential proposals exceeding 15 units per hectare and helps to ensure that growth pays for growth.

In 2020, the Province of Ontario passed Bill 197 (COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act), which made a number of adjustments to the parkland dedication sections of the Ontario Planning Act, among other changes. Current legislation now states that new Parkland Dedication By-laws with the alternative rate are appealable to the Ontario Land Tribunal. Furthermore, some existing Parkland Dedication By-laws now have sunset clauses of September 2022 and it is a requirement that new By-laws using the alternative rate must be supported by a Parks Plan, which includes a duty to consult with local school boards. The Town/County are encouraged to seek a legal opinion as to the implications of these changes on their Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law as updates may be necessary.

## Recommendations

52. Maximize **parkland dedication tools** to ensure that active parkland conveyances (and cash-in-lieu) are able to address growth-related needs through the development process. Explore acquisition and other means as required.
53. Update the Town's **Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law** to reflect recent legislative changes and to ensure that the per lot valuation for consents and zoning by-law amendments (currently listed as \$600) reflects current market values and accounts for inflation.

### 7.3 Park Design and Activation

Ingersoll's parks produce high levels of public satisfaction and are an area of strength. They contain a variety of features that are indicative of evolving interests and opportunities (e.g., splash pad at Victoria Park). A continued emphasis must be placed on designing parks so that they are welcoming and comfortable outdoor spaces for people to use and have safe, meaningful, and positive experiences. This critical need has been on full display during the COVID-19 pandemic as people have relied on parks for their physical and mental wellbeing.

Below are some best practices that the Town may use as a guide in designing and redeveloping parks. By making parks more visible, comfortable, welcoming, safe, inclusive, and accommodating of a variety of uses, these guidelines have been shown to increase the frequency of usage and level of enjoyment.

- a) Promote **universal accessibility** in parks (e.g., wheelchair accesses, ramps to play structure areas, paved and looped pathways through parks, etc.). Through our site visits, it is evident that there is a need for accessible, paved pathways to playgrounds and within parks in general. The Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee should be consulted on these and related works.
- b) Provide both junior and senior play opportunities in parks with **playgrounds**. Use engineered wood fibre surfacing for play structures to an appropriate depth for the fall-height of the equipment. Ensure appropriate sight lines to play areas.
- c) Consider activities and programming for the growing **older adult population**, including increased daytime use and emerging activities such as pickleball.
- d) **Unstructured space** within a park that allows for a wide variety of **active and passive uses throughout all seasons** is considered an asset. These spaces can support a wide range of all-season recreation and sports, casual use and unstructured play, special events and cultural activities.
- e) Locate **shade structures and trees** central to amenities to protect users from the harmful effects of the sun. Consideration may be given to shade pavilions, shade structures over playground equipment and tree planting. The Town's

commemorative tree (and bench) program also helps to enhance shade and comfort throughout the Town.

- f) Provide informal **seating** opportunities. Locate seating in shaded areas, along accessible routes and in proximity to active amenities. Comfort amenities benefit everyone and can position Ingersoll's parks system to be more inviting for everyday users. The public consultation program yielded suggestions for additional seating and a replacement program for benches or other types of park furniture is needed.
- g) Maintained **pathways** should be a minimum of three metres wide, unless otherwise required. Provide clearance along pathways (waste receptacles, benches, trees, bike racks, etc.) for maintenance vehicles.
- h) Locate **waste and recycle receptacles** close to park entrances to facilitate maintenance.
- i) Select **materials and equipment** (e.g., park furniture) that are not easily vandalized and can be easily sourced for repair and/or replacement.
- j) Provide **consistent branded signage** at all public parks identifying the park name, address and Town emblem. Additional signage should include emergency contact information and regulatory requirements (e.g., non-permitted uses, park hours, etc.). The Town has established standard signage throughout the parks system; however, older signage will need to be replaced over time.
- k) Encourage **public art** within appropriate park locations and in keeping with relevant Town guidelines.
- l) Use non-invasive native species in all **plantings**.
- m) Follow **CPTED** (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles to enhance community security and safety features.
- n) Include **buffer space** between pathways and adjacent lot lines (minimum 5 metres when abutting a residential property and 2 metres when abutting other land uses), in addition to high-activity zones and residential lot lines.
- o) Provide **naturalized buffers** adjacent to natural features. Where appropriate, consider the piloting of naturalization initiatives in underutilized portions of parks to support habitat creation and other environmental objectives.

While many of Ingersoll's parks are in good condition, improvements and enhancements will be necessary to address asset lifecycle requirements and to respond to evolving needs. The opportunities for parkland renewal are infinite, but may include enhanced landscaping, new and upgraded facilities and comfort amenities and more. Through consultation and site visits, Jim Robbins, Woodhatch, and Lorne Moon Parks have been identified as **candidates for renewal** in the short-term:

These parks are well-sized neighbourhood parks, but are underutilized and not achieving their full potential. For example, the playground equipment at these parks is dated and in need of replacement to achieve modern park and accessibility standards.



Park renewal and development projects should encompass public and stakeholder input, which helps to ensure that the design is reflective of community needs and can also foster a sense of civic pride.

Collaboration with community agencies and volunteer organizations is also important to the success of the parks system. For example, the Town benefits from its partnerships with service clubs that have contributed to park infrastructure. Survey respondents also expressed interest in more police patrols within parks. These and other partnerships should be fostered. Enhanced public access to existing sites and facilities – such as schools and natural areas – will also help to increase participation. There may even be opportunities to work collaboratively on capital initiatives or educational programs and natural/cultural heritage appreciation.

## Recommendations

54. Maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety and comfort** within the Town's parks and trails system by:

- a) Regularly consulting with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with **barrier-free guidelines**, recognizing that some parks may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access.
- b) Undertaking and incorporating **accessibility audits** into the Town's asset management planning to identify a multi-year strategy for addressing barrier-free compliance.
- c) Engaging local police services to undertake a review of all parks and trails using **CPTED principles** to identify safety concerns relative to accesses and sightlines.
- d) Emphasizing the provision and timely replacement of **comfort amenities** such as washrooms, benches/seating areas, bicycle racks and shade areas in parks to address the needs of all age groups.
- e) Installing consistent and high-quality **signage** at all Town parks to enhance branding and wayfinding.
- f) Installing accessible **pathway loops** within parks and pathways that connect to accessible playground features.

55. Support expanded **year-round park and trail use** through outdoor education, challenging play opportunities, municipal programming, equipment-lending, and community development activities.

56. Continue to support opportunities for **environmental stewardship and climate change mitigation** through the parks system, such as tree planting, use of native species, naturalization initiatives, and butterfly/pollinator parks in collaboration with community partners.

