ONTARIO CANADA
ST. MARYS

Town of St Marys

Recreation and Leisure Services master plan

DRAFT

October 2017

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Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan - DRAFT

October 2017

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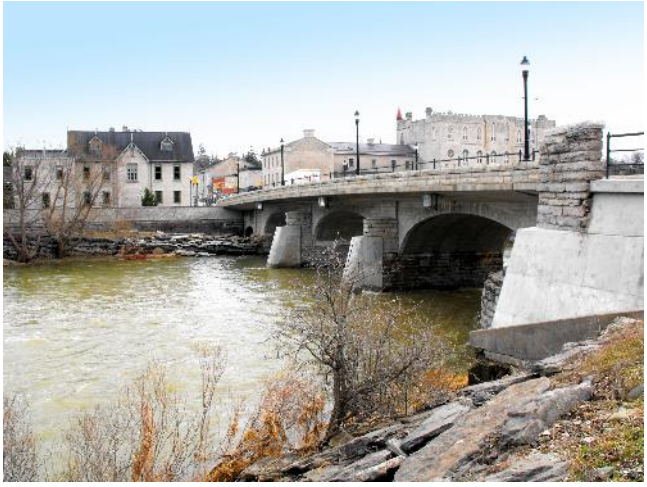
1.0 Introduction

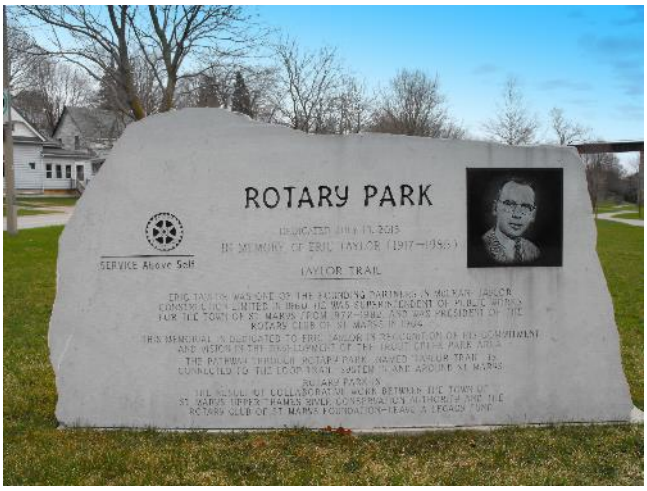
1.1 The Importance of Master Planning

Recreation and leisure services play an important role in advancing community health and well-being. These services – which are delivered by the Town of St. Marys, its partners, local volunteers and others in the community - facilitate meaningful opportunities for physical activity and social cohesion. The Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan (the "Master Plan") is a guide for use by Town of St. Marys Council, Town Staff, local stakeholders and the public to make informed decisions based upon high level needs and priorities that have emerged from the master planning process. The Master Plan provides insights into St. Marys' unique parks, recreation and leisure needs by taking into consideration the feedback provided by St. Marys residents, trends and best practices in the sector, population characteristics and projections for the Town, and a host of other inputs.



View from Bennett Park

The Master Plan identifies the types of recreation and leisure facilities and services required for current and future generations in St. Marys to be active, healthy, and engaged with their community. Master Plans are often considered to be a "first step" or a "road map" that are considered in conjunction with other municipal infrastructure and service plans; most often, a considerable commitment to ongoing work is required on the part of the municipality and its partners.



Memorial Stone at Rotary Park (Kin Park)

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

1.2 Purpose of the Master Plan

The Master Plan guides municipal decision-making on matters related to the provision of recreation and leisure services over the next ten years. The scope of this Master Plan focuses on various aspects of the Community Services Department including indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, parks, trails, open spaces,

recreation programs, and the way in which these services are delivered. Notable drivers behind the impetus for this Master Plan are as follows:

- Recognizing that the Town's previous Master Plan was developed in 2002, preparing a new Master Plan **provides the Town with a fresh perspective** on the provision of parks, trails, recreation facilities (indoor and outdoor), and recreation programs and services. The new Master Plan guides Town officials and staff, stakeholders, and the public on matters related to recreation and leisure opportunities over the next ten years with strategically prioritized recommendations that are supported by existing policies and studies, demographic and recreation trends, utilization data, and public input.

- In communities such as St. Marys, **the efficient use of municipal resources** is crucial. In accordance with the Town's Strategic Plan, this Master Plan identifies strategies to ensure that the provision of recreation and leisure services are scale-appropriate for current and future residents, which includes, but are not limited to, cost-saving measures and maximizing the use of existing community facilities and resources (e.g., volunteers and non-municipal sector partnerships).

1.3 Master Planning Methodology

The preparation of the Master Plan was organized into a three phase process (Figure 1) based on several inputs. The first phase consisted of developing a Planning Context Report, which summarized:

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

Phase Two involved developing the Draft Master Plan, which built upon information gleaned from the previous Phase and assessed the current and future needs associated with parkland, trails, recreation and leisure facilities, and service delivery models. Phase Three is focused on testing recommendations with the public, stakeholders, and Town staff, prior to Council adoption of the Master Plan as a guiding document.

Figure 1: Project Methodology

1.4 Project Background Review

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

Friendship Centre Lounge and Reading Area

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

Strategic Policy Documents

- Town of St. Marys Strategic Plan Revision and Update (2017)
- Town of St. Marys Official Plan (2007)
- Town of St. Marys Public Library Strategic Plan (2014)

Recreation and Leisure Services Documents

- Programs & Services Guide (2016/2017)
- User Agreements

Other Supporting Documents

- Official Plan Discussion Papers (2013)
- 2017 Municipal Budget
- Municipal Cultural Plan (2013)
- Organizational Chart
- Facility Rental Fees
- Various staff reports, policies, financials, etc.

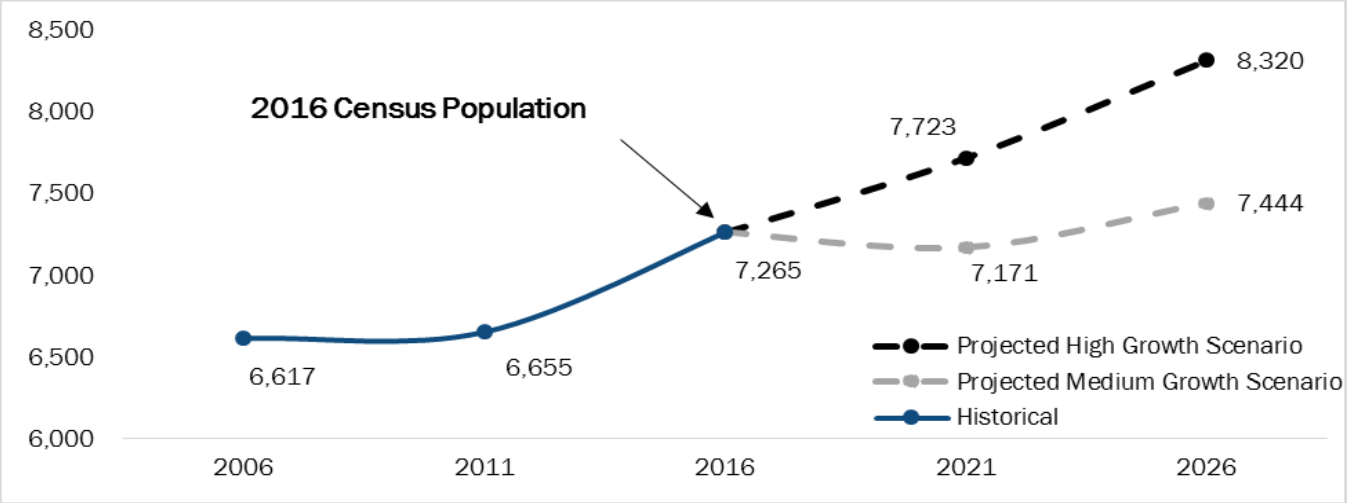
2.0 Research Inputs

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

2.1 Implications of Population Growth

Understanding population growth helps shape recreation and leisure opportunities in St. Marys as the number and characteristics of residents are factors that can dictate the number and type of parks, recreation and leisure facilities and programs that should be provided. St. Marys has experienced modest population growth over the past ten years. Statistics Canada reported a 2016 population of 7,265 persons, representing a 10% growth since 2006 (or 1% annually). Given the level of growth expected during the planning period, the 2016 population will be used as the baseline population for this Master Plan. **Population projections for St. Marys are contained in the Town's 2013 Background Discussion Paper #1, which was prepared as a part of the Town's Official Plan Review.** The Background Discussion Paper recommended that a 'medium-low' growth scenario be utilized for future planning considerations; however, the 2016 Census revealed that growth is more in line with the high growth scenario (Figure 2). Through discussions with Town staff, it was determined that the Master Plan should assume that the Town's population will reach between 7,444 and 8,320 persons by the end of the planning period, representing an increase anywhere from 3% to 15% (between 180 and 1,100 new residents).

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



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

Discussion Paper #4 of the Official Plan Review provides insights to where population growth is expected to occur. The majority of undeveloped residential land is located in the north end of Town. The existing housing stock in this area of St. Marys is single dwelling units, suggesting that this area may be home to families with young children and continued population growth in this area will likely drive pressures for neighbourhood level opportunities. Confirmation of recreation and leisure opportunities in this area, and in St. Marys as a whole, is explored in this Master Plan. Notwithstanding where growth is expected, it is essential that a geographically-balanced recreation and leisure system is provided throughout the Town in order to maximize opportunities available to new and existing residents.

2.2 Recreation Preferences among Age Groups

Understanding St. Marys' age profile provides insights into the types of recreation and leisure services that might be needed to effectively serve residents. Research reveals that communities with a larger market share of children and youth often have higher demands for minor sports and active activities such as soccer, hockey, figure skating, and skateboarding. On the other end of the spectrum, municipalities with a large demographic of older adults and seniors may place greater emphasis upon health and wellness, arts and culture, and types of activities that encourage social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

The 2016 Census reported a median age of 45.3 years for St. Marys, which is older compared to the Province (41.3 years) and Perth County (42.4 years). St. Marys' median age grew by nearly one year compared to the 2011 Census (44.4 years), reinforcing the fact that the Town's population is aging as a whole.

A closer look at St. Marys' age profile reveals additional evidence of an aging community. Between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the majority of growth occurred among residents over the age of 50. As illustrated in Table 1, the number of older adults between the ages of 50 and 69 increased by 16%, while the number of seniors over the age of 70+ grew by 21%. Younger age cohorts under the age of 34 also experienced varying levels of growth, while mature adults (35 to 49) showed a modest decline.

Table 1: Population by Age Cohort, 2011 – 2016

	2011	2016	Growth
Children (0 to 9 Years)	735	770	5%
Youth (10 to 19 Years)	805	820	2%
Adults (20 to 34 Years)	1,075	1,175	9%
Mature Adults (35 to 49 Years)	1,295	1,245	-4%
Older Adults (50 to 69 Years)	1,765	2,055	16%
Seniors 70+ Years	985	1,195	21%
Total	6,660	7,260	9%

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 – 2016

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

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

2.3 Lack of Free Time and Physical Inactivity

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

Friendship Centre – Multi-Purpose Room

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

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

2.4 Overcoming Financial Barriers to Participation

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

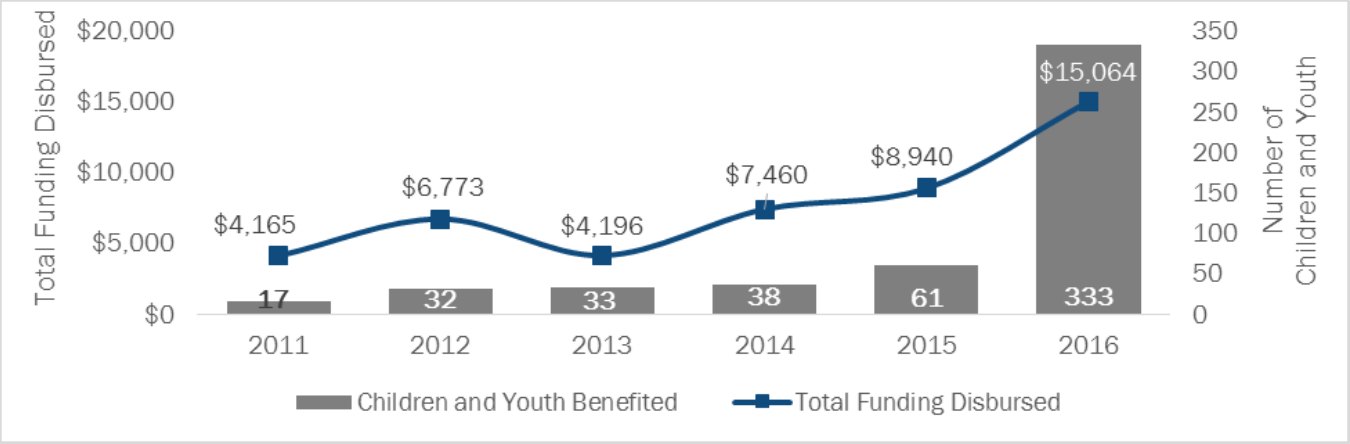
According to Statistics Canada, the 2015 median after-tax income in St. Marys was $64,512, which is on par with the Province ($65,285) and higher compared to Perth County ($62,229). This finding suggests that based on income alone, St. Marys' residents may be more active in physical activities compared to the County. However, the 2016 Census reported that 9% of St. Marys' residents are living in low income households, which

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

is lower compared to the County (11%) and the Province (14%). Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure that affordable recreation and leisure services are made available.

While St. Marys does not offer financial assistance to participate in recreation and leisure activities, the Town encourages the use of the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program, which provides monetary assistance to children and youth between the ages of four to 18. The Jumpstart program disbursed over $15,000 to 333 children and youth in St. Marys in 2016, which is a sizeable increase from 2011 where $4,200 was distributed to 17 children and youth (Figure 3). The Town believes that the increase in the number of applicants and the amount of funding distributed in 2016 was due to increased efforts to promote the financial assistance program. Older adults and seniors who are members of the Friendship Centre may also be eligible for programming discounts. The Town is currently working towards formalizing a financial assistance program to benefit adults. In addition, the Town also provides one free room rental per month at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to local community groups.

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



Source: Canadian Tire Jumpstart

2.5 Engaging Persons with Disabilities

The Canadian Survey on Disability reported that approximately 3.8 million Canadians were living with a disability in 2012, representing 13.7% of Canadians and 15.4% of Ontarians.[2] While the number of persons with disabilities in St. Marys is not quantified, applying the provincial rate to the Town's population leads to an assumption that more than 1,100 local residents could have some form of disability. Given these statistics and the aging of the population, it is crucial that recreation and leisure services in St. Marys consider inclusivity, universal design, and barrier-free elements wherever possible to minimize participation barriers.

Municipalities across the Province have embraced the principles of inclusivity through facility design and service delivery. This practice is guided by the *Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (A.O.D.A.), 2005, which requires municipalities to remove all barriers within municipal facilities by 2025. In doing so, municipalities are required to form Accessibility Advisory Committees and adopt accessibility plans, which identify, develop, and prioritize solutions to remove

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

barriers from municipal facilities. The Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee (A.A.C.) advises Council on the preparation and implementation of St. Marys' Accessibility Plan, and other matters related to accessibility. The Town's 2012 – 2017 Accessibility Plan identifies a number of accessibility improvements to areas of customer service, communications, employment, transportation, and the built environment. Limited actions were articulated with respect to accessibility improvements within recreation and leisure facilities. The Accessibility Plan directed the A.A.C. to identify and develop an implementation plan to integrate accessibility features within Town facilities, although no specific projects were suggested.

2.6 Aging Infrastructure

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

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

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

2.7 Adopting Green Design

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

[3] Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. 2016.
[4] Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. CPRA applauds federal government commitment to parks and recreation opportunities for Canadians. Retrieved from http://www.cpra.ca.
[5] Recreation Infrastructure Ontario. Funded Projects. Retrieved from http://www.ic.gc.ca.

sustainability certification programs designed to assess environmental performance and management of existing and newly constructed buildings.

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

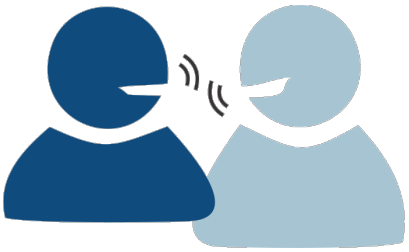
2.8 The Merits of Risky Play

Generally speaking, risky play can be defined as "Thrilling and exciting forms of play that involve a risk of physical injury. The risk can be real or perceived." Risky play may be described as a range of actions including, but not limited to, climbing, jumping, swinging, and hanging. There are a number of risky play categories such as heights, speed, dangerous tools or elements, rough and tumble play, and exploration and adventure.[7] There is growing research on the merits of risky play, which can have a positive impact on fostering the development of the children. Studies have revealed that allowing children to play in risky environments or situations can assist with developing mental and physical health, which can lead to improved motor skills, social behaviour, independence, conflict resolution skills, and risk management strategies.[8]

Research suggests that outdoor risky play is closely associated with playgrounds as they can be developed to facilitate a range of experiences. The provision of playgrounds has transformed from the traditional play structure (e.g., slide and swing set) to unique creative and natural/adventure structures that encourage children to take more risks. Adventure and natural playgrounds utilize landscape features and materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and large boulders. While the Town does not currently have any risky play areas, the provision of such facilities ensure that playgrounds continue to facilitate engaging experiences for children, which is considered in the needs assessment of this Master Plan.