## Recommendations

57. Undertake **park amenity condition assessments** on a regular basis to inform the Town's asset management plan and long-term capital plan.
58. Begin planning for park renewal and redevelopment projects at **Jim Robbins, Woodhatch and Lorne Moon Parks** by allocating funding in the Town's long-term capital plan and undertaking additional public and stakeholder consultation.
59. Establish a long-term asset management plan (with funding) to guide the **repair and replacement of significant park infrastructure** such as support buildings and sports field lighting. Some notable projects include (but are not limited to):
  - a) restoration of the historic bandshell in **Yvonne Mott Memorial Park**;
  - b) replacement of the washroom/storage building at **Garnet Elliot Park**;
  - c) resurfacing the courts at the **CAMI Soccer Flyer Park**;
  - d) ball diamond lighting, fencing and dugout replacement (**various sites**); and
  - e) outdoor basketball court in **Lion's Park** (replace with a half court).

### 7.4 Recreational Trails System

The Town of Ingersoll owns and maintains nearly 9-kilometres of recreational trails, including the Thomas Ingersoll Scenic Trail and trails within Butternut Woods and Lawson Park. The trails are complemented by an extensive sidewalk network that connects users to a variety of destinations within Ingersoll. A Recreational Trails Committee is in place to guide the development and management of the system.

Recreational trails are one of the most highly desirable amenities in any community. They facilitate low-cost outdoor physical activity opportunities and can be used by residents of all ages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, communities across the Province experienced a strong increase in trail usage, highlighting the importance of providing a connected trail network that connects residents within the town.

Trails also have an environmental benefit as they alleviate road congestion and minimize vehicular emissions, land consumption, and costs for road construction and maintenance. Active transportation can heighten community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more livable communities where individuals are more likely to have personal contact with one another.

The popularity of recreational trails in Ingersoll was demonstrated throughout the consultation process. The community survey found that walking or hiking for leisure was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular activity (with 76% of households participating), cycling or mountain biking was 9<sup>th</sup> (35%), and running or jogging was 15<sup>th</sup> (28%). Hiking and use of trails were the top two activities survey respondents participated in outside of Ingersoll since 2019 – 29% hike elsewhere and 19% use trails elsewhere. The importance of trails

within the community was further reiterated by a desire for more nature trails (unpaved) and recreational trails (paved), with 77% and 70% indicating that they should be a high priority for additional public spending, respectively.

**Figure 18: Existing Trails in the Town of Ingersoll**



Through this Master Plan and the Corporate Strategic Plan, the community has expressed a strong desire to cleanup and develop trails along the Thames River, which runs through the downtown but has few opportunities for public access due to private ownership. It was also expressed that the trail network should continue to be expanded and connected through new subdivision development. Other requests include safety features (such as lighting along trail paths) and support amenities (such as benches that offer users an opportunity to rest).

Strengthening the trail system in Ingersoll is an ongoing initiative for the Town and County. A key goal of the 2022 Corporate Strategic Plan is an interconnected active transportation network consisting of trails and cycling routes. Trail development is currently being guided by documents including the 2014 Oxford County Trails Master Plan and Oxford County Cycling Master Plan (ongoing). Together these documents set out to improve overall connectivity through active transportation modes like walking and cycling.

The key to developing an effective trail network is to create a connected system of routes that are safe, accessible and conveniently link users to key destinations (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, etc.). The opportunities for enhancing trail connectivity in Ingersoll are primarily through: (1) new subdivision development on the edges of town; (2) regional trail networks that connect to adjacent municipalities; and (3) new trail development along existing corridors such as the Thames River. The latter will require collaboration with private land owners and regulatory agencies (e.g., conservation authority, rail line, etc.), but represents an important long-term opportunity for the Town and its residents.

Safety and comfort are important components of a successful trail system, including natural landscaping, signage, shade, benches, rest areas and parking (fitness equipment would be an additional amenity, but offers physical health benefits to users). It is understood that Ingersoll's Safe Cycling Committee is exploring strategies to improve signage within trails.

## Recommendations

60. Continue to seek opportunities to **expand and connect the recreational trail network**. This includes establishing trails within parks (e.g., Victoria Park, Garnet Elliot Park, etc.), future residential areas, along the Thames River, and into adjacent municipalities. Improvements to the on-road cycling network should be guided by the Oxford County Cycling Master Plan.
61. Prioritize strategies that enhance public access and the creation of **trails along the Thames River**.
62. Improve the existing trail network by installing and maintaining **safety and comfort features** – such as lighting, signage, seating, and more – in appropriate locations.



## 8. Implementation Strategy

Active implementation of the Community Services Master Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders and the public, as well as a variety of funding options to implement certain aspects of the Plan. This section provides guidance on the Master Plan's implementation.

### 8.1 Budget Considerations

The Community Services Master Plan calls for continued financial investment and outlines a series of planning priorities for the provision of new and existing parks, recreation and culture infrastructure for the next ten years. The timing for the recommendations listed recognize a need for phased implementation. Timing is based on the anticipated need for infrastructure, which may be influenced by population growth and other corporate initiatives.

To assist the Town in establishing a financial strategy for the Master Plan, several assumptions have been highlighted. These assumptions provide direction towards the various opportunities and constraints that must be considered when budgeting for the Plan's implementation.

In the future, it is expected that:

- Increases in costs to develop, revitalize and maintain parks, recreation and cultural facilities will be greater than the rate of inflation because of rising land costs, increasingly complex projects, the general public's heightened quality expectations, legislated building and accessibility standards, etc.
- The Town will be expected to adhere to fiscally-responsible revenue generation policies and practices, along with the allocation of sufficient capital and operating resources to fund core priorities.
- The magnitude of investments required to achieve and maintain facilities in acceptable condition will grow in proportion to an expanding volume of assets and the increasingly aged stock of facilities.
- The range of new types of parks and recreation infrastructure will continue to expand, which will increase the funding requirements to address a growing inventory.
- The need for sufficient, stable and predictable infrastructure funding streams will be increasingly important to support sound and proactive facility planning.
- The need for creative infrastructure funding solutions will be greatest in periods of low-growth and where aging facilities need to be revitalized or replaced.

- Working collaboratively with the community, developers and other partners will be important to successfully keeping pace with escalating needs for more and better parks and recreation amenities.
- It will take time and investment to assist the parks, recreation and culture sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **8.2 Overview of Potential Funding Sources**

The Town has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; underscoring the importance for undertaking the Master Plan in the first place. Although Ingersoll may experience various challenges in providing the applicable financial and human resources to achieve the Master Plan's recommendations, the Town should make every effort to implement these strategies through appropriate means. In addition to direct taxation, full implementation of the Master Plan will require the use of numerous funding sources, including:

### **Development Charges**

Development charges (DC) are fees that are collected through the building process in order to address the growth-related infrastructure needs of a community, such as new or enhanced parks or recreation facilities (but not parkland acquisition). Through Bill 197, eligible capital projects may be fully funded through development charges (this amount was previously 90%). Funding limitations include replacement portions of facilities, historical service level deficiencies or excess capacity as a result of the pre-emplacement of facilities. Some of the items identified in this Master Plan are partially or fully growth-related and are eligible for Development Charge funding.

### **Parkland Cash-in-Lieu**

The Planning Act establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives, with implementation policies identified through Official Plans. One such alternative to land dedication is the conveyance of cash-in-lieu of parkland generated by development or redevelopment. At the Town's discretion, cash-in-lieu may be used to purchase parkland, to acquire associated machinery or equipment and/or for parkland development. Recent changes to the Planning Act allow municipalities alternative options to collect funds for parkland through a community benefits charge, applicable to certain types of development where supported by local studies and by-laws.

### **Municipal Reserves**

On occasion, municipalities may decide to set aside monies accrued from tax dollars or other revenue sources for special projects, like the development or expansion of a specific community facility or park. Additionally, annual lifecycle reserves that are designated to fund the maintenance and repair of existing facilities are becoming more common. Industry standards suggest that 2% of the capital value of assets be put into a reserve annually. An asset management plan serves to identify all capital assets, their current condition and when the asset or components should be refurbished or replaced.

The Town currently has a multi-use facility reserve, which is presently being used to repair/replace the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre.

### Fundraising, Donations and Sponsorships

The capital and ongoing operational costs of constructing parks and facilities are substantial and could place pressure on municipal budgets. Seeking assistance from the community to contribute resources towards the construction and/or operation of facilities and park amenities can be an effective way to provide services and spaces that are truly desired by residents. In the past, many local user groups and service clubs have collected donations and/or participated in fundraising for new facilities and this practice is anticipated to continue.

### User Fees and Surcharges

User and rental fees for most parks, recreation and culture services (particularly those that are for broad public use) are minimal as they exist to promote physical activity, social interaction and community benefits. Fees are in place for some dedicated-use spaces (e.g., sports fields, arenas, pools, etc.) that benefit specific groups or individuals. Increases in user fees (such as through a project-specific surcharge) can be used to offset the costs associated with capital upgrades.

### Debenture Financing

In cases where alternate sources of funding are unavailable, some municipalities have shown a willingness to finance a portion of major capital expenditures. Depending on the Town's credit rating, this can be a more expensive funding alternative and can impact the future borrowing rate and fiscal capacity.

### Ongoing Government Programs

One example of an ongoing government program is the Federal Gas Tax Fund, which provides municipalities with a long-term funding stream that can be used for the construction and rehabilitation of core public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, drinking water and wastewater, and leisure facilities (e.g., trails, bike lanes, etc.).

### One-Time Grants

Municipalities often seek financial support from senior levels of government for major municipal capital projects. Recently, the Federal budget made commitments towards infrastructure investments through the "Investing in Canada" Plan and (in partnership with the Provincial Government) the Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure funding stream opened in 2019, amounting to over \$700 million across Ontario over 10 years, with up to 73.33% support for eligible municipal projects. The presence of an approved Master Plan is often required to secure grant funding.

## Partnerships

To maximize benefits to the community, the Town may consider engaging in collaborations or partnerships with the private sector, non-profit sector or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services. Strengthening existing and creating new partnerships during the planning period should be the pathway forward in order to maximize the use of all available resources, while sharing roles and responsibilities.

## Cooperation Between Municipal Neighbours

Cooperation between neighbouring municipalities is important to the effective delivery of parks, recreation and culture services, particularly those services or systems that transect political boundaries. Throughout Ontario, municipalities benefit from various types of cooperation, including joint service agreements that allow cost-efficient access to services by residents in other municipalities. As an urban centre serving several rural communities, Ingersoll may benefit from continued discussions with its adjacent neighbours regarding service planning.

### Recommendations

63. Where appropriate and consistent with Town policies and priorities, **consider alternative funding and cost-sharing** approaches such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.
64. Use this **Master Plan as a resource** in establishing the Town's annual budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.
65. Phase in a **capital reserve** to fund the repair and replacement of major capital infrastructure. This reserve should be an annual line item in the budget that could be linked to overall asset replacement value (up to 2%) or a percentage of Department revenues (5% to 10%).
66. Assess and ensure that **operating budget implications** are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects

## **8.3 Monitoring and Updating the Plan**

The Town should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of this Community Services Master Plan to ensure that they continue to reflect local conditions and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the community especially as a result of the anticipated growth that will occur. This will require monitoring activity trends, tracking user satisfaction levels, having regular conversations with community organizations and the public, annual reporting on short-, medium- and long-term implementation plans, and undertaking a comprehensive ten-



year update to the Plan. Through these strategies – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

In order for the Plan to maintain relevancy, staff involved in planning, financing, and the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services, as well as Town Council and the public must buy-in. An appropriate time to annually review the plan is during the Town's budget process. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan:

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

### Recommendations

67. Develop a system for the regular **monitoring, ongoing implementation and reporting on the progress** of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.

68. Undertake a **comprehensive review and update** of the Community Services Master Plan to begin no later than 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

## 8.4 Summary of Recommendations – Priority and Timing

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

The timing of the actions proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation and/or outside funding sources as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what may be financially achievable at the

present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects. The full implementation of this Plan will require the use of development charges, grants, fundraising and/or contributions from the community.

**Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Town's capital and operating budget development exercise. It is expected that the Town will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the budget process.**

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

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

Priority is often, but not always, synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the action should be implemented. Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of amenities and services, etc.). Generally, municipalities seek to address the widest range of needs and achieve maximum community benefit through the efficient use of resources.

Within the tables that follow, the priority and timing of the recommended actions are organized into the following categories:

#### Priority

- **High Priority:** Immediate attention is strongly suggested during the timeframe recommended.
- **Medium Priority:** Attention is required when high priority actions have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.
- **Lower Priority:** Attention is required when high and medium priority actions have been initiated/completed.