[6] Marketwired. Government of Canada Contributes to Energy Efficiency Upgrades to St. Marys Community Centre Through the Gas Tax Fund. Retrieved from http://www.marketwired.com/.
[7] Brussoni, M., et al. What is the relationship between risky outdoor play and health in children? A systematic review. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2015.
[8] Ibid

3.0 Public Consultation



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

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

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

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

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

Riverview Walkway

Pyramid Recreation Centre

3.1 Summary of Public Consultation Themes

A broad range of comments were expressed throughout the community engagement sessions held in the first phase of this project. Table 2 summarizes the most common themes that were heard based on the opinions, preferences, and priorities of residents, stakeholder groups, Town staff, and Council. These themes, which are listed in no particular order of importance or priority, are used to inform the needs assessments carried out for the Master Plan in conjunction with other relevant research inputs.

Table 2: Summary of Community Engagement Themes

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

3.2 Master Plan Launch Event

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

St. Marys Swimming Quarry

Community Values in Recreation and Leisure Services

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

Improving Outdoor Parks and Recreation Facilities

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

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

Improving Indoor Recreation Facilities

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

Improving Recreation and Leisure Programs and Services

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

Priorities for Recreation and Leisure Services

Participants identified a number of priorities to be considered over the life of the Master Plan. The most common priority was the need to continue to maintain the Town's existing assets as they relate to parks and outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, programs, and services. Recognizing the population of older adults and seniors in St. Marys, participants also articulated the desire to continue focusing on the provision of age-friendly facilities, services, and programs. It was also indicated that recreation and leisure opportunities must be affordable to minimize financial barriers to participating in activities.

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

3.3 Online Community Survey

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

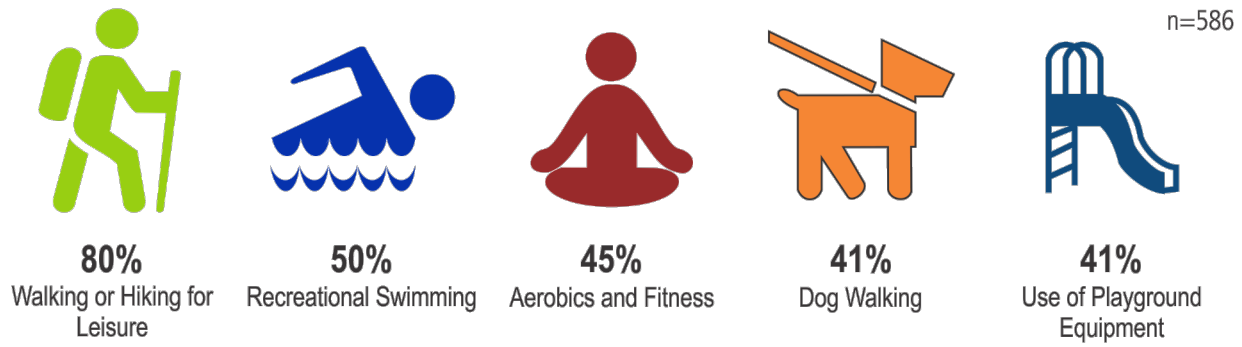
A total of 586 surveys were completed and analyzed. This section summarizes the key findings of the survey and excludes 'Don't Know' and 'No Responses', with a greater level of detail found in **Appendix B**. It is important to note that this was a self-administered, non-random survey and thus the results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

Participation in Recreation and Leisure Activities

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

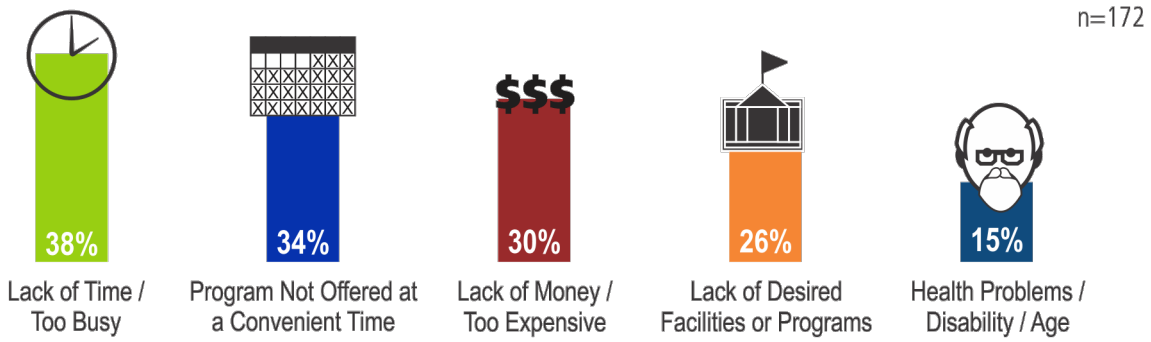
The majority of these activities took place within a park or recreation facility in St. Marys (83%), while other locations included at home (42%), at a park of facility in another municipality (25%), or at school (8%).

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



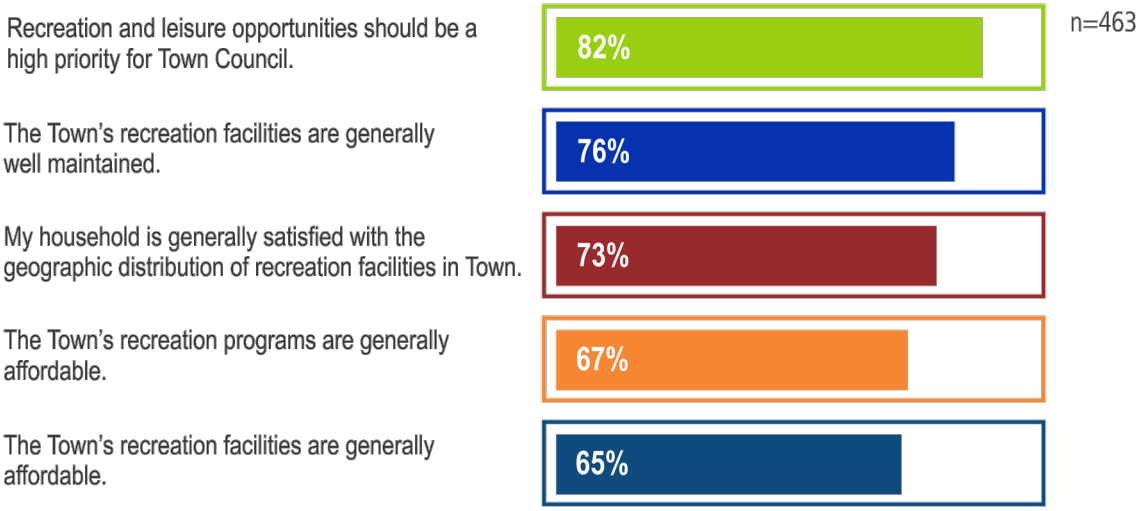
The survey revealed that one third (33%) of respondents were unable to participate in recreation and leisure activities as often as they would like. As illustrated in Figure 5, the most common barrier reported by respondents was the lack of time or being too busy (38%). This is a common challenge found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

Figure 5: Top Five Barriers to Participation in Recreation and Leisure Activities, Past 12 Months



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

Figure 6: Agreement with Various Statements



Importance and Satisfaction with Recreation and Leisure Opportunities

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

Figure 7: Importance and Satisfaction with Recreation and Leisure Facilities

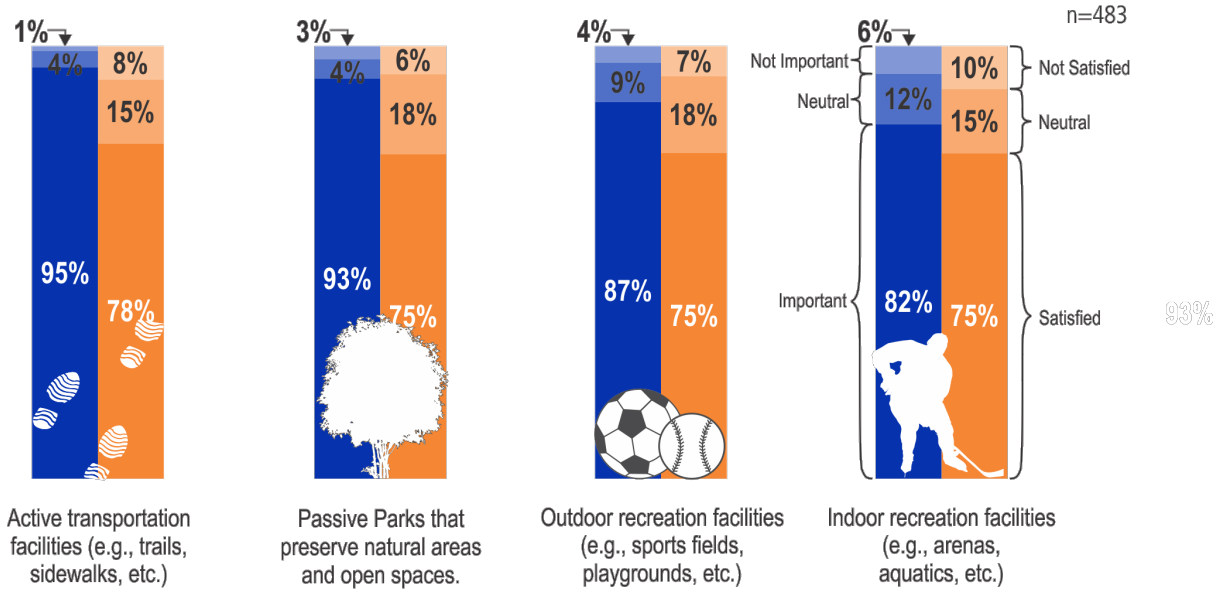
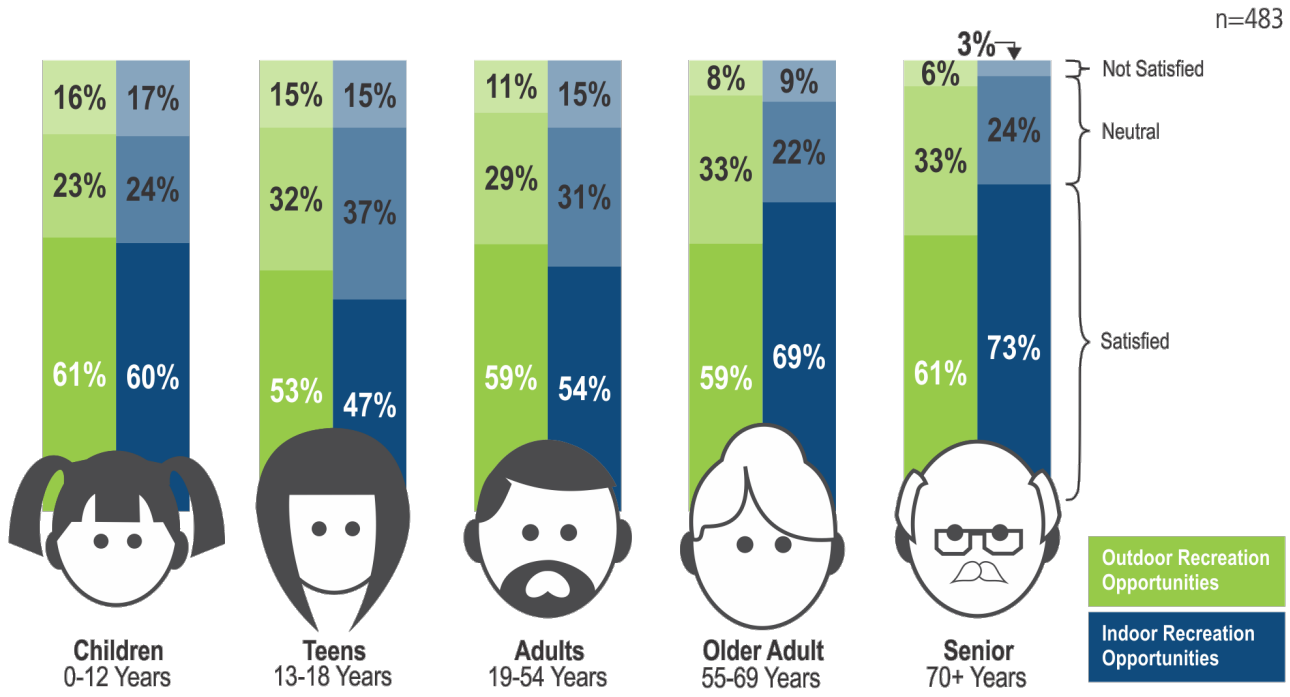


Figure 8 summarizes respondents' satisfaction levels with respect to outdoor and indoor recreation and leisure opportunities, by age group. With respect to outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities, respondents' satisfaction levels were generally balanced across each age group. Respondents were most satisfied with outdoor recreation opportunities for children (age 0-12) and seniors (age 70+) (61%), this is followed closely by satisfaction levels for adults (age 19-54) and older adults (age 55-69) (59%). Outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities for teens (age 13-18) had the lowest levels of satisfaction (53%).

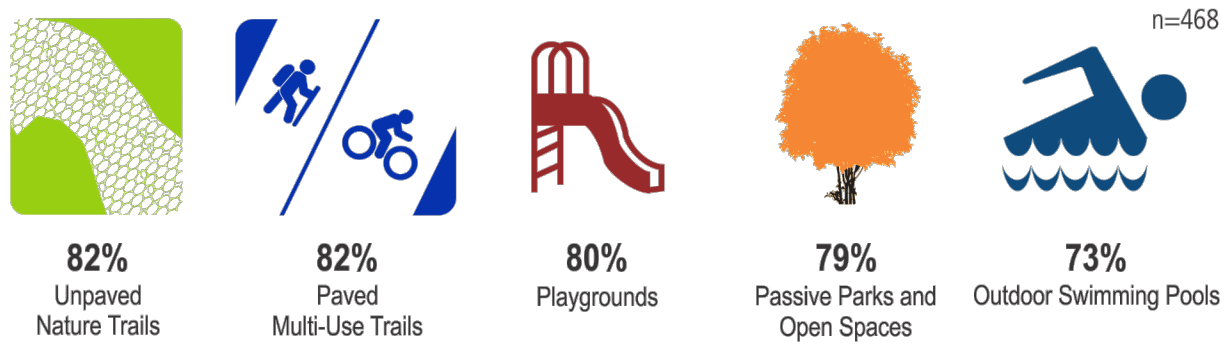
More varied satisfaction levels were observed for indoor recreation and leisure opportunities. Respondents were most satisfied with the indoor recreation and leisure opportunities for seniors (age 70+) (73%), followed by older adults (age 55-69) (69%), children (age 0-12) (60%), and adults (age 19-54)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

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



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

Figure 9: Top Five Facility Priorities for Additional Spending



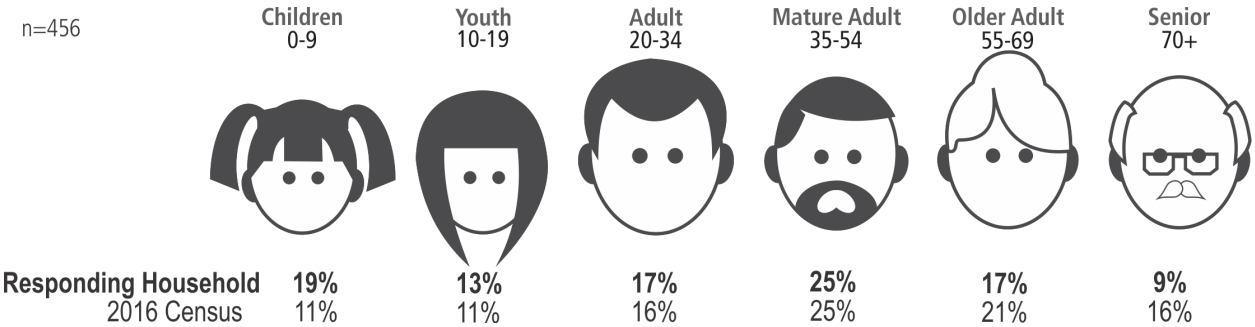
Summary of Survey Respondents

Responding households were over represented in children, youth, and adult age groups, and under-represented in mature adults, older adults and seniors (Figure 10). The average household size of respondents was 3.1 persons, which is greater compared to the 2011 Census (2.4 persons per private household). This is common in other communities that complete a survey of this type as households with children and youth are more likely to complete a self-administered survey regarding recreation and leisure opportunities. Additionally, the median age was 46 years, which is slightly higher compared to the median reported in the 2016 Census (44.4 years) (the average was 45 years).

The average household size of respondents was 3.1 persons, which is greater compared to the 2011 Census (2.4 persons per private household).

The median age of respondent was 46. Slightly higher compared to the 2011 Census (44.4 years).

Figure 10: Demographic Composition of Responding Households



3.4 Stakeholder Group Survey

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

Table 3: Respondents to the Stakeholder Group Survey

Stakeholder Group Survey Participants	
Arena Groups • St. Marys Minor Hockey Association • St. Marys Model T's Hockey Club	• St. Marys NBC Hockey Club • St. Marys Ringette Association
Outdoor Sports Groups • St. Marys Minor Soccer • St. Marys Minor Ball Association	• St. Marys Social Tennis Club
Service Clubs and Other Providers • McConnell Club • Rotary Club of St. Marys	• St. Marys Community Players • The Friendship Centre

Themes from Arena Groups

- Suggested improvements to the Pyramid Recreation Centre arenas included larger and additional storage spaces, providing free use of meeting rooms, a smoother ice surface, and an improved score-keeping system.