#### Timing

- **Short-term:** 2022 to 2024
- **Medium-term:** 2025 to 2027
- **Longer-term:** 2028 and beyond
- **Ongoing:** Guidelines and practices to be followed on a continual basis

**Table 25: Service Delivery and Programming – Implementation Strategy**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the <b>vision and guiding principles</b> of this Master Plan.	High	Ongoing
2. Continue to solidify the <b>Community Services Department's role</b> as a park/facility provider, program provider and facilitator, and event coordinator through consistent messaging in all communications, budgeting, policies and procedures.	High	Ongoing
3. Regularly undertake <b>internal reviews of existing services and emerging pressures</b> , with comparisons to benchmark municipalities and promising practices.	Medium	Ongoing
4. Review <b>policies and procedures</b> at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.	High	Ongoing
5. Work with community organizations to <b>maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities</b> through affordable and inclusive programming (drop-in and registered) for children, youth and older adults. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new program offerings.	High	Ongoing
6. Develop an <b>Inclusion and Access Policy</b> to demonstrate the Town's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the intentional actions that are or will be taken to include all residents that may face barriers to participation.	High	Short-term
7. Measure <b>service performance</b> , track <b>facility utilization</b> , and collect <b>registration data</b> annually from all organizations that use Town parks and facilities to assist in understanding trends, changing demands and allocation. Report to the public annually on the results of parks, recreation and cultural service delivery in Ingersoll to illustrate the value to taxpayers.	High	Ongoing
8. Work with community partners to promote the <b>importance of physical activity</b> and engage more residents in embracing active lifestyles.	High	Ongoing
9. Work with the Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre Board and other partners to reduce duplication, share resources and jointly focus on enhancing <b>recreation program opportunities for older adults</b> .	High	Short-term
10. Identify the <b>true cost</b> to deliver parks, recreation and culture services (e.g., direct and indirect costs) to support evidence-based decision-making and tracking of performance over time.	Medium	Medium-term

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
11. Review <b>facility and sports field rental rates</b> at minimum every three years to help inform future rates and fees. Any increases greater than the rate of inflation should be phased in.	High	Ongoing
12. Continue to encourage <b>long-term financial sustainability</b> through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate application of user fees, and the pursuit of external funding.	High	Ongoing
13. Create a <b>volunteer recognition and awards program</b> to celebrate outstanding achievements and contributions to parks, recreation and culture services in Ingersoll.	Medium	Medium-term
14. Develop a <b>Volunteer Policy/Charter</b> that encourages local contributions and outlines the Town's commitment to supporting volunteer efforts, including a formal process to consider and approve volunteer projects.	High	Short-term
15. Continue to <b>seek and support community partnerships</b> that service, reduce reliance on tax dollars, and increase resident access to needed parks, recreation and cultural services. Use a standard set of criteria to evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests (including a minimum fundraising requirement), informed by the Master Plan's guiding principles and findings.	High	Ongoing
16. Ensure that third-party partnerships (e.g., maintenance, lease agreements, etc.) are guided by <b>written agreements</b> that address the responsibilities of all parties and protect the public interest.	High	Ongoing
17. Continue efforts to establish a <b>reciprocal use agreement</b> with area school boards to maximize community access to school facilities.	High	Short-term
18. Continue to engage <b>adjacent municipalities</b> on community service initiatives that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for Ingersoll residents.	Lower	Ongoing
19. Develop a <b>Communication and Marketing Strategy</b> to guide the use of various tools in promoting and gathering feedback on the Department's services and initiatives.	High	Ongoing
20. Maintain and publicly promote an <b>inventory</b> of local parks, recreation and culture programs, events and service providers.	High	Ongoing
21. Host <b>annual forums</b> with community groups and residents to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks, recreation and culture services.	High	Ongoing



Recommendation	Priority	Timing
22. Continually review Departmental <b>staffing levels</b> to ensure alignment with levels of service. Additional staff will continue to be required as the Town grows. Through future budgets, consideration could be given to conversion of part-time positions to new <b>full-time positions</b> with an emphasis on internal staffing promotion/retention.	High	Ongoing
23. Develop and keep current a <b>succession plan</b> to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.	High	Short-term and Ongoing
24. Provide <b>staff training and professional development</b> opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to <b>equity and inclusion</b> in the delivery of service. Continue to support the Department's staff training plan through an annual budget allocation.	High	Ongoing
25. Work as a staff team to define the <b>organizational culture</b> and respective values and behaviours through the development of a <b>Charter of Engagement</b> .	High	Short-term

**Table 26: Facilities – Implementation Strategy**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
26. Continue with plans to include a <b>single pad arena</b> to replace the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre as part of the first phase of the proposed MURC. The facility should be designed so that it can be expanded to add a second ice pad as part of a future phase, should demand warrant. Monitoring of usage trends and regional arena supplies will help to demonstrate needs going forward.	High	Short-term
27. Conduct <b>building assessment studies</b> to confirm the status and potential costs of revitalizing the Ingersoll District Memorial Centre, should the development of the MURC be further delayed.	Medium	Short-term
28. Continue to pursue programs and partnerships that promote <b>pool usage during non-prime (daytime) hours</b> .	Medium	Ongoing
29. Renovate the public service spaces at the <b>Victoria Park Community Centre</b> (e.g., lobby and pool changerooms) to improve universal access and enhance operational efficiency.	Medium	Medium-term
30. As part of the proposed renovation at Victoria Park Community Centre, explore options to <b>convert the two squash courts</b> into a space that offers broader appeal.	Medium	Medium-term
31. Continue to seek strategic partnerships that <b>maximize participation and use of multi-use rooms</b> at municipal recreation facilities. Monitor usage levels to identify trends and opportunities.	Lower	Ongoing

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
32. Continue with plans to include a <b>double gymnasium</b> within the first phase of the proposed MURC to support expanded and new programming, rentals and community activities.	High	Short-term
33. Recognize and celebrate the vital role that the Town plays in supporting youth and providing high quality programming through <b>sustainable funding for the Fusion Centre</b> and its services.	High	Ongoing
34. Re-engage with the 50+ Activity Centre to explore opportunities to <b>integrate the seniors centre into a future phase of the proposed MURC</b> through a blend of shared and dedicated spaces.	High	Short-term
35. Consider the establishment of a <b>Seniors Advisory Committee</b> to advise Town Council on issues and policies impacting older adults and seniors. Improved coordination and integrated service delivery to this demographic should be a priority and may require additional <b>working groups</b> involving key service providers such as the Community Services Department and 50+ Activity Centre.	Medium	Medium-term
36. Monitor local demand for an <b>Arts and Heritage Hub</b> . The development of a community-led feasibility study is recommended to inform further discussions around public demand, possible operating models, locations, and financial requirements.	Lower	Ongoing
37. Establish a target of providing <b>playgrounds within 500-metres of all residential areas</b> . Where necessary, install playgrounds in new subdivisions and seek opportunities to address gaps (e.g., South Ingersoll).	High	Medium-term and Ongoing
38. Create a capital reserve or capital line item in the budget to ensure the timely <b>replacement of aging playgrounds</b> (e.g., Jim Robbins, Woodhatch, Lorne Moon and Edward Parks). Establish a <b>minimum accessibility standard</b> for new and updated play structures to improve barrier-free access.	High	Short-term
39. Develop a <b>long-term strategy to accommodate local soccer needs</b> in the event that the lease on the CAMI lands is not extended. Options include maximizing existing fields, adding fields to parks or the MURC site, acquiring or leasing additional lands, etc.	High	Longer-term
40. Develop <b>two to three properly-sized, lit diamonds</b> in the longer-term to accommodate tournaments and adult play, possibly as part of the MURC project or future park development. Monitor ball diamond usage and participation to confirm long-term needs.	Medium	Medium-term
41. Revisit the demand for a second <b>splash pad</b> (to improve access for those living north of the Thames River) through the next Master Plan update.	Medium	Longer-term