- The need to improve communication between the Town and arena groups was suggested, including the need to hold an annual or bi-annual meeting with sports groups to discuss issues, challenges, and areas for improvement.

- The scheduling of ice was raised as a concern by some groups. There were requests for earlier ice times and it was suggested that blackout periods should not negatively impact practices and games.

Themes from Outdoor Sports Groups

- Suggested improvements to St. Marys' outdoor sports fields included providing access to washrooms and shade shelters, particularly at the Baseball Hall of Fame, as well as for additional storage space and enhancing the general quality of soccer fields.

- A multi-use gymnasium was requested to accommodate indoor sports such as basketball, pickleball, and soccer.

- Some of the concerns raised by groups included securing enough facility time, attracting and securing volunteers, and costs associated with facility maintenance and paying coaches and referees, while maintaining affordable registration costs.

Themes from Service Clubs and Other Providers

- Suggestions to improve the facilities at the Pyramid Recreation Centre included upgrading the sound equipment and keeping rental costs low.

- Suggestions to enhance the facilities at the Town Hall auditorium included installing air conditioning, updating the kitchen, and constructing additional washrooms.

3.5 Town Staff Workshop and Interviews with Key Opinion Leaders

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

Figure 11: Staff's Vision for the Future

Highlights of Recreation and Leisure Services in St. Marys

- There is great pride in the recreation and parks facilities.

- There are a wide range of program opportunities for residents of all ages.

Improving the Use of Existing Recreation Spaces

- The challenges rest with maximizing the use of the recreation centre during all prime and non-prime hours. It was indicated that a development plan for the quarry might increase utilization and become a tourist attraction.

Partnerships

- The partnership with the school board is strong and reciprocal use is mostly seen in the schools using the recreation facility. After school programming is a success with children walking to the recreation centre to receive supervision and get involved with a good choice of activities. The schools are supportive in promoting recreation activities within their current communication channels. A reciprocal use agreement between the Town of St. Marys and the Public School Board is under development.

- There have been no formal discussions to date with the Y as to the use of space in the recreation centre for YMCA programming.

- The Library and Recreation staff are beginning to have discussions about the types of programming each should manage to reduce duplication and maximize participation.

Enhancing Communications and Public Education

- There is a belief that formalized internal communications could strengthen the delivery of services through better coordination of efforts. Further it was felt that a better understanding of the costs to provide services would create an opportunity to examine further efficiencies.

- Participants in the staff workshops and key opinion leader interviews felt that there are not enough residents using the recreation centre.

- Staff believe that greater out-reach and public education might help residents see the value in participation and better understand the opportunities within the centre.

- There is an appreciation for the communications support that is being provided to the department.

- There are varying levels of support for a Recreation Centre Advisory Committee. There is a common belief that a terms of reference could articulate the responsibilities of the committee and staff and ensure that the community uses the facility to a greater extent.

Measuring Performance

- The Department tracks many statistics in order to monitor the use of programs and camps, and to keep a record of concerns and complaints.

Pyramid Recreation Centre

4.0 Services Delivery Assessment

The review of the recreation and leisure programs and services is a key component of the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan. It is essential that high quality programs and services be available to residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. A wide range of choice of opportunities will ensure that residents can be active and engaged within the community. The Town is not required to be the direct provider of all programs and services; however, staff must be aware of the needs and enable a coordinated, cohesive delivery system.

The Service Review is aligned to deliver upon the goals of the Town's Strategic Plan specific to recreation and leisure services. The recently updated Strategic Master Plan (2017) recognises the importance of recreation in the community and strives to ensure that services are delivered in a fiscally sustainable manner. The following Strategic Pillar and Initiatives capture Council's direction in the Strategic Master Plan that is aligned with the work of this Master Plan in whole or in part.

St. Marys Strategic Plan Revision and Update
Strategic Pillar 4 - Culture and Recreation

Readjusting existing recreational services to a more scale-appropriate level will result in savings for the Town by enabling it to reallocate funding to other priorities. In some cases, volunteers and private sector can take on leadership or partnership roles for the delivery of some recreational services that are underutilized. Moreover, as culture is being positioned as a vital economic driver, some of these tactics are complementary with both the re-profiling of the Town and economic development.

Strategic Priority – Repurposing the Pyramid Recreation Centre

Outcome Statement

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

Short-term Initiatives

- Align the future of the Pyramid Recreation Centre with the findings of the Recreation Services Master Plan

Mid-term Initiatives

- If space remains, investigate the options of hosting additional library programming at the Pyramid Recreation Centre through an integrated planning program strategy.
- Determine the full cost of relocating some of the Town's community services including a retrofit to the Pyramid Recreation Centre.
- Investigate the ability to attract the YMCA or any other organization to locate to the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

Source: Town of St. Marys Strategic Plan (2017).

The Strategic Plan is quite clear in its instruction to investigate methods to work with community partners to reduce the fiscal burden of the Pyramid Recreation Centre, while ensuring that all residents of St. Marys have access to an appropriate range of recreation and sport activities.

4.1 Service Review Focus

The Service Review entails capturing the status of recreation service delivery, identifying the existing strengths and challenges as well as an analysis of what approaches may improve service delivery more effectively for the residents. This review includes an analysis of:

a) Current and potential role of the municipality in the delivery of recreation services;
b) Available programs and opportunities for all age groups, utilization of major facilities;
c) Current revenues and expenses for key services;
d) Partnerships and relationships that could further add to recreation and leisure service delivery;
e) Opportunities to generate possible budgets savings;
f) Governance Opportunities;
g) Administrative capacity; and
h) Annual Performance Measures

4.2 Service Review Methodology

The service delivery and recreation program assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the Town of St. Marys continues to meet the needs of the residents and reflects the elements of a high performing Community Services Department. The review process includes a comparison of existing program and service provision approaches to industry standards, trends, best practises and strongly considers community, Council, public, opinion leader and staff input garnered through various engagement initiatives. The following is an outline of the service review and assessment process, which is illustrated in (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Service Review Methodology

Step One: Review of the Public Facing Service Delivery Model – A synthesized description of the service delivery model as the public views it. An analysis of the current strengths and challenges.

Step Two: The Recreation Program Assessment – An audit of St. Marys practises against high performing parks and recreation standards including a comparison of the work of the Community Services Department as compared to the expectations housed in the Framework for Recreation in Canada "Pathways to Wellness". An indication of current strengths, challenges and subsequent recommendations in each of three key result areas.

Step Three: Clear Departmental Vision, Mission and Goals – An articulation of Departmental vision and mission statements, guiding principles, and key result areas that focus on priorities and will serve residents well into the future.

Step Four: Development of Meaningful Actions – Meaningful recommendations to ensure that recreation and leisure services are sustainable into the future. Realistic recommendations are offered considering staffing levels, the size of the community and the primary concerns of the public.

Step Five: Implementation Plan and Performance Measures –The recommendations are prioritized and offered in the sequence in which they might be executed in either short, mid-range or longer-term timeframes. Performance measures are developed to ensure that the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan is meeting its goals and objectives in a timely manner, to ensure continued transparency and provide a sound communications tool.

4.3 Service Delivery Model

Current Role of the Municipality

Recreation and leisure services are delivered and enabled in most municipalities across Ontario. Councils recognize the importance of an active and engaged community in developing and sustaining a strong and vibrant municipality. A dynamic and coordinated delivery system generates community pride and cohesion and provides support to residents to be active and live their best life. The way in which services are delivered vary from the direct provision of all services by the municipality to the enabling provision by community and stakeholder groups to a combination of both approaches. The role of the municipality is to ensure that this fulsome range of leisure choices are offered by community groups, not for profit / charitable organizations, by other related agencies, and the municipality. Further, the municipality should determine what the core levels of service should be (in concert with the community), provide relevant infrastructure, a sound and fair policy framework and open and transparent governance to ensure that all groups and organizations can work collectively toward the goal of an active and engaged community.

Typically, communities enable various methods to ensure that residents can enjoy active and healthy lifestyles. Council must ensure that these approaches are sustainable over time and can adapt to changing conditions like population growth, income disparity, diversity and varying backgrounds of residents. The role of the municipality is to anticipate and plan for these changes and develop the tools necessary to be proactive and respond in partnership with other providers. Most successful communities demonstrate strong communications, promotion and awareness of opportunities, the development of a common vision and guiding principles, partnerships, joint development and planning initiatives, start-up funding for new initiatives and evaluation mechanisms. The most proactive municipalities continuously have their pulse on the community, build cohesion and a sense of purpose with all providers and move toward the same vision and goals. The collective evaluates the complete system to proactively respond to trends and current and anticipated issues. This is the ideal approach and requires dedication by Council, staff, volunteers, community stakeholder groups, other levels of government and the business community.

Specifically, the role of the municipality is to:

- Understand the demographic and growth patterns of the community and any changes that are upcoming;
- Promote the benefits of being active in recreational and leisure activities;
- Develop a joint vision with community stakeholders so that everyone can play their part in contributing to the vision;
- Develop a multi-year plan that provides focus on clear priorities;

- Identify social issues that can be addressed through the provision of services (poverty reduction, reduction in youth related substance abuse, reduction of social isolation, increased levels of education, reduction in anxiety and depression etc.).
- Develop a policy framework that enables equitable delivery of service and reaches out to marginalized populations;
- Provide/enable a full range of programs and activities based on community need and preference;
- Work with community partners to sustain a full breadth of opportunities;
- Ensure that the infrastructure is adequate, well maintained and provides safe experiences;
- Comply with legislative requirements in all aspects of service delivery and facility and parks provision;
- Provide and enable fiscal, human and physical resources; and
- Measure performance and evaluate services to continually improve policies, practises and most importantly increase participation.

Service Delivery Model

The Town, together with local community groups and organizations, offer residents many choices in recreation, leisure, cultural, sport and active pursuits. There is a variety of choices between physical activity, performing and creative arts, heritage, literacy and sports. The recreation and leisure delivery system is both proactive and responsive to current needs, the age of participants, new trends and strives to eliminate barriers to participation. Figure 13 illustrates the varying organizations that offer recreation and leisure pursuits in St. Marys and the choices that residents have in varying pursuits. Residents have a broad range of choices in terms of providers and activities. In a community of this size and in an environment of finite resources, it is critical for providers to work together toward one common vision. This collective approach will serve to share resources, avoid duplication, and maximize participation.

Figure 13: Recreation and Leisure Providers in St. Marys

Directly Provided Programs and Services

The current service delivery model for recreation and leisure centres around the Town's direct provision of programs and services coupled with the delivery of sport and active pursuits through community groups, not-for-profit/charitable groups, private/commercial providers and community organizations. The Community Services Department delivers programs and services that are either offered as registered programs and drop-in/casual opportunities. Staff design, develop and execute programs based on quantified resident interests and new trends. Residents register for programs and commit to attend a series of classes. Most often there is a learning and skill development continuum involved in a structured environment and many of the programs and content are standardized so the public can be guaranteed a level of service that is based on industry

standards and legislated requirements. In addition to registered programs, flexible drop-in activities are offered such as lane swim, public skating, or youth centre. Drop-in programs offer the ability to participate in a range of recreation activities without having to register beforehand. These drop-in opportunities can accommodate more participants and are generally offered at a lower cost. Drop-in opportunities are becoming more popular as lifestyles dictate the need for more casual forms of recreation.

The Museum offers programs and events that require pre-registration and more formal learning opportunities are augmented with special events and casual visits to the museum site. The Library also provides programs directly that centre on literacy the use of computers and pre-school play.

Community-Based Programs and Service Provision

Community Based Groups, Private Operators and Non-Profit Charitable Organizations

At least 15 self-governing community groups exist to provide recreation, leisure and sport opportunities in St. Marys. They are operated by community members for the most part and a tremendous amount of volunteer effort is given to ensure that residents are provided with skill development, competition where applicable, safe facilities and social opportunities. Most often the community groups pay for their use of fields and facilities and there is a range of supports provided by St. Marys including one free room rental per month at the PRC for executive meetings, display case to showcase trophies and awards, and in some cases, storage is offered (indoor groups). There are some inconsistencies in the provision of supports for some groups and an Affiliation Policy would serve to standardize these supports and clarify the rationale for some of the differences. All organizations and individuals using Town of St. Mary's facilities agree to abide by a common code of conduct called the RZone, which promotes respect and responsibility.

Main Hall – Friendship Centre

Private Operators follow the market and offer classes in various activities that are commercially viable. The municipality does not generally compete with private enterprise. Often staff will provide space to private instructors and share the surplus revenues; this contains costs for the municipality in terms of hiring, training and supervising costs.

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth is a charitable organization that works diligently to engage marginalized segments of the population. The organization leases space at St. Marys Memorial Hospital to provide membership based recreation and social/employment supports, including a fitness centre, and ancillary programs and services to members of all ages and abilities.

Partnerships

Partnerships are a strong part of a recreation delivery system and they are evident in St. Marys. One example of many is the Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) Camps. St. Marys provides space for the camp to exist and the camp is run by the organization allowing an exciting opportunity for children and youth to learn paddle boarding in a safe environment. The Town avoids the capital cost of equipment as well as staff and supply costs. This is a good example of a partnership that is effective and serves both parties well.

St. Marys Grant Program

The Town's grant program assists in the sustainability of special events, start up community groups and related initiatives. These investments are critical to the success of volunteer driven activities.

Observations

- The community input received on the delivery system included comments from some groups that communications could improve to inform groups and the public of opportunities but as well to keep informed and have formalized opportunities for input.

- The most effective recreation delivery systems work as a collective (public, volunteer, community, charitable and private providers) toward a common vision, each playing their role and working collectively to address current issues.

- There are differing approaches to the expectations of the community based organizations. These variances were mentioned in the input sessions and should be addressed to ensure equitable treatment of volunteer based community groups.

Recommendations – Service Delivery Model

1. Provide opportunities for all recreation, leisure and sport services providers to gather bi-annually (at a minimum) to discuss joint vision, guiding principles, and strategic priorities for recreation and leisure in St. Marys. Other opportunities should include the ability to share resources and training opportunities, engage in joint planning, marketing, better understand total market penetration, legislative compliance and reduce duplication where it exists.

2. Complete an annual analysis of trends, social issues, community priorities and determine the opportunities that are offered through other accessible organizations. Offer programs where there are gaps in the fulsome provision of programs and services.

3. Develop an Affiliation Policy to ensure that all volunteer based community groups are supported in a consistent fashion.

4.4 Recreation Services Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

The Service Review research, consultation and analysis has resulted in the challenge of synthesizing this information into a go forward strategy that will provide focus on priorities and result in a more engaged community and sustainable delivery system. The development of a vision, mission, guiding principles and key result areas provides a synopsis of this assessment.

Vision Statement

A **vision statement** describes what parks and recreation services contributes to the residents and the community. It defines what the services are seeking to achieve now and into the future. The following vision statement is proposed to guide recreation and leisure services in St. Marys. For branding purposes, this vision statement could be shorten to: "St. Marys Recreation and Leisure – Active. Engaged. Healthy".

St. Marys Vision for Recreation and Leisure Services

St. Marys' residents are active, engaged and healthy through participating in recreation, sport and outdoor activities.

Mission Statement

The following **mission statement** briefly describes the purpose of the Town's Community Services Department, how it goes about its work and the needs that it fulfills.

Community Services Department Mission Statement

St. Marys' Community Services Department works closely with community partners to reflect resident's needs in order to provide a choice of active, creative and passive recreational opportunities. St. Marys wants to ensure that all residents are living their best lives.

Guiding Principles

The vision and mission statements inherently set out the parameters for the Town's role in delivering recreation and leisure services. The Department's mandate and role will further be advanced through the following guiding principles, which are core direction statements intended to advance and support the Town's role in community service delivery. They emphasize the values that staff and community partners will embrace as they work together to provide a range of active, creative, and passive opportunities. The guiding principles are largely complementary and they should be read and interpreted as a set, rather than as separate, isolated statements.

Pyramid Recreation Centre

Inclusion and Access – Special efforts will be taken to include marginalized residents in recreational opportunities.

All Life Stages and Ages – Recreation services will be developed and offered considering the needs of all ages of residents.

Integrated Service Delivery – Community partners will work together and each play their part in providing recreation programs and services. The Town will work with community organizations to increase recreation and leisure opportunities for all residents.

Participation – All efforts are made to encourage residents to lead active lifestyles to gain the physical, social, psychological and emotional benefits.

Quality Experiences – All participants will enjoy their experiences through the implementation of strong customer service.

Fiscal Sustainability – Given the population, St. Marys will provide an appropriate scale of recreational opportunities based on demographics and probable participation rates and will seek to recover a portion of costs where applicable and appropriate.

4.5 Key Result Areas

The Service Review has uncovered three areas where focused efforts must be placed to align with the strategic directions of St. Marys over the course of the planning period. The three key result areas include:

- Programs and Services for All
- Fiscal Sustainability
- Organizational Effectiveness and Governance

Key Result Area One: Programs and Services for All

Goal Statement: Ensure that all residents are included and have a variety of choices to participate in recreation, sport, creative, historical and literary pursuits; special efforts are made to include marginalized populations. A minimum of 50% of each age group participates in a program, active opportunity of their choice.

Variety of Choice for All Age Groups

With a Census population of 7,265 residents, the Town recognizes the importance of active engagement in recreation and leisure pursuits. All efforts must be employed to ensure that there is a variety of choice within the menu of activities, safe and quality services are provided and further that special efforts are undertaken to include marginalized residents. Citizens should have a variety of choices that include active, creative, sport and/or passive opportunities. These opportunities are available in the community and are offered by the municipality, the YMCA, the Museum, Library and community groups.