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
42. Maintain a supply of four <b>outdoor tennis courts</b> . If any tennis courts are converted to dedicated pickleball courts, they should be replaced at another site, ideally in the eastern or northern portions of the town to improve distribution.	Medium	Ongoing
43. Accommodate <b>pickleball courts</b> on the existing tennis courts at the CAMI Flyer Soccer Park. Resurfacing and other site improvements are required. If not feasible, seek alternatives to support outdoor pickleball within the parks system.	High	Short-term
44. Construct an <b>outdoor basketball court in South/East Ingersoll</b> to improve distribution and provide access to growing neighbourhoods.	High	Longer-term
45. Regularly consult with youth to ensure that the Fusion <b>skatepark</b> continues to address a wide range of needs. Improvement and/or expansion may be considered if the site can accommodate it and the park remains compatible with surrounding uses.	High	Short-term and Ongoing
46. Consider installing a smaller-scale amenity such as a “ <b>skate spot</b> ” or “ <b>bicycle playground</b> ” through an existing or future park. Consult with youth and potential partners to define options, locations, and funding possibilities.	Medium	Longer-term
47. Consider opportunities to <b>support outdoor skating</b> through park development and redevelopment projects, such as new multi-use courts and synthetic ice.	High	Short-term
48. Establish an <b>outdoor rink program</b> to support volunteer-led ice rinks in appropriate park sites.	Medium	Short-term
49. Require proponents of <b>unsolicited proposals for municipal capital partnerships</b> to prepare business plans and funding strategies for the Town’s consideration. Use a standard set of criteria to evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests.	High	Ongoing

**Table 27: Parks and Trails – Implementation Strategy**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
50. Maintain an up-to-date <b>parks and trails inventory</b> (including park blocks to be conveyed through the development process) to inform the assessment of future parks and trails needs, use of cash-in-lieu, and capital planning.	High	Ongoing
51. Secure <b>11.8 hectares of additional active parkland by 2046</b> (4.6 hectares by 2031) to achieve a growth-based target of 2.5 hectares per 1,000 new residents.	High	Ongoing

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
52. Maximize <b>parkland dedication tools</b> to ensure that active parkland conveyances (and cash-in-lieu) are able to address growth-related needs through the development process. Explore acquisition and other means as required.	High	Ongoing
53. Update the Town's <b>Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication By-law</b> to reflect recent legislative changes and to ensure that the per lot valuation for consents and zoning by-law amendments (currently listed as \$600) reflects current market values and accounts for inflation.	High	Short-term
54. Maintain a commitment to <b>universal accessibility, safety and comfort</b> within the Town's parks and trails system by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Regularly consulting with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with <b>barrier-free guidelines</b>, recognizing that some parks may include areas of natural terrain that are more difficult to access.</li> <li>b. Undertaking and incorporating <b>accessibility audits</b> into the Town's asset management planning to identify a multi-year strategy for addressing barrier-free compliance.</li> <li>c. Engaging local police services to undertake a review of all parks and trails using <b>CPTED principles</b> to identify safety concerns relative to accesses and sightlines.</li> <li>d. Emphasizing the provision and timely replacement of <b>comfort amenities</b> such as washrooms, benches/seating areas, bicycle racks and shade areas in parks to address the needs of all age groups.</li> <li>e. Installing consistent and high-quality <b>signage</b> at all Town parks to enhance branding and wayfinding.</li> <li>f. Installing accessible <b>pathway loops</b> within parks and pathways that connect to accessible playground features.</li> </ul>	High	Ongoing
55. Support expanded <b>year-round park and trail use</b> through outdoor education, challenging play opportunities, municipal programming, equipment-lending, and community development activities.	High	Ongoing
56. Continue to support opportunities for <b>environmental stewardship and climate change mitigation</b> through the parks system, such as tree planting, use of native species, naturalization initiatives, and butterfly/pollinator parks in collaboration with community partners.	High	Ongoing
57. Undertake <b>park amenity condition assessments</b> on a regular basis to inform the Town's asset management plan and long-term capital plan.	High	Short-term and Ongoing



Recommendation	Priority	Timing
58. Begin planning for park renewal and redevelopment projects at <b>Jim Robbins, Woodhatch and Lorne Moon Parks</b> by allocating funding in the Town's long-term capital plan and undertaking additional public and stakeholder consultation.	High	Short-term
59. Establish a long-term asset management plan (with funding) to guide the <b>repair and replacement of significant park infrastructure</b> such as support buildings and sports field lighting. Some notable projects include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. restoration of the historic bandshell in <b>Yvonne Mott Memorial Park</b>;</li> <li>b. replacement of the washroom/storage building at <b>Garnet Elliot Park</b>;</li> <li>c. resurfacing the courts at the <b>CAMI Soccer Flyer Park</b>;</li> <li>d. ball diamond lighting, fencing and dugout replacement (<b>various sites</b>); and</li> <li>e. outdoor basketball court in <b>Lion's Park</b> (replace with a half court).</li> </ul>	High	Short-term (a, b, c) Medium-term (d, e)
60. Continue to seek opportunities to <b>expand and connect the recreational trail network</b> . This includes establishing trails within parks (e.g., Victoria Park, Garnet Elliot Park, etc.), future residential areas, along the Thames River, and into adjacent municipalities. Improvements to the on-road cycling network should be guided by the Oxford County Cycling Master Plan.	High	Ongoing
61. Prioritize strategies that enhance public access and the creation of <b>trails along the Thames River</b> .	High	Longer-term
62. Improve the existing trail network by installing and maintaining <b>safety and comfort features</b> – such as lighting, signage, seating, and more – in appropriate locations.	High	Ongoing

**Table 28: Financial and Implementation – Implementation Strategy**

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
63. Where appropriate and consistent with Town policies and priorities, <b>consider alternative funding and cost-sharing</b> approaches such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.	High	Ongoing
64. Use this <b>Master Plan as a resource</b> in establishing the Town's annual budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.	High	Ongoing

Recommendation	Priority	Timing
65. Phase in a <b>capital reserve</b> to fund the repair and replacement of major capital infrastructure. This reserve should be an annual line item in the budget that could be linked to overall asset replacement value (up to 2%) or a percentage of Department revenues (5% to 10%).	Medium	Longer-term
66. Assess and ensure that <b>operating budget implications</b> are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects	High	Ongoing
67. Develop a system for the regular <b>monitoring, ongoing implementation and reporting on the progress</b> of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.	High	Ongoing
68. Undertake a <b>comprehensive review and update</b> of the Community Services Master Plan to begin no later than 2031. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	High	Longer-term

# **Appendix A: Community Survey – Detailed Results**

See following pages.