Articulation of Core Recreation and Leisure Services

The consultation process to support the development of the master plan unveiled a need to articulate an appropriate range of services considering the size of the municipality and the ongoing sustainability from a budget perspective.

Core services can be defined as programs and services providing the greatest amount of return in benefits to the community and to individuals. Often core services are aligned with strategic initiatives or social issues facing the community (inactivity and obesity, youth engagement, social isolation in older adults, health and wellness, drowning prevention, lifelong learning etc.). Identifying core services tend to balance available resources with demand within the community. They provide a return on the investment and are generally subsidized as required.

Non-core services that do not provide a direct positive outcome or benefit should only be maintained if they provide a fiscal benefit to offset the costs of other core services. Programs for elite or advanced participants and/or exclusive use (Clubs) or ancillary services such as canteens are considered non-core and are required to be cost recoverable to profit generating. Articulating a set of core services is not intended to revisit Council's current "Cost Recovery "philosophy but to focus resources where they can gain the most benefit.

It should be noted that the municipality does not have to offer core or non-core services directly. The following set of core services is offered for consideration and further discussion between the Town and the public:

1. **Physical Activity** – Improvement of resident's Physical Activity levels – frequency, duration and intensity.

2. **Water Safety** – Every resident can learn how to swim; every family knows the importance of being safe in and around water.

3. **Children and Youth** – Children and youth engagement in recreational activities is paramount to ensuring that youth have the best future life opportunities.

4. **Aging Population –** Elders are active and engaged in leisure pursuits.

5. **Including Marginalized Populations –** Efforts to include all residents will enhance the overall health and vibrancy of St. Marys.

6. **Sport Development** – Every resident has the opportunity to participate in a variety of community based sports.

7. **Culture and Heritage Appreciation** – Every resident appreciates St. Marys heritage and founding cultural practices.

8. **Lifelong Learning** – Literacy and lifelong learning supports self-development and continuous improvement.

9. **Getting Outdoors** – It is critical to the health of individuals and the community to be outdoors in natural settings.

10. **Community Development** – Efforts are made to engage the community to increase the capacity to enable recreation and leisure activities.

Summary of Current Directly Offered Programs and Services

Table 4 captures the growth of registered or formal programs and services over the last three years per age grouping. A review of the offerings made to include all age groups has shown positive results. Each age group has a choice of programs that provide learning and engagement opportunities in sports, leisure pursuits, literacy, heritage and creative and passive activities. This table captures a sampling of participation in registered and casual opportunities offered by St. Marys staff, the Friendship Centre, the Library and the Museum. The analysis shows that there has been growth in most program areas for each age group and family opportunities. St. Marys is engaging more residents through outreach, increased marketing and providing quality services.

Table 4: Participation in Registered Programs and Services, by Age Group, 2014-2016

Age Group	2016	2015	2014	% Change
Children and Youth (Age 0 – 19)				
Aquatics	1,396	1,517	1,363	2%
General Programs	349	349	432	-19%
Museum (field trips)	1,003	797	854	17%
Camps	1,350	1,753	1,391	-3%
School Break Camp	251	303	227	11%
Library	295*	295*	295*	0%
Sub-Total	**4,644**	**5,014**	**4,562**	**2%**
Adults (Age 20 – 50)				
General Programs	31,281	28,516	26,814	17%
Museum Seminars	264	201	183	44%
Sub-Total	**31, 545**	**28,717**	**26,997**	**17%**
Older Adults and Seniors (Age 55+)				
Aquatics Aquafit	625/ week	570 /week	523/week	20%
Home Support**	859	925	757	13%
Friendship Centre Annual Memberships/Clients	343	345	298	15%
Museum – Seniors Outreach	523	388	263	99%
Sub-Total	**2,350**	**2,228**	**1,841**	**28%**
Family Opportunities				
Special Events	1,437	1,377	1,392	3%
Melodies at the Museum	710	335	280	154%
Sub-Total	**2,147**	**1,712**	**1,672**	**28%**
Total	**40,686**	**37,671**	**35,072**	**17%**

*** Average attendance in 2016 weekly programs – attendance figures not kept in 2014 and 2015.**
** Total number of recipients.

Marginalized Groups That Require Greater Outreach

The Town strives to ensure that all residents have access to recreation and leisure opportunities. Some resident groups may have difficulty in accessing services and staff must be proactive in reaching out to marginalized populations versus being passive about their engagement.

Persons with Disabilities

It is estimated that there are approximately 1,100 St. Marys residents with disabilities (derived by applying the provincial rate of 15.4% to the Town's 2016 Census population). The Community Services Department works to include persons with disabilities by training staff, working with community support groups and including caregivers in programs where appropriate. A policy outlining the goals of the department and its approach to inclusion would be appropriate in informing residents and ensuring that staff and volunteers are trained and have the right supports.

Female Participation

While just over half of the population is female, female youth often drop out of organized activities. Best practises include developing opportunities for females or for those who identify as females to develop programs and services that are designed around their specific needs. The Service Review did not have the data to differentiate between male and female participants however this phenomenon is evident in most municipalities in Ontario and Canada. The guidance offered is to monitor participation of all sport, recreation and leisure opportunities in St. Marys to sustain a gender balance of opportunities and participation.

Residents from Lower Income Backgrounds

Statistics Canada identified that 9% of residents of the Town's residents live in lower income households, which equates to approximately 600 residents. In 2016, 333 residents applied and received financial assistance which is a positive outcome of the promotion of the Financial Assistance Program. The Canadian Tire Jumpstart program has provided the necessary funding to assist those in need.

A promising practise in many communities is to work together with other and related agencies to ensure that there is coordination in providing support services to persons from low income backgrounds. For example, Durham Region has developed an initiative called "Advancing Access to Affordable Recreation in Durham". All municipalities in the region as well as Public Health, Social Services, Children's Services and all non-profit and charitable organizations have worked diligently to reduce barriers to participation. One of the more promising approaches is that social workers have been trained in the benefits of participation in recreation pursuits and encourage Ontario Works clients to gain access through the various financial assistance programs.

Youth Engagement Priority

St. Mary's Council has placed a priority on youth and ensuring that they can continue to be engaged in the community over time. Recreation and leisure opportunities play a role in engaging youth by ensuring that they have support to:

- Be active and safe in supportive environments;
- Have caring leaders who encourage self-efficacy and discovery;
- Participate in a range of activities that are self-directed;
- Gain leadership opportunities through community engagement, addressing social issues, getting engaged in community service and volunteerism; and
- Advocate on behalf of youth needs within the community

To this end, the Playworks Partnership was developed to ensure that youth have supportive environments and a voice in communities. The Playworks Partnership consist of 6 organizations and institutions that support youth development, engagement and leadership opportunities including 4H-Ontario, Ontario Physical Health Educators Association, Parks and Recreation Ontario, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada – Central Region, and the YMCA of Ontario. The Partnership has completed extensive research as to what approaches will keep youth engaged and consider communities "youth friendly". The Youth Friendly Communities Initiative lists 16 criteria that communities can employ toward this end. Communities address these criteria and apply for Youth Friendly Community status in either Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum levels pending on how many of the 16 criteria the respective community can attain. The designation entitles the community to post standardized road signs at strategic locations throughout the town/city. The criteria are currently under review and will be modified by the Fall of 2017. This has been a worthwhile initiative as youth are engaged in making their community become more youth friendly. Over 10% of municipalities in Ontario have received the Youth Friendly designation to date.

St. Marys as a Youth Employer and Youth Engagement Initiatives

One of the reasons most often cited by youth as to why they leave communities is a lack of employment opportunities. The Community Services Department promotes the Partners in Employment support program and respective supports that are offered including resume writing, employee rights, interview techniques, etc. This promotional material is available at the Customer Service Desk at the PRC. The Community Service Department is most likely one of the employers of the greatest number of youth in St. Marys with 50 youth hired annually to provide various programs and services. The value of offering these leadership opportunities

cannot be understated and youth employment is a strong benefit to not only these individuals but to the community as a whole. Any options to work with other partners to provide services must protect these employment opportunities for youth.

Promising Practise – Youth Workers

The use of Youth Workers to engage youth has been a promising practise employed throughout Ontario for the last 25 years. The Ministry of Children and Youth – Youth Action Plan states the importance of Youth Workers in communities. Youth Workers engage youth to assist with any issues by connecting them with the right resources but also engage youth in positive behaviours and an active lifestyle. The work that the Community Services Department is doing to engage youth is proving successful. The Supervisor of Youth Services is reaching out to youth and providing opportunities that they have identified. Subsequently the participation at the Youth Centre and within youth oriented programs is increasing.

Friends of the St. Marys Youth Centre and Youth Council

St. Marys' staff support the development and ongoing engagement of two committees to ensure that youth services remain viable and sustainable. The development of the Friends of the St. Marys Youth Centre and Youth Advisory Committee involves engagement of both adults and youth to develop events, fundraise, and best understand the current issues that youth face in the community. This is a very positive approach in listening and acting on youth driven concerns and needs.

Utilization of Facilities – During Prime-Time Hours 2016

Measuring the utilization of facilities is one indication of the response of the community to the various facility types. The utilization rate is arrived as a percentage of the hours available that are used for either direct programming, rentals, permits or casual and drop in uses. A sampling of the utilization of major facilities is offered to determine where facilities can accommodate additional uses and serve a greater percentage of the population. Prime time hours are defined as early evenings Monday through Friday and all-day Saturday and Sunday (during the respective season per the facility type). All facilities and parks amenities in the following table can accommodate additional uses. The pool and ice pads have the greatest utilization of all facility types, however on average there are 13 available prime hours per week available for the pool and approximately five hours of prime time use per week available in the arena.

Table 5: Summary of Facility Utilization during Prime-Time Hours, 2016

Facility	Prime Time Hours Available	Hours Utilized	Unused Prime Time Hours	Utilization Rate
Pool	4,550	3,850	700	85%
Arenas (2016/17 season)	1,082	889	193	82%
Community Halls /Gyms (2)	7750	2,243	5,507	29%
Lit Soccer Fields (1)	960	245	715	26%
Multi-Purpose Meeting Rooms (6)	14,700	2,517	12,183	17%
Unlit Soccer Fields (3)	2,208	318	1,890	14%
Junior Soccer Fields (2)	1,472	0	1,472	0%
Ball Diamonds Lit	5,224	1,891	3,352	36%
Ball Diamonds Unlit	5,094	1,620	3,474	32%

Observations

- There is a fulsome range of recreation and leisure opportunities available for residents of all ages in St. Marys. These are either offered through the municipality or related agencies and community organizations.

- Staff and organizations are nimble and keep track of trends and offer current high interest activities.

- Participation is increasing in most St. Marys recreation and leisure opportunities for residents of all ages; overall participation has increased by 28% of the programs and services that were sampled.

- There is no current articulation of what the Town considers cores service in the delivery of recreation and leisure. This review has suggested a set of core services and outcomes for consideration.

- With a Census population of 7,265 residents, there are many service providers of recreation and leisure programs. There is no current understanding of the market penetration of each organization and of the possibilities that could be achieved by working better together.

- There is no intentional strategy in place to include marginalized residents including but not limited to persons from low income backgrounds, women and girls and persons with disabilities at a minimum.

- The Community Services Department staff that work with children are trained in the principles of healthy child development through the High Five initiative offered by Parks and Recreation Ontario.

- The community is aging and the capacity to engage older adults will be important over the course of the next 2-3 decades. Space is not an issue at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and a self-sufficient /cost recovered programming is already in place. Parks and Recreation Ontario is developing a quality assurance program for the delivery of programs and services for older adults called Active Aging – it will be important for staff to be trained in these principles and audit process as soon as it becomes available.

- While youth engagement and participation is increasing, there are other approaches that the Town can take to keep youth engaged and be considered a youth friendly community.

- Offering a range of free, low fee and for fee programs will result in higher participation rates and greater coordination is needed by the various service providers.

Pyramid Recreation Centre

Recommendations – Service Delivery Model

4. Test the list of Recreation and Leisure Core Services offered in the Master Plan with the public to ensure that these are reflective of their needs. Further ensure that Non-Core services are fully cost recoverable to profit making to offset costs of Core Services.

5. Develop an Access Policy to Recreation that is proactive in engaging and supporting marginalized populations.

6. Implement the Parks and Recreation Ontario's High 5 Active Aging quality assurance program as it applies to providing/enabling recreational opportunities to older adults.

7. Work with other recreation and leisure providers to develop a level of service for each discipline (aquatics, programs, camps, etc.) and age group. Further discuss the primary organization to provide the suggested level of service with a view to decreasing duplication and sharing resources.

8. Implement, where possible, the newly revised criteria of the Playworks Partnership to enable the Town of St. Marys to be designated a Youth Friendly Community.

9. Work to better understand market penetration of the various age groups in recreation and leisure services by identifying the unique clients of the various agencies and organizations offering programs and services.

10. Develop an online central data source where all programs and services regardless of the provider can be promoted. Use social media, where possible, to cross promote all opportunities.

Key Result Area Two: Fiscal Sustainability in Recreation and Leisure Services

Goal Statement: To provide a meaningful range of core services that are safe, inclusive and enjoyable considering the fiscal sustainability focus of the municipality.

Relevant Background Information

As part of the approach to provide meaningful and affordable services, Municipal recreation, leisure and parks staff look to innovative ways to reduce costs and enhance revenue streams. This tactic works well once staff fully understand the cost to provide various services and look to methods of reducing/containing costs and seeking out alternative revenue streams. The reduction in the cost per participant, or cost per an hour of ice, pool time, etc. can be achieved by addressing utility reductions, limiting hours in some cases, maximizing the use of facilities during peak times, maximizing revenue opportunities such as sponsorships, partnerships, etc. and seeking out alternate providers of services, where appropriate. St. Marys staff have employed these approaches and continually seek ways of improving the participant experience while containing costs.

The Recreation Task Force (2012)

A community-driven organization known as the Recreation Task Force was struck in 2012 to identify cost containment measures as well as some standards in cost recovery. The task force made six monetary and four non-monetary recommendations:

1. **Temporary Closure of PRC Aquatic Facility with the Task Force recommending two options to be considered in temporarily closing the facility: (a) Two Year Full Closure; and (b) Three Month (Spring/Summer) Seasonal Closure.**

    a. Since the 2012 Report, The access to aquatic opportunities during the proposed closure was, in part, to be accommodated and contingent on Cadzow Pool and the Quarry remaining open in the summer. However, since the time of this recommendation, Cadzow Pool has been closed (see Recommendation #6 of the 2012 Task Force). This closure has substantially reduced the opportunity to transition aquatics programming to outdoors during Spring/Summer months.

    b. The Town and County have been working on strategies to retain and attract youth to the community. It is important to note that recreation opportunities play a critical role in decision-making for youth/young adults in deciding upon where to live (job opportunities, housing costs, etc. also play key roles). Should the Town temporarily close the PRC Aquatic Facility, such a decision has the potential to impact this strategic direction. As stated in this Master Plan, the Town hires 50 staff (mostly youth) annually in recreation and leisure, any reduction in service such as a facility closure will reduce youth employment and may negatively impact youth staying in the community.

    c. Based on the information assembled by Town staff associated with this Master Plan, aquatic programs are being operated on a direct cost-recovery basis with the cost of staff and equipment being recovered from user fees. However, the on-going cost associated with facility operations adds to the overall deficit (heat, hydro, etc.). Should the pool be closed for a temporary time frame, either the pool water itself would continue to need to be recycled and treated thereby not resulting in the cost savings originally anticipated or the water would be drained and leaving the tank itself exposed which may impact the structural adequacy of the facility.

    d. Temporary closure of the PRC Aquatic Facility could also impact the Town's ability to retain/attract required staffing when the facility is reopened. This also applies to facility usage as a closure could alter resident usage patterns for meeting their aquatic needs or result in them not participating in aquatics creating a potential challenge in attracting residents back to the facility when opened.

    e. The PRC facility operates as a multi-use, multi-generational facility which is highly valued by the community (as per the community consultation undertaken during the preparation of the Master Plan). The temporary operational removal of the Aquatics Facility could negatively impact other programs offered at the PRC which benefit from co-location, visibility, cross-training, etc. In addition, temporary closure of the pool would push existing Aquatic Facility users to other facilities in adjacent municipalities during the interim. There is no certainty that these users will return to St. Marys once the Aquatic Facility is reopened, thus further impacting usage levels (and revenue) over the long term.

    f. The 2012 Task Force did not comment on the potential for a partnership approach to operating the Aquatic Facility and/or other components associated with the PRC. As recommended in this Master Plan **(Recommendation #34)**, a third-party facility operator/partner is recommended to be pursued by the Town to assist in off-setting the operating deficit of the PRC Aquatic Facility which would result in the continued operation of the facility (without temporary closure) while retaining the aquatic service to the Town's residents.

g. The Task Force recommendation #6 regarding the future of Cadzow Pool was affected by the Town's decision to close/decommission this outdoor pool. The Task Force indicated that if the Town were not to temporarily close the PRC Pool then the Cadzow Pool should be permanently decommissioned.

2. **Eliminate Town Operated Kitchen and Catering Services**

   a. This Task Force recommendation was to permanently eliminate the kitchen operations. To date, the catering services have been eliminated and staff hours reduced from 40 to 25 hours per week. The operation manages four dining programs for older adults, one breakfast program for school aged children and some other internal functions. The kitchen has a current deficit of $18,200 / year. The Master Plan recognizes that food services is not a core service for the Town and, as part of **Recommendation #13**, recommends food services cost reductions/revenue enhancements as part of an overall Service Review and Business Plan for the PRC. Further the Master Plan makes specific reference to food services that "*cost containment measures as well as cost recovery efforts must be made to reduce the budget to at least a break-even scenario. Should this not be achievable, the attainment of an alternate provider at no net cost to the operating budget should be undertaken*". This is consistent with the general direction provided in the 2012 Task Force report.

3. **Three Month Spring/Summer Seasonal Closure of Both Ice Pads at the PRC for 1 Season** - This recommendation was for a period of one year (although 2 years was considered by the Task Force, bookings for the ice were already in place for the summer of 2012).

   a. This recommendation has been fully implemented by the Town and a Corporate savings of approximately $50,000 has been realized. It is noted that while the Task Force estimated that the savings would be $121,800, the arena staff were moved out to the parks system and therefore the amount of Corporate savings was not fully realized as anticipated by the Task Force. That said, the Town has continued to close both ice pads during this three month spring/summer season realizing on-going savings or cost reductions beyond the one-year time frame originally recommended by the Task Force.

4. **Cost Recovery for User Groups to a Minimum of 50% of Annual Operating Budget**

   a. User fees and rental rates are evaluated by the Town annually and increases are recommended, where possible, without overtaxing volunteer community groups. The focus of the 2012 Task Force was primarily on baseball, slo-pitch, lawn bowling, and curling – primarily where there is a club in existence. The notion of cost recovery is typically articulated in a Pricing Policy once all true costs are known with various levels of cost recovery based on whether the club focuses on children and youth or an adult population. During the preparation of this Master Plan, an analysis has shown that there are still subsidies provided by the municipality for baseball, soccer and tennis.

   b. The Master Plan has provided commentary and a recommendation associated with understanding the 'true cost' of individual units of service in order to develop a Pricing Policy (**Recommendation #12**) that takes into account actual costs to the Town and appropriate levels of cost recovery. At the time of writing this Master Plan, the Town's accounting systems were not in place to determine actual units of service costs. However, aligning with this

direction will better position the Town to understand true costs and determine appropriate cost recovery levels (consistent with the general intent of the 2012 Task Force).

5. **Friendship Centre Operating Deficit Must Be Reduced**

    a. The Town contributes $23,000 annually to the Friendship Centre as this is a requirement to qualify for the Elderly Persons Centre grant program. Efforts to recover the full cost of critical services provided to older adults by contract are recommended as these do not include the operational costs of the Friendship Centre at this point. The Master Plan recommends (**Recommendation #13**) that contracted services at the Friendship Centre be investigated as part of an overall Service Review and Business Plan for the PRC.

6. **Cadzow Pool** – The 2012 Task Force recommended this facility remain seasonally operational until such time that capital improvements are required to keep Cadzow open. When capital improvements are necessary, or if the recommended temporary closure of the PRC pool is not undertaken Cadzow should be permanently decommissioned,

    a. The Town decided to close/decommission Cadzow Pool permanently since the 2012 Task Force report. The park site (former Cadzow location) is being redeveloped in concert with local service clubs to include new outdoor amenities including a splash pad and playground.

7. **Creation of a Recreation Advisory Board**

    a. As noted within the Master Plan, given Council's clear interest in the cost reduction efforts at the PRC and the need to maintain an engaged approach, a Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee is recommended (**Recommendation #20**). This Advisory Committee would have input into Town lead recreation and leisure opportunities, subject to the results of the possible YMCA partnership discussed within the Master Plan.

8. **Implement Accurate Management Information System (MIS) and Cost Accounting**

    a. The Task Force found it a challenge to disentangle expenditures for varying cost centres, especially utility costs within the PRC where there is not separate metering. The current financial system is capable of tracking actual costs by cost centre where staffing, overtime and fringe benefits are concerned. Separate metering of utilities within the PRC will assist with this endeavour and is not cost prohibitive.

    b. **Recommendations #12 and #13** of this Master Plan address the on-going need for the Town to determine individual units of service costs and for the creation of a formalized Business Plan for the PRC. This direction is consistent with the Task Force's recommendation.

9. **Recreation Leadership** - The Task Force recommendation was to achieve "*long term recreation sustainability*" and utilizing a "*real entrepreneurial mindset*".

    a. The Town has implemented a staff training program as part of the Business Continuity Plan. This Plan oversees regular on the job training programs as well as management training and session on First Aid, Quality Assurance (HIGH5), Wellness, First Aid, CPR, AED, and training in Legislative Requirements. Training is based on job requirements, succession planning and

required skills and competencies which are all consistent with the Task Force recommendation.

b. The Master Plan reinforces this direction through a policy on Core and Non-Core Services (**Recommendation #11**), a Service Review and Business Plan (**Recommendation #13**), and creation of a Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee (**Recommendation #20**).

10. **Alternative Sources of Recreation Funds** – the Task Force sought a renewed and on-going concentrated effort specifically to raise funds for recreation, including consideration of an endowment fund and tax reserves or tax assessment for recreation.

    a. While the Town has not moved forward on this recommendation, the Master Plan's Implementation section addresses the need for funding potential, partnerships, etc., which could include stated examples of creation of an endowment fund and creation of a capital reserve fund (**Recommendation #55**).

Other Efficiencies

Staff have implemented many more efficiencies since the Task Force completed its work and are to be commended for their continued focus on cost reduction and revenue enhancement. Through these efforts to obtain grants, sponsorships, gifts and alternate revenues such as rink board advertising, over $150,000 is captured annually using these approaches to contain operating costs. Further:

- the retrofitting of lighting reduced hydro by 50% on the ice surfaces;
- efficiencies allowed staffing reductions in events, bookings and kitchen operations (cost reduction $70,000); and
- streamlined guest services with the canteen operations (cost reduction of $15,000).

These examples demonstrate that Town staff continue to look for ways and means of being more efficient and will continue to do so.

The Value of Volunteerism

The value of volunteerism in St. Marys cannot be measured in dollars alone. The value to the community demonstrates a significant level of community engagement, ongoing support for fellow residents, strong community values and a belief that recreation and leisure in general are critical programs and services. Capturing the hours of volunteerism and placing a minimal dollar value on the work serves to capture the extent to which programs and events are augmented and potential costs are avoided. This summary does not include the numerous hours that sport and community groups volunteer to administer sport and other opportunities in the community. The municipality appreciates the level of volunteerism and could never afford to provide the full range of opportunities offered through volunteers. Table 6 indicates that the volunteerism efforts that have been captured account for over 5 full-time staff equivalents and avoids costs of over $123,000 annually. Efforts to support and invest in volunteers demonstrates a direct benefit to the community.

Table 6: Annual Volunteer Hours Worked

Service	Annual Volunteer Hours	Value at $13.00 / Hour
Aquatics	0	$0
Senior Services	7,316	$95,108
Youth Services	380	$4,940
Day Care	0	$0
Museum	1,100	$14,300
Special Events	250	$3,250
Library	447	$5,812
Parks and Trails	0	$0
Horticulture	Not Quantified	$0
Total	9,493 Hours	$123,400 (Saved)

The Pyramid Recreation Centre

The budgets for recreation and leisure are developed through projecting expenditures and revenues in two distinct cost centres; one captures the program revenues and expenditures and the other cost centre includes all operational costs (operational staff, fringe benefits, maintenance, supplies, utilities etc.). To understand the full cost of programs and services these cost centres (operations and program costs) have been combined and some sub-allocations have been made to prorate utilities and maintenance costs in one building where separate metering is not in place; this is the case for the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

The Pyramid Recreation Centre is of particular interest to Council in articulating ways to contain costs and maximize revenue streams. The following table captures the revenues, expenditures and net deficit of this facility as per the approved 2017 budget. The following budget assumptions are made:

- The Pyramid Recreation Centre hosts 6 distinct lines of business or facility components consisting of the pool, arena, community hall rentals, food services, the canteen, and the Friendship Centre.

- The budget for each facility component includes both program and operational costs as well as revenues where applicable.

- The Recreation Administration Budget includes the cost for the Director of Community Services, Program staff and a full-time Guest Services Coordinator, part-time customer service staff as well as the costs to support hall rentals and bar supplies etc. Recreation Administration and Halls are two distinct functions and the costs have been separated out to better understand the costs of the facility and its components.

- The approved Recreation Administration/Halls Budget is approved at $587,100 for 2017. $135,500 has been reallocated from that budget into Halls (15%), Arenas (35%) and the Pool (40%) to account for the costs to support facility rentals and guest service requirements.

- The facility components are not metered for utilities separately and therefore an approximation has been utilized in determining individual facility component costs. The Operational costs for staffing, fringe benefits, overtime, utilities, contracted services, snow removal have been pro-rated to the following budgets: Pool @ 45%, Arena @ 40%, Community Halls @ 8% and the Friendship Centre @7%.

This allocation has been based in consideration of the facility type, square footage of the respective areas, hours and months of operation. Staff costs, including full and part-time staff, fringe benefits and overtime have been apportioned for Operations based on the staff work tracking system considering that the arena is a 9 -month operation while the other facility components operate year-round.

- All budget figures have been provided by municipal staff, are based on the 2017 approved operating budget and figures have been rounded to the closest $100.

Table 7: Summary of 2017 Approved Budget, Pyramid Recreation Centre

Cost Centre	Revenue	Expenditures Operations	Expenditures Program	Sub-Total Expenditures	Surplus / (Deficit)
Pool	$224,300	$669,400 (45%)	$190,100	$859,500	($635,200)
Arena	$519,000	$595,100 (40%)	$33,500	$628,600	($109,600)
Recreation Administration	$0	$0	$454,600	$454,600	($454,600)
Community Hall Rentals	$100,000	$119,000 (8%)	$14,400	$133,400	($33,400)
Food Services	$50,000	$0	$68,200	$68,200	($18,200)
Canteen	$95,000	$0	$70,000	$70,000	$25,000
Friendship Centre	$619,000	$104,100 (7%)	$651,800	$755,900	($136,900)
Sub-Total PRC	$1,607,300	$1,487,600	$1,482,600	$2,970,200	($1,362,900)

Observations

The Pyramid Recreation Centre net deficit accounts for 70% of the total deficit St. Marys incurs for the Community Services Department. It is appropriate to investigate ways and means of reducing the net cost of this facility while ensuring continued choice and quality in recreation and leisure programs and services.

Pool

- The pool has a fulsome program whereas 85% of the pool hours available are utilized for programs, rentals and drop-in opportunities. This is not to indicate that the full pool space is used for each hour that it is programmed to its maximum capacity, a portion of the pool or the full pool space may be utilized in any given hour. There is additional space and hours available to accommodate more swimmers/participants within the times that the pool is open to the public (thus setting about to reduce the deficit).

- The gross expenditure level to operate and provide pool program opportunities is appropriate and is comparable to public pools of this size and within similar municipalities in Ontario, given that the revenues are much lower than most municipally operated pools.

- The direct program costs of the Pyramid Recreation Centre pool (salaries, fringe benefits, supplies etc.) in operating a fulsome swim program is offset by the existing revenue stream. There is a slight surplus

of revenue over program costs ($4,300). Staff are cognisant to capture 100% of the cost to deliver aquatic programs and casual opportunities.

- The revenues for the pool program opportunities are lower than the average of the capacity of a pool this size; there were 1,396 registrants in swim programs in 2016 while a pool of this design could accommodate at least 2,000 - 3,000 registrants plus in a given year. The lower registration numbers are a result of the lower population base to draw from and there is a need to penetrate a greater percentage of the population in aquatic activities. Additional revenues would assist in offsetting the operational expenditures.

- Increased participation has resulted in increased revenues over the last three years.

- The Town receives funding from the Swim to Survive program, which offers swimming opportunities for grade 3 students.

- The cost to operate the pool will increase over its lifespan due the rising costs of personnel and utilities as well as repairs and replacements as the plant ages.

- Employing the assumptions, the cost to operate the pool is $635,200 or 47% of the full deficit of the Pyramid Recreation Centre ($1,362,900). An alternate funding strategy is to offset the operational costs of the pool is appropriate.

Arena

- The gross expenditures of $628,600 for the arenas compare to twin pad arenas in Ontario.

- The deficit for the arena's two ice surfaces is $109,600; this deficit compares to an average range of deficits for twin pad arenas in Ontario but would be reduced should a greater percentage of ice time be rented out.

- The arena ice surfaces are utilized 82% of the prime-time hours (evenings/weekends) that are available during the ice season; on average, there are nine hours per week available for rentals during prime-time. An additional and approximate revenue of $35,600 could be realized should this ice time be leased on a consistent basis (an average of minor and adult prime time ice fees was utilized).

- The ice surfaces are generally in operation from between August to March at Rock Rink and September to April at Blue Rink (actual dates varies year to year) to reduce operating costs and best utilize the facility during the months that respond to the hockey and figure skating seasons. This was a fiscally responsible undertaking as revenues would most likely not offset expenditures during the spring and summer months.

- Staff have undertaken initiatives to reduce energy costs and maximize the energy that is generated within the facility. Any further initiatives to reduce utility costs would require major capital investments (deep water cooling and solar energy).

- The annual cost of overtime (OT) at the Pyramid Recreation Centre is $34,000. Of this amount, $29,800 or 88% of the total is attributed to the arena operations which is essentially a nine-month operation. While some overtime is unavoidable, efforts should be made to audit when OT occurs and schedule staff coverage when OT is most likely to occur. This may mean a review of lost time due to

illness and work accidents, events on Statutory Holidays, etc. to capture and work to reduce overtime patterns.

Hall Rentals

- Community Halls and meeting rooms within the Pyramid Recreation Centre are utilized on average 23% of the hours that they are available. Community Halls have a revenue stream to offset operating costs by hosting special events, parties, trade shows, meetings, receptions and charity events.

- There is a revenue sharing option for local not-for-profit and charitable organizations which assists with fundraising events.

- The revenue stream of $100,000 offsets the operating costs of $133,400 and generates a net deficit of $33,400.

- Meeting room rentals are not considered a core service as other room and hall rental opportunities are available within the community; therefore, a break-even operation to a surplus revenue for direct costs should occur during evening and weekend rentals. There is concern that the cost to rent halls exceeds the costs that other local facilities are charging and rentals may be less than optimal for that reason. An analysis of when rentals occur and at what gain to the net revenue stream is appropriate. Access to community spaces for programs and community purposes is important to the vibrancy of the community and must be considered as well.

Canteen

- The canteen offers snacks and minor equipment/supplies to patrons during prime hours of operation.

- The operation generates a $25,000 surplus after expenditures, staffing and supplies have been accounted for.

- The profit margin of 36% is an indicator of a well-operated canteen, however it should be noted that no utility costs or a portion of a full-time salary was attributed to this operation. The profit margin would be lower should these costs be accounted for.

- The canteen is not considered a core service and therefore should continue to generate a surplus revenue over expenditures to offset the costs of providing core recreation and leisure services within the community.

Food Services

- Efforts have been made in the past to reduce the number of hours that staff dedicate to this service as per the recommendations of the Recreation Task Force 2012.

- The net deficit after expenses equals $18,200.

- Food Services is not considered a core service in recreation and leisure and therefore either cost containment measures as well as cost recovery efforts must be made to reduce the budget to at least a break-even scenario. Should this not be achievable, the attainment of an alternate provider at no net cost to the operating budget should be undertaken.

Friendship Centre

- The Friendship Centre offers a well-rounded choice of programs and services to older adult residents including:
  - Recreation Services
  - Home Support
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Wheels to Meals
  - Home Support Transportation
  - Falls Prevention
  - Home Support General Services
  - Supportive Housing

- This range of services offered out of one facility provides accessible and affordable supports for all older adults. This is truly a "community hub" for older adults that is an example to other communities.

- The Town is required to support the Friendship Centre at a minimum of $23,000 / annum to ensure that the centre is eligible for the Elderly Persons Centre funding from the Provincial government. The current net deficit for the centre is $136,900 (including allocated costs for Operations). Recreation services at the Friendship Centre operate at a deficit of $20,100. This is both an acceptable deficit and required for provincial funding.

- The Town is allocated funding for all programs as a third party provider other than recreation programs and services for Home Support, etc.

- Home Support, Meals on Wheels, and Home Support General are projected to operate at a deficit of $41,300 in 2017. While these programs are critical and important to the health and wellbeing of older adults, the Town should be reimbursed for all associated costs as a contracted provider.

Costing, Pricing and Setting of Rates and Fees

St. Marys has a requirement to post rates and fees on the Town's website according to Provincial legislation. A review of the methodology utilized to determine the pricing of programs and services revealed that the pricing of rates and fees is based on historical pricing plus inflation and a comparison to the market. This approach relies on historical practises and does not reflect cost recovery based on the true cost of the service. Current practises in recreation pricing suggest that the municipality first understand the cost to deliver the service including both direct and indirect costs (operations and program costs). This is valuable information in determining where efficiencies could be made especially reductions to the indirect costs. A Pricing Policy could then be developed to determine the value of the program or service to individual and community good and the percentage of the program or service that must be cost recoverable to ensure fiscal sustainability over time.

One option to increase revenue levels is to consider levying a surcharge for out of town residents. This approach is usually taken when there is pent up demands for space and in program registrations and residents are unable to use the facilities due to use by non-residents. This is not the case in St. Marys as there is capacity available within the Town's facilities and programs. Levying a surcharge could be a deterrent to using St. Marys' facilities and programs and it is not recommended at this time.