**1 Since 2019 (the period both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic), which of the following parks, recreation, and cultural activities did you or anyone in your household participate in, in Ingersoll 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 (select all that may apply).**

	#	%
Enjoying Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Areas	514	81%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	485	76%
Attending Special Events (e.g., fairs, festivals, etc.)	398	63%
Use of Playground Equipment	349	55%
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	340	54%
Use of Splash Pad	322	51%
Swimming (Recreational)	280	44%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness, or Weight-Training	237	37%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	225	35%
Ice Sports (e.g., hockey, figure skating, etc.) or Recreational Skating (indoor)	218	34%
Swimming (Instructional or AquaFit)	198	31%
Canoeing, Rowing, Kayaking, or Paddle Boarding	183	29%
Baseball or Softball (or other forms)	181	29%
Golf	180	28%
Running or Jogging	179	28%
Outdoor Ice Skating	162	26%
Organized Programs for Children (e.g., Day Camp, Drop-in, etc.)	160	25%
Organized Programs for Adults (e.g., Fitness, Special Interest Class, etc.)	145	23%
Visiting Museums	131	21%
Visiting Theatres (Performing Arts or Music)	124	20%
Soccer	123	19%
Scootering	104	16%
Organized Programs for Youth (e.g., Fitness, Special Interest Class, etc.)	89	14%
Performing Arts, Visual Arts, or Music Classes	85	13%
Visiting Art Galleries	81	13%
Rollerblading	77	12%
Tennis	66	10%
Organized Programs for Seniors (e.g., Cards, Luncheons, Special Interest Class, etc.)	65	10%
Youth Centre Activities	60	9%
Basketball	59	9%
Skateboarding	53	8%
Pickleball	29	5%
Other (please specify)	23	4%
answered question	634	
skipped question	0	

Other Activities	
Creative Arts	2
Geocaching	2
Volleyball	2
Biking	1
Dance	1
Fishing	1
Picnicking	1
Inline Hockey	1
Kite Flying	1
Nature Observation	1

**2 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, what proportion of your household's parks, recreation, and cultural needs were met within the Town of Ingersoll?**

	#	%
All (100%)	57	9%
Most (67 - 99%)	214	34%
About Half (34 - 66%)	226	36%
Some (1 - 33%)	94	15%
None (0%)	13	2%
Don't Know	19	3%
answered question	623	100%
skipped question	11	



**3 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, what activities did you or members of your household typically participate in outside of the Town of Ingersoll? List up to three (3).**

Top ten open-ended responses	#	%
Hiking	127	29%
Trails	85	19%
Special Events/Concerts	74	17%
Walking	70	16%
Hockey	43	10%
Biking	42	10%
Swimming	39	9%
Performing Arts	31	7%
Skating	31	7%
Golf	27	6%
answered question	442	
skipped question	192	

**4 Why does your household participate in these activities outside of the Town of Ingersoll?**

	#	% of subsample	% of sample
Facility or program is not available in the Town	301	67%	48%
Quality of facility / program is superior	194	43%	31%
Facility or program is not available in the Town at the preferred time	106	24%	17%
"Connected" to other community / used to live there	97	22%	16%
Tournaments / special events / travel teams	52	12%	8%
Less expensive	44	10%	7%
Closer to home, work, or school	24	5%	4%
Don't Know	19	4%	3%
answered question	447		
skipped question	119		

**5 Were you and your household able to participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities as often as you would like prior to COVID-19?**

	#	%
Yes	323	58%
No	173	31%
Unsure	57	10%
answered question	553	100%
skipped question	81	

**6 Why were you and your household not able to participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities as often as you would like prior to COVID-19?**

	#	% of subsample	% of sample
Lack of desired facilities or programs	150	65%	27%
Program not offered at a convenient time	103	45%	19%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	81	35%	15%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	70	30%	13%
Lack of money / Too expensive	46	20%	8%
Lack of child care	24	10%	4%
Accessibility / Disability / Age	14	6%	3%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	11	5%	2%
Language / Cultural barrier	1	0%	0%
Don't know	7	3%	1%
Other (please specify)	21	5%	3%
answered question	223		
skipped question	7		

Other	#
Lack of Programming	4
Lack of Adequate Trails/Paths	3
New Resident	2
Facilities Outside of Town	2
No Availability	2

**7 If applicable, list up to three (3) parks, recreation, and culture programs / activities that you or members of your household would like to see provided in Ingersoll that were not available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Top ten open-ended responses	#	%
Trails/Paths	89	26%
Special Events	68	20%
Parks	30	9%
Programming	25	7%
Outdoor Skating	24	7%
Arena	21	6%
Availability	17	5%
Children Programming	16	5%
Playgrounds	15	4%
Splash Pad	14	4%
answered question	346	
skipped question	288	

**8 Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

	1		2		3		4		5		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered Question		Skipped Question	Average
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Parks, recreation, and cultural services should be a high priority for Town Council	33	7%	3	1%	18	4%	116	23%	326	65%	5	1%	501	100%	133	4.41
You feel well informed about the Town's parks, facilities, programs, and events	25	5%	97	19%	175	35%	161	32%	39	8%	5	1%	502	100%	132	3.19
The Town's parks, recreation, and cultural programs are affordable for your household	8	2%	46	9%	127	25%	249	50%	56	11%	14	3%	500	100%	134	3.62
The Town's parks, recreation, and cultural amenities are well maintained	16	3%	52	10%	108	22%	235	47%	80	16%	10	2%	501	100%	133	3.63

**9 Please rate your level of satisfaction with parks, recreation, and culture opportunities for the following age groups.**

	1		2		3		4		5		Answered Question		Don't know		Skipped Question	Average
	Not Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Infants and Children (Age 0 - 9)	66	17%	66	17%	84	21%	144	36%	38	10%	398	100%	133	--	501	9.16
Youth (Age 10 - 19)	89	23%	89	23%	99	26%	87	23%	16	4%	380	100%	159	--	475	6.25
Adults (Age 20 - 54)	98	19%	98	19%	159	31%	136	27%	15	3%	506	100%	51	--	583	27.42
Older Adults and Seniors (Age 55+)	49	16%	49	16%	88	28%	97	31%	27	9%	310	100%	198	--	436	4.72
Families	74	16%	74	16%	151	33%	139	30%	19	4%	457	100%	79	--	555	16.86