Types of Partnerships in a Municipal Recreation and Leisure Setting

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with the Department's vision, mandate, values, strategic priorities and service standards. The value in seeking out partnerships to provide a net benefit to both organizations and essentially reduce costs to the municipality. A comparison of different partnership types is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Partnership Types

Partnership Types	Description	Formalized Relationship
Not-for-Profit Community Groups	Community groups exist to provide services, leagues, education etc. using volunteers for the most part and are not-for–profit. They may require assistance in forming as a group but most likely require space and consideration for a not-for-profit rate for rental fees.	Community groups are typically governed by an Affiliation Policy or a Community Development Policy and thrive more effectively through sharing of information, cross-marketing of opportunities and regular communications to enhance the delivery system.
Complementary Institutions and Agencies	Working more effectively with school boards, hospitals and other agencies such as the Y and the Boys and Girls Clubs can benefit the community through the development of joint programs and initiatives and sharing of resources including facilities. This will broaden the reach of like programs and services and reduce duplication.	Requires a Service Level Agreement or a Reciprocal Agreement that outlines the rights, obligations and deliverables of each agency.
Private Service Providers	Private service providers have a for-profit mandate and may provide specialized programs and services not necessarily in the municipal mandate. Often profit sharing can provide an alternate form of revenue to the municipality.	A contract will articulate the rights, obligations and deliverables of each party. Specific consideration must be given to ensuring that quality assurance, risk management and service levels are equal to that of the municipality.

Potential Partnership with the YMCA

Council in its current Strategic Plan approved that an exploration take place that determines the viability of attracting the local YMCA or another related recreation or community organization to locate at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The Consulting Team undertook this preliminary exercise as part of the master planning process to seek out greater efficiencies for the Pyramid Recreation Centre. Discussions have been held with both interested parties and a set of principles for further discussion and public consultation has been developed.

There are many reciprocal arrangements between the YMCA and municipalities across Ontario. Traditional arrangements have witnessed the YMCA utilizing or constructing facilities in concert with the municipality and offering services to members only; however, more progressive agreements share the programming responsibilities and residents use the facilities without being members. The YMCA, as a charitable organization, has a mandate to include marginalized populations and this is well aligned with the Town's goal to service the whole population.

The YMCA would consider managing some operations at the Pyramid Recreation Centre including the pool. Typically, the YMCA operates a pool in tandem with a fitness centre and possibly some preliminary reciprocal arrangements could be made between the YMCA and the Town. Initially, the Town and the YMCA might consider the use of the pool by YMCA members and the use of the fitness centre by resident non-members. The YMCA is not interested nor do they feel qualified in operating the arena operations. Further consideration for the operation of other program areas would be the result of more detailed discussions between the senior management teams of both organizations. The YMCA would complete its due diligence in terms of a review of the current and the previous five years of budget figures, facility condition assessment, participation numbers, current scheduling, etc.

St. Marys Vision for a Partnership with the YMCA

- The two organizations share a vision to include as many residents within the Pyramid Recreation Centre as possible to gain in the inherent benefits to individuals and the community.
- The partnership results in greater participation at the Pyramid Recreation Centre for all age groups with a reduction in the operational costs to the municipality.
- Both members and residents could be given access in terms of the use of the facility.
- That the operations are seamless in the public's ability to access services.
- Little to no disruption to current staffing levels take place. It may be that existing staff are managed by the YMCA for certain operations but remain Town employees.
- Experience expenditure reductions and revenue enhancements, where possible.

The YMCA Vision for a Partnership with the Town of St. Marys

- That the partnership become a model of collaboration and be values driven.
- The partnership focuses on community engagement and improve community health and wellbeing outcomes.
- That the YMCA and St. Marys reduce/eliminate duplication where possible and maximize participation in active lifestyles.
- That a favourable review of 5 years of budget figures take place as well as an evaluation of other required documentation.
- That any future needed capital improvements be undertaken by the municipality.

It should be noted that preliminary discussions have been favourable with the two parties; however, community consultation and discussion will be paramount to test the points that each party has articulated in terms of a successful partnership. The community members must have input on the advantages and disadvantages of a partnership and ultimately support the partnership in a positive fashion before Council could approve that more detailed conversations take place. Very preliminary discussions have taken place, more work must be completed before Council can consider the merits of this potential partnership.

Next Steps

- Consult with the public to obtain input regarding the principles and public needs with respect to the partnership;
- Determine if there are any beneficial (no cost/low cost) preliminary arrangements such as a reciprocal agreement for use between the YMCA and the Town facilities;
- Report back to Council on the public input and any preliminary arrangements that could be made;
- Develop a short-term and longer term approach to the partnership; and
- Based on consideration and approval from Council; develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties to enable implementation of a short term arrangement and further discussions in developing a sustainable partnership over time.

Recommendations – Service Delivery Model

11. Develop a policy on Core and Non-Core Services and levels of service in concert with the community.
12. Articulate the costs to provide individual units of service to develop an equitable and fair-minded Pricing Policy.
13. Further investigate the cost reductions and revenue enhancements suggested in the Service Review and create a formalized Business Plan for the Pyramid Recreation Centre to be approved by Council – increase arena rentals during prime time, food services cost reductions/revenue enhancements, arena overtime reduction and cost recovery for contracted services at the Friendship Centre, etc. Further, develop Program Based Budgets (program and operational costs) for Recreation and Leisure to fully understand the cost to provide these services. To ensure the successful delivery of this Plan, implement a process for annual reporting to Council with effectiveness measures based on the performance measures recommended as articulated in Recommendation 19.
14. Consult with the public on the principles of the potential partnership between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA. Host discussions between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA regarding any preliminary and beneficial (no cost/low cost) arrangements that could be made in the short term. Bring any short term recommendations and longer term vision to Council for discussion.
15. Obtain volunteer software to offer online volunteer opportunities, provide an online screening process, training and tracking of volunteer hours with a view to increasing volunteerism in St. Marys.
16. Apply for alternate funding to cover the costs of the Swim to Survive program.

Key Result Area Three: Organizational Effectiveness and Governance

Goal Statement: To ensure that residents receive the highest quality of recreation and leisure services through the input provided by the public and a high performing staff team.

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness can be described as an approach to continuous improvement to organizational design, organizational culture, group and individual performance, communications, service delivery and performance measures. The elements of organizational effectiveness require evaluation and refinement on an ongoing basis. The purpose of the review of the organizational effectiveness and governance to support Community Services is to ensure that there is the capacity to deliver on the recommendations housed in the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan. While the input by the public and key opinion leaders did not probe too deeply into organizational effectiveness and design as well as governance, there were comments that are instructive along with the analysis.

Organizational Design and Structure

Organizations have different structures depending on the need for formalization and accountability. In a public setting, there is a need for an equitable distribution of work, clear delineation of responsibilities and accountabilities and transparency in all policies, communications and work efforts. The current organizational design meets common publicly driven standards as described below:

- The department reflects a centralized operation and this is appropriate given the size of the operation, the number of facilities and the population of St. Marys. The Community Services Department is responsible and accountable for the allocation of space in the public facilities, programming, relationships with community partners and stakeholder groups, building capacity through volunteerism and ensuring that residents' needs are reflected in the use of all public spaces. The Operations department is responsible and accountable for ongoing maintenance, upkeep and repair of recreation, culture, and parks facilities and amenities.

- Job descriptions are formalized and reviewed annually.

- There is a clear chain of command with autonomy and authority delineated, where possible.

- Cross functional teams work as collectives in areas of common focus.

- There is a flow of information that centres on the use of technology, regular one on one meetings as well as full staff meetings.

- The structure is flat with 2 layers of staff between the Director of Community Services and the public.

- The span of control (number of direct reports) ranges between 4 and 10 direct reports which is suitable given the size and scope of responsibilities.

- There is specialization and educational requirements in each of the disciplines (Museum, Early Learning, Senior Services, Aquatics, Guest Services, Children/Youth and Adult Programming).

From this review, the organizational structure is sound and is appropriate should the scope of responsibilities remain the same.

Organizational Culture

The culture of the Community Services Department is based on a common passion for the work and the need to serve the public well. Efforts are made to go about work with honesty and integrity, by embracing new and innovative concepts and most importantly understanding the community's needs. The culture of the Department has never been formally articulated and this exercise would be well worth the effort to engage staff in discussing what values should be in play to support the work of the department and the respective behaviours that would support these values. Most staff persons have worked together and many of these behaviours are in play. Articulating values and supporting behaviours, committing to them and reviewing them on an annual basis serves to strengthen a team and customer driven approach. These values must be aligned with any values in place corporately and within the community.

Group and Individual Performance

Staff's focus has been very clear over the course of the last few years and that has been to meet the public's expectations around quality, safety and service delivery. Priority has been given to cost reduction, revenue enhancement and engaging partners to share in service delivery. Volunteerism can be extended for all disciplines and there is a need to recommend a governance model that is effective and better engages the public. A training program is in place to identify and execute needed areas of training.

Service Delivery Policy and Processes

The development of some pertinent policies has been recommended throughout the course of this Service Review including the development or review of an equitable Community Group Affiliation Policy, Costing of programs and services to arrive at a fair and equitable Pricing Policy as well as procedures to work better together with related service providers, improve communications, volunteerism, etc. Staff will need to develop policies and processes to implement the Service Review recommendations.

Communications

Internal communications seem to be strong although the staff functions and disciplines are varied and the opportunities for joint planning sessions should increase due to the Master Plan recommendations and initiatives. Communications to engage community groups and better promote opportunities will be a focus in the future, embracing the use of social media to augment traditional communications vehicles.

Performance Measures

Measuring performance is an excellent method to assess as to whether the department and partners are meeting the goals of the community with respect to the delivery of service. Performance measures typically centre around inputs, outputs, efficiencies and effectiveness. Table 9 provides a summary of performance measures that will adequately "tell the story" of recreation and leisure in St. Marys and compare results year over year.

Table 9: Types of Performance Measures

Performance Measure Type	Description	Suggested Measures
Inputs	The human, fiscal and physical resources that are dedicated to providing recreation and leisure services.	• Full-time equivalents dedicated to providing the service • Approved budget per discipline • Inventory of physical assets • Highlight changes over the previous three years
Outputs	The return on the investment in participation and meeting strategic goals.	• Participation levels in the various services • Market penetration of all age groups by the collective of partners • % of prime time used by facility type • Inclusion of marginalized populations
Efficiencies	The cost per type of service – this can be reduced through efficiencies and/or increasing the number of residents using the service.	• Cost per participant for the various services • Cost per capita for the various services • Value of volunteerism • Cost reduction and revenue enhancement values • $ amount of revenues received through alternate funding sources
Effectiveness	User and group satisfaction levels with respect to quality, safety, facility conditions etc.	• Perceived value of the service within the community • Level of satisfaction of the various programs and services

Collecting and analyzing data in the first year will set the baseline information needed to create a performance metric for recreation and leisure. Then and only then can meaningful, incremental targets be set and strategies put in place to achieve these targets. Each municipality is different and is starting at differing levels of participation and use of facilities etc. There are no industry standard targets or benchmarks currently available in Ontario that articulate preferred metric ranges for small, medium and larger municipalities as each community offers services in different ways. Setting realistic targets would be a requirement in year two of data collection. Success would be measured against targets and the preceding year's performance.

Governance

Staff have reported to Council on the need to engage the public in the delivery of recreation and leisure services. The last report discussed the various types of governance options and left the review and recommendation to the Master Planning process. The input to support the development of the Master Plan probed specifically about appropriate governance models. The two options that were discussed most often were either an advisory committee or a board of management.

Prior to the construction of the Pyramid Recreation Centre there was an Arena Board and a Recreation Committee. The Arena Board ceased to exist as it consisted of representatives of both Town of St. Marys and Perth South as they both funded the arena at that time. When the decision to build the Pyramid Recreation Centre came about, Perth South left the board because they could no longer fund any portion of the facility and chose not to continue. The Recreation Board ceased to exist in the year 2000.

Currently, there are two other committees of Council relating to parks, recreation and leisure. There is a Beautification Committee of volunteers with a mandate regarding beautification of parks and open spaces. There is also a Senior Services Committee that focuses on seniors' programming within the community. The Community Services Department meets annually with user groups (e.g. ice users to discuss ice) along with meeting regularly with local Service Clubs. The Service Club meetings include updates on Town projects, events and upcoming initiatives and ways they can be involved.

The point of good governance is to offer transparency in decision-making, garner input from experts as well as community users and deliver quality and safe services in the most efficient and effective manner. The key difference between an advisory committee and a board of management is clearly the level of authority delegated by Council. A comparison between an Advisory Committee and a Board of Directors in a municipal recreation setting is articulated in Table 10:

Table 10: Comparison between Advisory Committee and Board of Directors

Advisory Committee	Board of Directors (BOD)
Provides advice to Council through senior staff and through recommendations housed in minutes of meetings	Has delegated authority to make certain decisions and implement them
Has no hiring authority; Council/CAO hires senior staff	Has hiring authority of the highest level of staff reporting to the BOD
Has input into budget development, understands and reviews budget performance	Develops budget for Council approval
Provides advice on operational policies	Sets operational policies and rates and fee structures within the delegated service(s)
Is active in fund development and sponsorship opportunities in terms of providing advice on the design of a program and abiding by Corporate policy.	Approves sponsorship and fund development program
Provides hands on technical assistance. Members are recruited and selected based on needed skills and competencies through a transparent process	Sets strategy and high-level policy development. Members are appointed through a transparent selection process which focuses on recruiting members with the required skills and competencies
Appointed for a term of office as defined by Council	Appointed for a term of office as defined by Council

The merits of each governance model have been weighed given the recommendations of the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan and the potential of a YMCA partnership with the Town regarding the program/service delivery at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The focus of senior staff will be to complete a public engagement strategy to test the public's views on the principles of this potential partnership and to work on a cohesive and seamless delivery model. The YMCA has its own Board of Directors and if there is public support and partnership discussions are successful, a governance model would have to be designed to support a seamless and cohesive delivery model. The resultant Administrative model will most likely mirror the Partnership's scope and level of authority; there are many unknowns at this time. It would be prudent to wait until the partnership consultation has occurred and the approved accountabilities and responsibilities are known before recommending the timing of a preferred governance model. The YMCA would support appointments at large to its Board of Directors or any level of regular input deemed useful. Given Council's clear interest in the cost reduction efforts at the Pyramid Recreation Centre and the need to maintain an engaged approach, a

Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to have input into Town lead recreation and leisure opportunities is recommended, subject to the results of the YMCA partnership.

Recommendations – Service Delivery Model

17. Coordinate discussions with Town staff to articulate the Departmental culture and supporting values and behaviours.

18. Develop a Communications Plan that engages community groups and serves to better inform the public as to the recreation and leisure opportunities available using traditional and social media communications vehicles at a minimum.

19. Gather the data required to support the development of performance measures. Report annually to Council and the public and compare results year over year to inform continuous improvement initiatives in community engagement and service delivery.

20. Provide the tasks involved and an implementation schedule on the development of a Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee. Articulate the skills and competencies needed to implement the Master Plan recommendations and ensure that the Town recruits and selects members transparently based the needed skills and competencies.

Town Hall

5.0 Parks and Trails Assessment

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

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

5.1 Parkland Classification System

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

While the existing classification system generally aligns to park functions and best practices currently found in many other municipalities, there is merit in fine-tuning these descriptions. A comparison between the existing and recommended parkland classification system is contained in Table 11. The recommended parkland classification system revises or builds upon the existing parkland descriptions to provide greater clarity and accuracy towards locational characteristics, service area, permitted uses and amenities, and other details to provide a better understanding of how different types of parks are used. The revised parkland classification system ensures that the Town has a robust classification system to optimize future parkland development and to respond to the needs of current and future residents. The revised parkland hierarchy should be incorporated into the Official Plan at the time of its next review/update.

Recommendations – Parkland Classification System
21. Incorporate a revised parkland classification system to provide greater clarity and accuracy towards locational characteristics, service area, permitted uses and amenities, and other details into the Town of St. Marys Official Plan at the time of its next review to guide the development and redevelopment of parkland in St. Marys.

Table 11: Existing and Recommended Parkland Classification System, Town of St. Marys

Existing	Recommended
Town Park	
– Designed to serve the Town and surrounding areas (1,500 to 10,000 residents). – Permitted recreation uses include lit sports fields, golf courses, community centres, concessions, washrooms, seating, and more. – May be serviced by water, sanitary, and hydro. – Size generally ranges between 10 hectares to 50 hectares in area.	– Designed to serve the Town and surrounding areas. – Generally drive to parks that are accessible by motorized and non-motorized forms of transportation. – Located along an arterial or collector road. – Permitted recreation uses may include lit sports fields, community centres, playgrounds, and more. – Supporting amenities may include pavilions, parking, concessions, washrooms, seating, and more. – May include unique natural and physical features and support special events and sports tournaments. – May be serviced by water, sanitary, and hydro. – Varies in size depending on its intended function. Town Parks may have the largest land area of parkland, although they can be much smaller if, for example, a cenotaph is the main focus.
Neighbourhood Park	
– Designed to provide recreational areas and open space to serve residents within a 2 kilometre service area (or 1,000 to 2,000 residents). – Permitted recreation uses includes playground equipment, seating, green space, and water fountain. – Size generally ranges between 0.5 hectares to 4 hectares in area.	– Intended to serve local residential areas within a larger settlement area. – Designed to provide recreational areas and open space to serve residents within a 10 minute walking distance (approximately 800 metre service radius), without obstruction of physical boundaries, preferably on the corner of two intersecting local roads. – Permitted recreation uses include unlit sports fields, hard surface courts, playgrounds, and other neighbourhood-level recreation facilities. – Supporting amenities may include seating and open space. – Size generally ranges between 0.5 hectares to 4 hectares in area. Larger park sizes are also acceptable.

Existing	Recommended
Parkette / Tot Lot	
– The smallest form of open space to serve residents within 500 metres (or 50 to 100 residents), without obstruction of physical boundaries. – Permitted recreation uses include a playground – Smaller than 0.5 hectares in area	– The smallest form of open space to serve residents within 500 metres (or 50 to 100 residents), without obstruction of physical boundaries. – Permitted recreation uses include a playground. – Supporting amenities include seating and open space. – Smaller than 0.5 hectares in area. – The development of parkettes/tot lots smaller than 0.5 hectares should be discouraged, except in instances that may be advantageous to the Town to reconcile gap areas and to address shortages in parkland.
Open Space	
– Passive open spaces and parks, including walking and biking trails, natural areas, gardens, storm water management area, cemeteries, elementary and secondary school open space.	– Passive open spaces and parks, including walking and biking trails, natural areas, gardens, storm water management area, cemeteries, elementary and secondary school open space. (NO CHANGE)

Lind Park

5.2 Parkland Supply and Distribution

The Town's parks system consists of 19 parks that collectively provide 33.6 hectares (83 acres) of outdoor recreational space to St. Marys residents, as shown in Table 12. These parks contain a range of outdoor facilities and amenities including sports fields, playgrounds, seating and shade areas, and passive spaces that facilitate informal gatherings and activities. For the purposes of this Master Plan, Cadzow Park and Milt Dunnell Field have been classified as Town Parks to align with the Parkland Classification System proposed through Recommendation #21, given their functionality and ability to host Town-wide events as well as the geographic area that they serve.

Residents also have access to Town-owned open spaces, woodlots and other naturalized municipal lands, over and above the 33.6 hectares of parkland. These naturalized lands support the Town's Official Plan objectives to provide and promote a range of recreation activities and facilities, and to preserve and enhance natural areas. In addition to the municipal parks supply, residents and sports groups enjoy the use of many open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities located at local schools and the Wildwood Conservation Area.

Table 12: Parkland Supply, Town of St. Marys

Town Park	Area (ha)		Area (ha)
Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame	7.4	St. Marys Quarry	2.6
Cadzow Park	1.3	Milt Dunnell Field	4.9
		Sub-Total:	16.2
Neighbourhood Park			
Centennial Park	1.1	Skateboard Park	0.6
Early Learning Centre	0.2	Solis Park	3.6
East Ward Park	1.7	Southvale Park	0.9
Junction Station Dog Park	1.3	Teddy's Field Diamond	0.7
Kin Park	3.5	Tennis Courts	0.4
Meadowridge Park	2.0	West Ward Park	0.4
North Ward Park	0.7	Sub-Total	17.1
Parkette			
Lind Park	0.2	Millennium Park	0.1
		Sub-Total	0.3
		Total Park	33.6

Note: Parkland Supply excludes open spaces, woodlots and other naturalized municipal lands, as well as non-municipal parkland found at local schools and the Wildwood Conservation Area. For the purposes of the Master Plan, Cadzow Park and Milt Dunnell Field have been classified as Town Parks given their functionality and their ability to host Town-wide events, as well as the area they serve.

Based on the 2016 Census population of 7,265, the Town is achieving an overall parkland service level of 4.6 hectares per 1,000 residents. This level of service compares favourably to parkland service levels provided in other municipalities across Ontario, where targets typically range between 3.0 and 4.0 hectares per 1,000 persons. That said, parkland service ratios are subject to numerous variables including historical level of provision, population size and density, availability of developable land, etc. St. Marys' healthy level of provision appears to be reflected in the level of importance that residents placed upon parkland.

Going forward, it may be a challenge for the Town to maintain the current parkland service level (particularly given that the Town has emphasized the need for fiscal responsibility), though the anticipated population growth of approximately 1,000 persons by the end of the planning period should allow the Town to maintain a strong level of parkland provision. If this growth is primarily accommodated through new residential development, the Town can be expected to receive approximately 1.0 to 1.5 hectares of parkland when acquiring parkland dedication permitted through the *Ontario Planning Act* (parkland acquisition opportunities are discussed in Section 5.4). Assuming that this ratio of new parkland can be acquired and added to the existing supply, the Town will continue to provide a high level of service compared to other municipalities (in the range of 4.2 hectares per 1,000 residents).

It is on this basis that the Master Plan recommends the Town to continue to maximize its parkland dedication requirements through the subdivision approval process, and in doing so can be expected to effectively service parkland needs during the planning period. Irrespective of parkland service levels, the geographic distribution of parkland must also be an important consideration to ensure that newly developing residential areas have good access and proximity to park space(s). Applying a service area of 800 metres around all active parks, with consideration given to major obstructions (e.g., major roads, railways, etc.) is presented in Figure 14 to illustrate the level of accessibility from residential areas.

A high level examination of park distribution and service coverage reveals that the majority of residential areas are served with some form of parkland, with notable exceptions identified below:

Northwest area of St. Marys, west of the Thames River – There are limited opportunities for future parkland development in this area given that it is already built-up. It is recognized, however, that residents currently use a large open space on the southwest corner of Salina Street and Maiden Lane, which is owned by the St. Marys Memorial Hospital, for a range of casual park activities (e.g., baseball, dog walking, etc.). While this open space (so long as it is available for public us) is expected to be sufficient to serve residents during the planning period, the Town should remain open to potential parkland development opportunities in this area, utilizing the alternative parkland acquisition methods described in Section 4.4, should the hospital lands no longer be available for park uses.

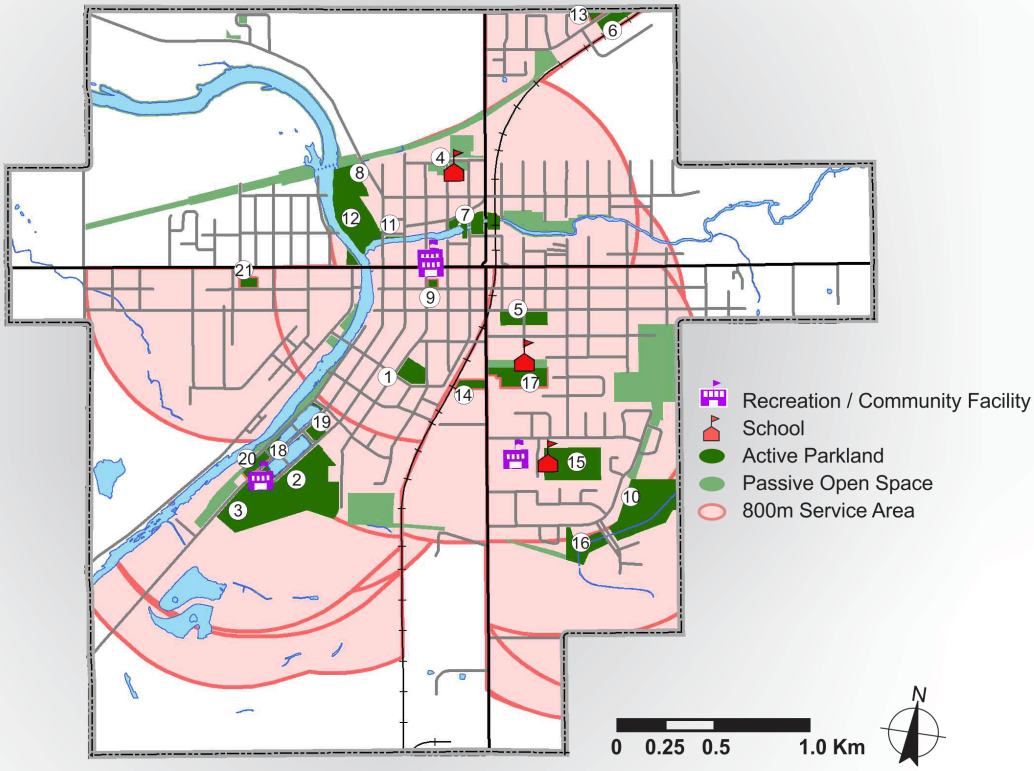
North end of St. Marys, north of the Grand Trunk Trail and west of James Street – According to the Town's Official Plan, these lands are designated for residential development. The Town should maximize parkland dedication through future subdivision development. As the Town does not require any new recreation facilities that require substantial parkland, the Town should work with developers and pursue neighbourhood-size parks to ensure that residents are well served with geographically accessible parkland in this area.

Recommendations – Parkland Classification System

22. On an opportunity basis, pursue opportunities to rectify any parkland gaps that exist, utilizing parkland development strategies identified in this Master Plan, in addition to working with local non-municipal organizations (e.g., schools, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Conservation Authority, etc.) to maximize access to a wide range of active and passive open spaces.

23. Strive to achieve a minimum parkland service area of 800 metres, unobstructed by major barriers such as major roads, railways, waterbodies, etc.

Figure 14: Distribution Map of Parkland



Parkland

1. Cadzow Park
2. Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame
3. Centennial Park
4. Early Learning Centre (No public access)
5. East Ward Park
6. Junction Station Dog Park
7. Kin Park
8. Lawn Bowling Club
9. Lind Park
10. Meadowridge Park
11. Millennium Park
12. Milt Dunnell Field
13. North Ward
14. Skateboard Park
15. Solis Park
16. Southvale Park
17. St. Marys DCVI (Town maintained)
18. Swimming Quarry
19. Teddy's Field Diamond
20. Tennis Courts
21. West Ward Park

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

5.3 Park Naturalization

One of the objectives of this Master Plan is to explore strategies to optimize the use of municipal resources. Through various strategies that have been articulated in this Master Plan and in relation to the provision of parkland, there may be opportunities for park naturalization. Naturalization refers to the process of returning park space back to a natural state by allowing existing grass along with native plants and wildlife species to grow and flourish with minimal or no municipal maintenance. A naturalization approach restores the ecological lifecycle of flora and fauna in the area, while reducing the need for grass cutting, watering, fertilizing, and other park maintenance practices, that can collectively result in cost savings and an ability to redirect municipal resources to other areas of the Department.

Re-naturalization efforts may be suitable for some of St. Marys' parks and open spaces, which may consist of naturalizing open spaces, repositioning recreation facilities within an active park to delineate naturalization areas, or another method suitable to the Town. The following are examples of park naturalization projects that could be considered at Meadowvale and Southvale Park during this planning period as both are large Neighbourhood Parks that appear to have limited use. Both parks feature soccer fields that are utilized infrequently and Meadowvale Park also offers on-site parking. The orientation and layout of each park is not ideal given that they have limited road frontage with deep lots and as a result, visibility into the parks is difficult. In addition, these parks have overlapping service areas that generally serve the same group of residents given that these parks are both located along Southvale Road, approximately 225 metres from each other. Solis Park, which has a higher level of usage, is also located in the vicinity.

Given these reasons, the Town could consider naturalization efforts to a portion of Meadowvale and Southvale Park to reduce maintenance responsibilities. This process may, in some cases, require removing or relocating existing recreation facilities to other locations. It is recommended that the Town consider the following naturalization approach for each park.

Meadowvale Park should continue to offer a full size soccer field given that there is a need to maintain this facility should the Town lose access to the full size soccer field located at St. Marys DCVI. The soccer field should be maintained for casual neighbourhood-level use only (i.e. no permitted rentals) until such time that it is demonstrated that this field is required for regular permitting. The existing playground should be removed at the end of its lifespan (2025) given that it is located within the interior of the park and has poor street visibility. A replacement playground should be located at Southvale Park, which is located within close proximity to Meadowvale Park and boasts more street frontage. Naturalization should be considered in areas surrounding the soccer field, with an appropriate buffer provided around its perimeter.

As this Master Plan recommends the removal of a junior soccer field (see Recommendation #45), the rear of **Southvale Park** should be considered for naturalization. In accordance with park-size requirements, a minimum of 0.5 hectares of active parkland should be maintained along the frontage of Southvale Road to accommodate a new playground to replace the aforementioned aging playground located at Meadowvale Park after the year 2025 (also see Recommendation #53).

Recommendations – Park Naturalization
24. Consider naturalization of select areas of parklands, including Meadowvale Park and Southvale Park, in order to reduce parkland maintenance efforts. The naturalization of these parks or park areas may require the removal and/or relocation of certain recreation facilities, as articulated in this Master Plan.

5.4 Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines

There are a number of provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland, with the *Ontario Planning Act* and the Town of St. Marys Official Plan being the primary tools.

Ontario Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990) & Bill 73

The *Planning Act* (R.S.O. 1990) outlines a framework for parkland dedication in Sections 42 and 51.1, which allow approval authorities to enforce parkland dedication requirements as a condition of land development or plan of subdivision. These Sections establish that 2% of commercial and industrial land developments and 5% of all other land developments be conveyed to the municipality for parkland or other public recreational purposes. In certain cases, where the approval authority has established specific policies regarding parkland dedication, the *Planning Act* allows a municipality to require an alternative rate of one hectare for every 300 dwelling units, if land for parks is being provided. If no dedicated land is proposed for parkland through development, the approval authority may accept cash-in-lieu thereof.

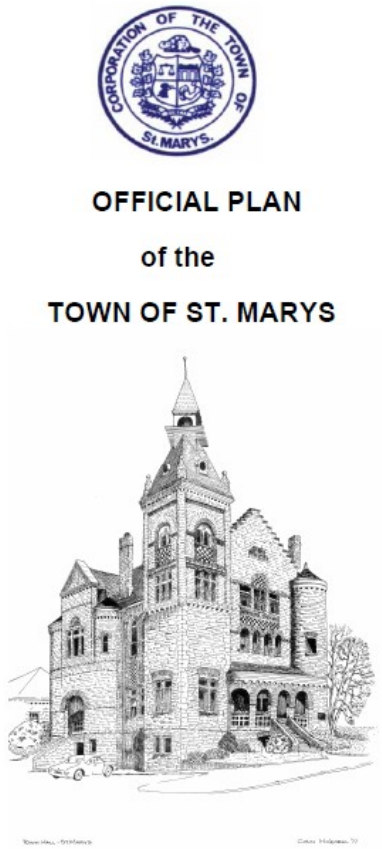
Bennett Park

In 2015, Bill 73 (also known as the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*) received Royal Assent and enacted a number of changes to amend the *Planning Act*. One of Bill 73's most notable amendments relating to parkland pertains to how much cash-in-lieu can be collected. While physical land taken for parkland remains the same at one hectare for every 300 dwelling units through the alternative rate, Bill 73 amends the Planning Act whereby a municipality intending to collect cash-in-lieu of parkland must do so at a reduced rate of one hectare per 500 dwelling units (as compared to one hectare for every 300 dwelling units prior to Bill 73 coming into effect). The stated intent is to create an incentive for the approval authority to take physical parkland through dedication rather than cash-in-lieu.

Centennial Park

Town of St. Marys Official Plan

The Town of St. Marys Official Plan[9] provides direction pertaining to the dedication of land for parkland through development. Specifically, the following Official Plan policies outline the amount of parkland the Town may receive, as well as alternative dedication methods:



Section 4.2.1.11(c) – land, not exceeding 5 per cent of the land being severed, be conveyed to the Town for park purposes, or alternatively, the Town may accept money equal to the value of the land required to be conveyed if authorized by the Minister.

Section 7.15.5 – It is intended that the creation and/or improvement of parks within the Town shall be guided by the following policies:

(a) the provision of Subsections (5) and (8) of Section 51 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990 shall apply to all new plans of subdivision. In accordance with these policies, land not exceeding 5 per cent of the land included in the draft plan of subdivision or cash-in-lieu thereof shall be conveyed to the municipality as a condition of the approval of the plan of subdivision;

(b) land conveyed to the Town in accordance with 7.15.5(a) above shall be suitable for development as a public recreational area. Lands subject to physical limitations such as flooding, steep slopes, erosion, or other similar limitations will not necessarily be accepted for park purposes. All lands dedicated to the municipality shall be conveyed in a physical condition satisfactory to the municipality. Where an open water-course is involved, adequate open space shall be provided for the maintenance thereof; and

(c) lands conveyed to the municipality in accordance with 7.15.5(a) above shall be located in a manner that affords appropriate access to the surrounding community.

A review of these policies suggests that there is an opportunity to bolster park policies to maximize parkland requirements stated in the *Planning Act* in order to continue to provide high quality park experiences. During the next Official Plan Review, it is recommended that the Town strengthen park policies contained in Section 7.15 while considering the implications of the amended *Planning Act* as a result of Bill 73, particularly as it relates to the reduced rate of cash-in-lieu of parkland municipalities may require. Other policy considerations recommended for review include – but are not limited to – the following:

[9] Official Plan of the Town of St. Marys. October 1987 (Consolidated October 1, 2007).

- Outline criteria for accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland, such as when the required dedication fails to meet an area of suitable shape, size, or location stipulated in the Town's parkland classification system or if parkland dedication would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development, or other constraint preventing suitable park or land use development.

- Clarify that where policies currently state that 5% of land be dedicated for parkland through development applies only to residential subdivision development. Consistent with the *Planning Act*, a new policy should be developed stating that 2% of land shall be required for all other forms of development (e.g., commercial or industrial). Additionally, policies should be established to consider applying the alternative parkland rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units.

- Woodlots, storm water management ponds, naturalized areas, and environmentally sensitive areas should not be accepted as a part of parkland dedication, although the Town may assume these lands (over and above) for the purposes of protecting, natural areas for passive recreation (e.g., trail development) and educational uses.