**10 What is your level of importance for the following types of programs?**

	1		2		3		4		5		Answered Question		Don't know		Skipped Question	Average
	Not at all Important		Not Important		Neutral		Important		Very Important							
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
General Child and Youth Programs	18	4%	11	2%	40	9%	149	33%	237	52%	455	100%	18	--	179	4.27
General Adult Programs	3	1%	10	2%	79	17%	236	50%	143	30%	471	100%	6	--	163	4.07
Fitness Programs	6	1%	18	4%	77	17%	201	43%	164	35%	466	100%	7	--	168	4.07
Aquatic Programs	7	2%	19	4%	84	18%	176	38%	180	39%	466	100%	8	--	168	4.08
Drop-in Youth Programs	15	3%	20	4%	96	21%	170	38%	147	33%	448	100%	25	--	186	3.92
Fee-for-Service Youth Programs	23	5%	32	8%	136	32%	154	36%	79	19%	424	100%	44	--	210	3.55
Summer Day Camp Programs	21	5%	27	6%	83	19%	150	34%	162	37%	443	100%	29	--	191	3.91
Seniors Programs	23	5%	20	5%	68	16%	142	33%	176	41%	429	100%	49	--	205	4.00

**11 What is your level of satisfaction for the following programs in Ingersoll?**

	1		2		3		4		5		Answered Question		Don't know		Skipped Question	Average
	Not at all Satisfied		Not Satisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Very Satisfied		#	%	#	%		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
General Child and Youth Programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre	2	1%	37	12%	132	44%	113	37%	18	6%	302	100%	166	--	332	3.36
General Adult Programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre	3	1%	46	14%	161	48%	113	33%	15	4%	338	100%	131	--	296	3.27
Fitness Programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre	3	1%	49	15%	139	41%	128	38%	17	5%	336	100%	134	--	298	3.32
Aquatic Programs at the Victoria Park Community Centre	8	2%	59	16%	116	32%	147	40%	36	10%	366	100%	105	--	268	3.39
Drop-in Youth Programs at the Fusion Centre	3	1%	13	6%	121	55%	65	29%	19	9%	221	100%	245	--	413	3.38
Fee-for-Service Youth Programs at the Fusion Centre	2	1%	17	8%	126	60%	53	25%	12	6%	210	100%	256	--	424	3.27
Summer Day Camp Programs	7	3%	28	11%	126	51%	71	29%	15	6%	247	100%	219	--	387	3.24
Seniors Programs at the Seniors / 50+ Activity Centre	5	2%	11	5%	94	41%	83	36%	36	16%	229	100%	242	--	405	3.59

**12 To assist the Town in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following indoor facility types.**

	1		2		3		4		Answered Question		Don't know / Don't use		Skipped Question	Average
	Not a Priority		Low Priority		Medium Priority		High Priority		#	%	#	%		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Indoor Pools	7	2%	33	7%	114	25%	310	67%	464	100%	11	--	170	3.57
Indoor Arenas	13	3%	40	9%	109	24%	288	64%	450	100%	25	--	184	3.49
Youth Centres	10	2%	29	7%	121	28%	272	63%	432	100%	42	--	202	3.52
Fitness Centres	10	2%	58	13%	167	37%	221	48%	456	100%	18	--	178	3.31
Senior Centres	20	5%	38	9%	153	36%	213	50%	424	100%	51	--	210	3.32
Gymnasiums	9	2%	53	12%	185	42%	193	44%	440	100%	34	--	194	3.28
Theatres	36	8%	105	24%	188	42%	115	26%	444	100%	31	--	190	2.86
Museums	58	13%	142	32%	162	37%	79	18%	441	100%	34	--	193	2.59
Meeting and Program Rooms	53	12%	140	33%	180	42%	57	13%	430	100%	44	--	204	2.56
Art Galleries	99	22%	154	35%	135	31%	53	12%	441	100%	33	--	193	2.32

**Other High Priorities**

Arena	9
Indoor Walking Track	7
Affordability	2
Arena (double pad)	2
Pickleball	2

**13 To assist the Town in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following outdoor facility types.**

	1		2		3		4		Answered Question		Don't know / Don't use		Skipped Question	Average
	Not a Priority		Low Priority		Medium Priority		High Priority		#	%	#	%		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Nature Trails (unpaved)	2	0%	10	2%	96	21%	352	77%	460	100%	7	--	174	3.73
Playgrounds	2	0%	15	3%	83	18%	349	78%	449	100%	16	--	185	3.73
Recreational Trails (paved)	6	1%	21	5%	113	25%	321	70%	461	100%	6	--	173	3.62
Splash / Spray Pads	8	2%	23	5%	111	25%	299	68%	441	100%	24	--	193	3.59
Open Space for Casual Use and Picnicking	7	2%	43	10%	163	36%	239	53%	452	100%	13	--	182	3.40
Outdoor Ice Rinks	21	5%	47	11%	165	38%	199	46%	432	100%	35	--	202	3.25
Baseball Diamonds	23	6%	57	14%	150	36%	181	44%	411	100%	55	--	223	3.19
Soccer Fields	19	5%	51	13%	170	42%	161	40%	401	100%	64	--	233	3.18
Picnic Pavilions	10	2%	60	14%	209	48%	156	36%	435	100%	27	--	199	3.17
Basketball Courts	18	5%	61	15%	186	47%	134	34%	399	100%	64	--	235	3.09
Off-leash Dog Parks	40	10%	97	24%	140	34%	129	32%	406	100%	58	--	228	2.88
Skateboard Parks	30	8%	94	25%	148	39%	105	28%	377	100%	85	--	257	2.87
Tennis Courts	29	8%	83	22%	164	43%	105	28%	381	100%	82	--	253	2.91
BMX Pump Tracks	49	13%	104	27%	130	34%	96	25%	379	100%	83	--	255	2.72
Beach Volleyball Courts	46	12%	106	27%	148	38%	94	24%	394	100%	71	--	240	2.74
Pickleball Courts	61	19%	94	29%	111	34%	56	17%	322	100%	132	--	312	2.50

Other High Priorities

Pool (outdoors)	12
Improved/Expanded Playgrounds	3
Trails (paved)	1
Dog Park	1
Baseball Diamonds	1

**14 If not covered in the previous questions, please provide any additional comments below.**

answered question	78	open-ended
skipped question	556	

**15 How many individuals reside in your household?**

	#	# of Persons in Sample	%
1	28	28	6%
2	117	234	26%
3	80	240	17%
4	137	548	30%
5	68	340	15%
6	22	132	5%
7	3	21	1%
8+	3	24	1%
answered question	458		100%
skipped question	176		
Total persons in sample		1,567	
Persons per household		3.42	

**16 Including yourself, please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.**

## 2016 Census

	#	# of Persons in Sample	%	# persons	%	
Under 10 years	190	325	21%	1,530	12%	
10 - 19 years	143	233	15%	1,605	13%	
20 - 34 years	191	323	21%	2,250	18%	
35 - 54 years	247	418	27%	3,490	28%	
55 - 69 years	120	189	12%	2,380	19%	
70 years and over	29	40	3%	1,330	11%	
total persons		1,528	100%	12,585	100%	12.1%
answered question	444					
skipped question	190					
Persons per household		3.44				

**17 Do you live in Ingersoll?**

	#	%
Yes	448	97%
No	14	3%
answered question	462	100%
skipped question	172	

**18 If you live in Ingersoll, please select the general area where you live.**

	#	%
North of Thames River	138	31%
South of Thames River and east of Thames Street South	204	46%
South of Thames River and west of Thames Street South	102	23%
answered question	444	100%
skipped question	4	

**19 If you do not live in Ingersoll, in which municipality do you live?**

	#	%
South-West Oxford	7	54%
Zorra	3	23%
Woodstock	1	8%
Other (please specify)	2	15%
answered question	13	100%
skipped question	1	

Other	
London	1
Waterloo	1

**20 How did you hear about this survey? Select all that apply.**

	#	# of subsample	%
Town of Ingersoll social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram)	249	55%	48%
Other social media accounts	74	16%	14%
Signs in Town Parks or Buildings	64	14%	12%
Town of Ingersoll website	47	10%	9%
Radio or Newspaper	32	7%	6%
Local community / recreation organization	22	5%	4%
Word of mouth (family, friends, etc.)	21	5%	4%
Other (please specify)	10	2%	2%
total responses	519		100%
answered question	451		
skipped question	183		

Other	
News	6
Email	3
Internet	1



## Appendix B: Comparative Review of Fees and Charges

Rate Category	Middlesex Centre	Stratford	Strathroy-Caradoc	Thames Centre	Tillsonburg	Woodstock	Benchmark Average	Ingersoll
Arenas								
Adult Prime (per hour)	\$192.00	\$180.09	\$175.00	\$183.64	\$154.57	\$157.52	\$173.80	\$163.72
Adult Non-Prime (per hour)	\$109.00	\$92.92	\$100.00	\$156.00	\$83.17	\$132.74	\$112.31	\$110.62
Minor Prime (per hour)	\$158.00	\$157.52	\$165.00	\$170.64	\$108.59	\$138.05	\$149.63	\$125.66
Minor Non-Prime (per hour)	\$109.00	\$92.92	\$100.00	\$84.48	\$83.17	\$122.12	\$98.62	\$84.07
Adult Summer Ice (per hour)	\$192.00	\$150.44	\$77.00	N/A	N/A	\$151.03	\$139.81	N/A
Minor Summer Ice (per hour)	\$192.00	\$150.44	\$77.00			\$131.86	\$139.81	
Dry Pad - Adult (per hour)	\$80.00	\$65.49	\$62.83	\$70.99	\$60.22	\$1,383.48 / day	\$67.91	\$48.67
Dry Pad - Minor (per hour)	\$80.00	\$57.12	\$62.83	\$70.99	\$60.22	\$1,383.48 / day	\$66.23	\$48.67
Public Skate Admission - Public/Adult/Student (per person)	\$3.10	\$2.33	\$2.50	\$4.50	\$3.83	\$3.54	\$3.30	\$2.65
Public Skate Admission - Children	N/A	\$1.88	N/A	\$3.00	\$1.91	\$2.43	\$2.31	\$2.65
Public Skate Admission - Family (per family)		N/A	\$5.00	\$7.96	\$7.86	\$7.97	\$7.20	N/A
Public Skate Admission - Senior (per person)	\$2.21	\$2.33	N/A	\$2.70	\$3.83	N/A	\$2.77	\$2.65
Shinny/Pick-up Hockey Adult (per person)	\$5.31	\$4.42	\$4.42	\$7.21	\$5.02	N/A	\$5.28	\$6.19
Multi-Purpose Spaces								
Hall/Auditorium (per hour)	\$39.00	\$60.62	\$33.16	N/A	\$52.96	\$55.60	\$48.27	\$44.25
Meeting Room (per hour)	\$29.00	\$23.98	\$21.57	\$49.63	\$23.89	\$26.51	\$29.10	\$25.40
Gymnasium - Adult (per hour)	N/A	\$59.50	\$37.17	\$32.01	N/A	N/A	\$42.89	\$45.13
Gymnasium - Minor (per hour)		\$59.50	\$37.17	\$32.01			\$42.89	\$45.13
Non-Sport Facility Rental Youth/Senior (per hour)	\$10.00	\$16.55	\$15.93	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$14.16	N/A
Soccer								
Unlit Adult	\$20.00	\$491.15 / team	\$477.88 / team	\$46.16 / game	N/A	\$30.32	N/A	N/A
Unlit Minor	\$20.00	\$23.89 / child	\$25.00 / child	\$37.96 / game		\$12.35	N/A	\$5.00 / child
Lighting Fee	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$21.38 / game		N/A	N/A	N/A
Ball Diamonds								
Unlit Adult	\$17.50	\$491.15 / team	\$477.88 / team	\$52.84 / game	\$409.45 / team	\$30.32	N/A	\$39.82
Unlit Minor	\$17.50	\$23.89 / child	\$25.00 / child	\$35.43 / game	\$70.38 / team	\$12.35	N/A	\$8.00
Lit Adult	\$22.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$454.50 / team	N/A	N/A	\$48.67
Lit Minor	\$22.50				\$115.43 / team		N/A	\$8.00
Pool								
Admission - Child	N/A	\$2.88	\$2.65	\$3.00	\$1.91	\$2.43	\$2.57	\$2.65
Admission - Youth		\$2.88	\$3.54	\$4.50	\$1.91	\$2.43	\$3.05	\$2.65
Admission - Adult		\$2.88	\$5.31	\$4.50	\$3.83	\$3.54	\$4.01	\$2.65
Admission - Senior		\$2.88	\$4.42	\$2.70	\$3.83	\$2.88	\$3.34	\$2.65
Admission - Family		\$11.50	\$12.39	\$7.96	\$7.86	\$7.97	\$9.54	N/A
Aquafit (per hr)		\$4.73	N/A	\$2.89	\$6.80	\$4.65	\$4.77	\$6.64
Swim Programs		\$68.00 - \$135.00	\$ 67.00 - \$130.00	\$ 59.10 - \$127.38	\$6.04 - \$189.55	\$6.95 - \$175.22	\$ 61.54 - \$146.66	\$3.13 - \$226.50
Pool Rental (per hour)		\$199.12	N/A	\$76.43	\$78.84	\$110.62	\$116.25	\$112.00

Note: Rental fees for room bookings vary based on location, type and availability of amenities. An average rental fee for these facilities is shown. All fees exclude HST. Unless otherwise noted, rates are assumed to be calculated per hour.