Future parkland development must also be of an appropriate size and configuration to effectively utilize municipal resources and to facilitate meaningful recreation activities. As previously identified, accepting parkland smaller than 0.5 hectares should be discouraged given that small parcels of parkland generally facilitate limited parks and recreational opportunities. There are examples of undersized parcels of parkland in St. Marys such as Lind Park and Millennium Park. Exceptions may be permitted in instances that may be advantageous to the Town to reconcile gap areas and to address shortages in parkland. In cases where park development is too small to receive a meaningful park parcel, or where the immediate area already has suitable and unimpeded access to sufficient parkland, then the Town should consider requiring cash-in-lieu contributions that can be used to secure parkland better suited to the needs of the community.

Should there be a need to supplement parkland supplies beyond the mechanisms permitted by the *Planning Act* and the Official Plan, there are a number of other park acquisition strategies that the Town may pursue such as (but not limited to):

- Municipal land purchase or lease;
- Land exchanges or swaps, particularly if development is to occur in natural areas highly valued by the community;
- Off-site conveyance of parkland;
- Establishment of a Parks Foundation (e.g., community, corporate, or municipal donations towards parkland acquisition);
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use; and/or
- Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners.

Recommendations – Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines

25. During the next Official Plan Review, explore opportunities to bolster existing parkland policies, with consideration given to the following:

    a. Review the Town's parkland dedication policies to ensure that they consistent with the amended *Planning Act* as a result of Bill 73.

    b. Outline criteria for accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland, such as when the required dedication fails to meet an area of suitable shape, size, or location stipulated in the Town's parkland classification system or if parkland dedication would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development, or other constraint preventing suitable park or land use development.

    c. Clarify that the where policies currently state that 5% of land be dedicated for parkland through development applies only to residential subdivision development. Consistent with the *Planning Act*, a new policy should be developed stating that 2% of land shall be required for all other forms of development (e.g., commercial or industrial). Additionally, policies should be established to consider applying the alternative parkland rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units.

    d. Woodlots, storm water management ponds, naturalized areas, and environmentally sensitive areas should not be accepted as a part of parkland dedication, although the Town may assume these lands (over and above) for the purposes of protecting, natural areas for passive recreation (e.g., trail development) and educational uses.

26. Accepting parkland smaller than 0.5 hectares will be discouraged, except in instances that may be advantageous to the Town to reconcile gap areas and to address shortages in parkland.

27. Utilize alternative parkland acquisition tools, as necessary, to supplement parkland dedications and to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.

5.5 Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities

Supply

The Town boasts an impressive network of active transportation routes that connect residents and visitors to key destinations throughout St. Marys. Generally speaking, active transportation is defined as any means of travel using non-vehicular modes such as walking and cycling. The Town's active transportation network spans 66 kilometres, which includes approximately 18.8 kilometres of on and off-road trails and nearly 48 kilometres of sidewalk (Table 13).

Table 13: Active Transportation Inventory

Trail Name	Length (kilometres)
Grand Trunk Trail	3.2
Loop Trail	13.0
Riverview Walkway	2.3
Taylor Trail	0.3
Sub-Total	18.8
Sidewalk	47.2
Total	66

Grand Trunk Trail

Broader research indicates that walking and cycling are some of the most popular recreation activities. Through the consultation process for the Master Plan, residents spoke highly of the Town's trail network. While the online community survey found that 95% of respondents indicated that active transportation facilities were important, 78% were satisfied with the active transportation opportunities in St. Marys which suggests that there is room for improvement. Respondents ranked unpaved nature trails and multi-use trails as the most supported recreation facility types for future investment. Participants at the Master Plan's Launch Event also expressed the desire to enhance active linkages throughout St. Marys such as connecting residents in the north end of the Town, adding pathway lighting, constructing washrooms, installing fitness equipment, and providing wayfinding signage.

Policy Development

In contrast to parkland, the development of an active transportation network is not driven by the setting of a per capita provision target. They are generally developed based on opportunity or as a means of achieving community goals or vision, such as building strong communities, supporting active lifestyles, and promoting environmental awareness. The Town's Official Plan contains a number of relevant policies that support the development of trails:

> Section 2.6(f) – encourage the use of and sustain existing trails and open spaces throughout the Town and linkages with those in Perth County.

Section 5.3.14 – As an alternative to motorized conveyance, opportunities to integrate walking, hiking and cycling trails with the road network is encouraged.

Section 3.7.2.4 / Section 7.15.2 – The development of hiking, walking, and bicycle trails is a significant resource to the Town. Opportunities to develop new trails or extend existing trails throughout the Town will continue to be encouraged and shall be identified on Schedule "B" to the Official Plan. The use of public lands, the floodplains adjacent to watercourses, and private lands may be used to develop or extend the trail system.

These policies provide an excellent base to ensure that St. Marys continues to develop its active transportation network and to enhance walkability in the community. However, emphasis and support are crucial in any community in light of trends highlighting the vast benefits of active transportation, together with public input received through this process, which suggests that a high quality trail network is desirable in St. Marys.

There are a number of tools municipalities may utilize to acquire and develop corridors for active transportation network development. Chief among them is Section 51 of the *Planning Act*, which permits approval authorities to require the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycle pathways as a condition of subdivision approval. It is recommended that a new policy in this regard be contemplated, as it would provide the Town with an opportunity to identify desired lands for trail dedication, with consideration given to the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan. The provision of supporting amenities such as signage, seating, parking, and other facilities should be considered at the Town's discretion during the review and evaluation of development approvals. Complementing land dedication through subdivision development, there are other land acquisition strategies that may be employed in order to advance the Town's active transportation network, including:

- Private property easement
- Land purchase
- Land exchange / Land swap
- Donation / Bequest of land
- Lease / License private land

It is essential that residents are fully engaged in the planning and design of new active transportation linkages to solicit public input for consideration in the planning approvals stage. Public support and awareness regarding future active transportation development can be further enhanced by including the conceptual active transportation network in this Master Plan as a part of an Official Plan Schedule. While the Town's Official Plan currently indicates that opportunities for trail development are illustrated on "Schedule B – Road Classifications", a review of this Schedule reveals that no trail routes are currently illustrated. It is recommended that the conceptual active transportation network be incorporated into this this or a new Schedule, though the next Official Plan Review.

Conceptual Active Transportation Network

In developing a robust active transportation network, routes should link residents and users to key destinations (e.g., parks, recreation facilities, schools, storm water management ponds, etc.), utilize available corridors, and be sensitive to naturalized areas. Active transportation routes should be planned to maximize both recreational and utilitarian purposes with user safety being top-of-mind. From a recreational perspective, users generally seek interesting routes that traverse natural areas and that are looped so one does not have to take the same route in both directions.

The Town has been successful in creating an intricate active transportation network that consists of a loop trail, routes that boast scenic views along the North Thames River waterfront, sidewalks, and links to key destinations such as the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. In terms of future trail development, the recommended approach for enhancing St. Marys' active transportation network is to build off of these existing routes. A conceptual active transportation network is illustrated in Figure 15, which is intended to be used as a guide towards the development of active transportation opportunities within undeveloped areas to connect future residents with established destinations in St. Marys.

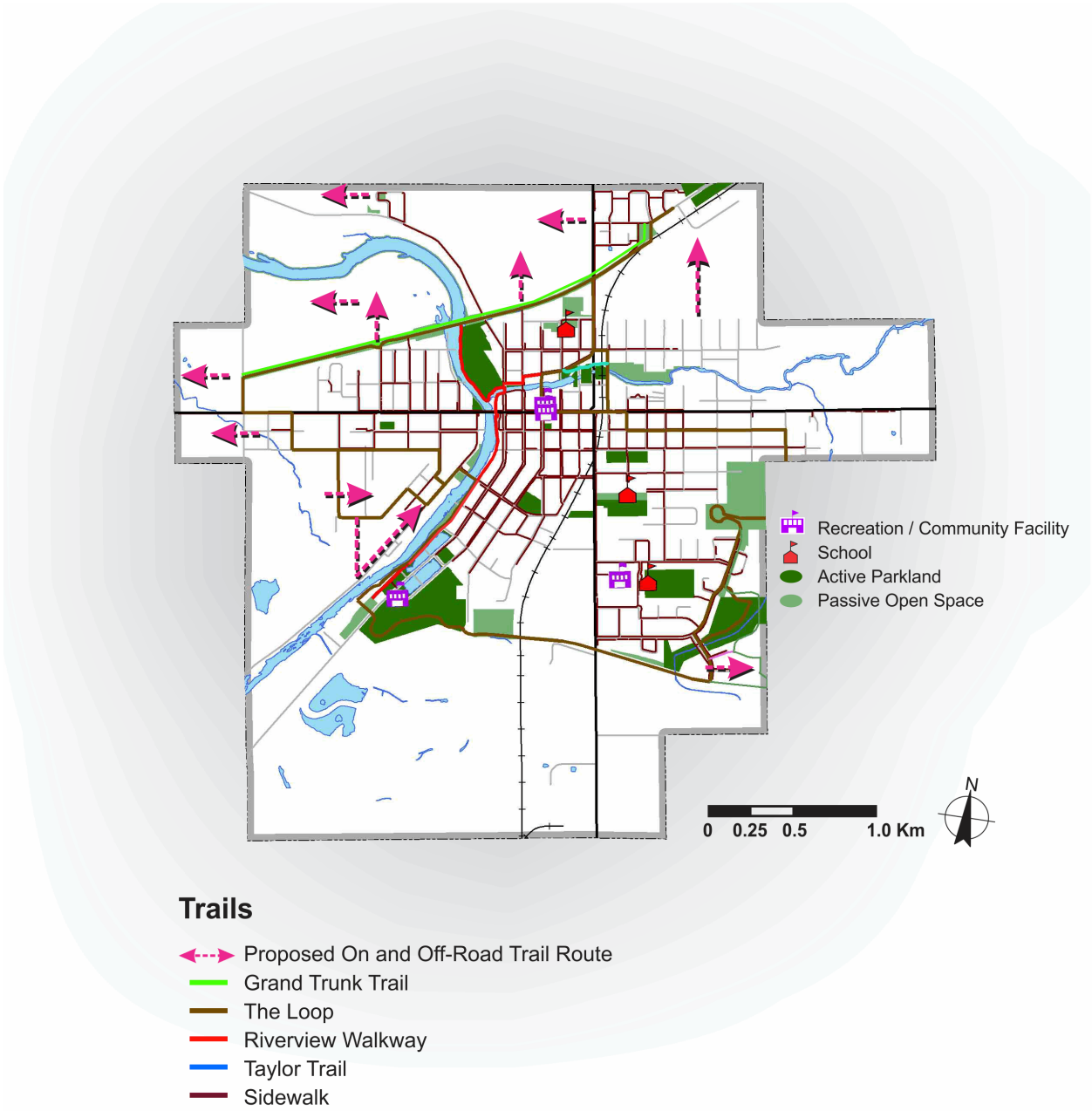
The proposed conceptual trails focus on linking future residential areas to the existing network via off-road trails or sidewalk connections. At the Town's discretion, specific routing should be determined through the planning process in consultation with the land development industry and the public. Emphasis on user safety should be paramount when planning the Town's trail network. This may include applying CEPTD principles or avoiding trail routes that cross uncontrolled arterial and collector intersection. In addition to the conceptual trails network, on-road cycling opportunities should be identified at the Town's discretion, utilizing a mixture of arterial, collector, and local roads, where appropriate, as well as the installation of "Share the Road" signage along the routes to enhance cycling safety and encourage motorists to utilize the traveled right-of-way in a safe manner.

It bears noting that implementing the conceptual active transportation network will be incremental as opportunities and available funding become available. Realignments and adjustments may be necessary due to unforeseen challenges relating to terrain, cost, or other implications. The Town is encouraged to explore new trail development opportunities that have not yet been identified, for the purpose of enhancing the active transportation network, provided the general intent of connecting residents and users with destinations is maintained.

Furthermore, there is value to consider preparing a more comprehensive active transportation master plan to assist with long-term trail implementation. There are several benefits associated with this process, chief among them is to establish a vision and guide for active transportation development, and to respond to the community's desire for a well-connected trail system. The recommendations emerging from this Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan establish a foundation for the Town to advance its active transportation network; however, a more detailed active transportation master plan may provide greater insights with respect to trail classification, development routes and priorities, policy, design guidelines and requirements, funding and implementation strategies, and other meaningful outputs desired by the Town.

As detailed engineering and construction specifications are beyond the scope of this Master Plan, this section provides the Town with high level guidance with respect to active transportation design. The intent is to ensure that the Town provides a safe and accessible active transportation network. The design standards contained in this section are based on best practices in other municipalities as well as key documents including Ontario Regulation 413/12 (Design of Public Spaces Standards – Accessibility for the Built Environment Standards) made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, the Ontario Building Code, and the Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18: Cycling Facilities. These standards would be supplemented with Town engineering and construction requirements and consultation with the appropriate groups (e.g., Accessibility Advisory Committee), as necessary. More detailed design considerations should be considered during the preparation of a separate Active Transportation Master Plan, as recommended in the previous paragraph.

Figure 15: Conceptual Active Transportation Map



Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.
Note: Sidewalk inventory current as of 2014

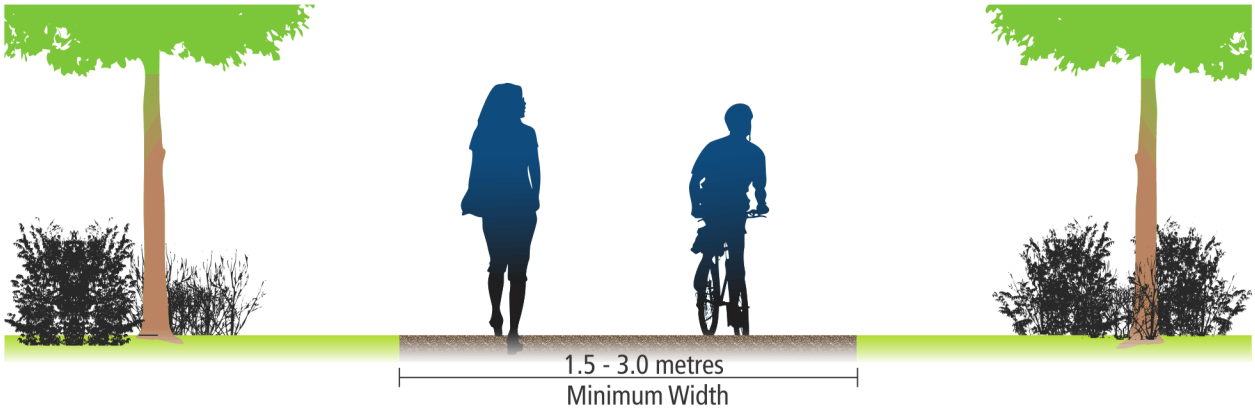
Active Transportation Design Considerations

Surface Type and Width

A range of trail surface types may be utilized provided that they are firm and stable, and contain no tripping hazards. Limestone screening for most trails, while asphalt and concrete should be used for higher traffic routes (including sidewalks). Woodchips should only be considered in environmentally sensitive areas and woodland trails. The Town currently provides a mix of surface types throughout its trail network.

Trail routes should be between 1.5 metres and 3.0 metres in width. The width should vary based on the volume of use. For example, sidewalks in St. Marys are 1.5 metres wide, which is sufficient to support bi-directional pedestrian movement. Riverview Walkway is approximately 3.0 metres in width as it accommodates higher volumes of pedestrian and cycling traffic.

Figure 16: Example Active Transportation Trail Width



Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, 2017

Trail Route through Kin Park

Signage and Wayfinding

Trail signage and wayfinding are critical components of an active transportation network as they are essential awareness tools to attract, guide, and direct users along designated pathways. Utilizing high tonal contrast and a sans serif font style, signage should be clear, consistent, and accessible, serving many purposes including, but not limited to:

- Identifying the name of the active transportation network to signify municipally-owned lands and trail routes;
- Providing information regarding trail length, surface, width, slope, and difficulty, accompanied by a map;
- Designating the walking/cycling route as a permitted recreational use trail;
- Identifying key points of interest along active transportation routes;
- Identifying permitted uses (e.g., walking, cycling, etc.);
- Describing rules pertaining to trail usage; and
- Hours of operation.

Trail signage can generally be categorized into six types, as described in Table 14. The Town has already implemented some of these signs in certain areas; however, appropriate signage should be considered for key areas along existing and future trail routes and at trail entrances. In some cases, some signage types may be incorporated into a single sign.

Examples of Trail Signage in St. Marys

Amenities

Complementary to trail signage, there are a plethora of other amenities that can be provided to enhance the comforts of St. Marys' active transportation network. Not only do amenities encourage the use of trails, they may also be necessary support for persons with disabilities, older adults and seniors, and children. At the Town's discretion, consideration should be given to the provision and placement of active transportation amenities including, but not limited to, seating, trash receptacles, shade, bike racks, staging areas, and landscaping and screening. Where possible, the Town should encourage the use of existing permanent and portable washroom facilities located at public facilities.

Table 14: Signage Typology

Signage Type	Purpose
Trail Head	Trail heads are located in highly visible areas that commonly serve as meeting places and are associated with supporting amenities such as a parking lot. Trail heads may also be located at existing parks and recreation facilities. Trail heads must include information including trail length and width, type of surface, slope, and location of amenities.
Location to consider	Trail access points should be considered at Grand Trunk Trail, Milt Dunnell Field, and Pyramid Recreation Centre, St. Marys Tennis Courts, Junction Station Dog Park, Ingersoll Street and Widder Street, Water Street and Queen Street.
Regulatory Sign	Denotes rules, conduct, and information users must follow, including hours of operation, permitted uses, restrictions, trail etiquette, and municipal contact information.
Location to consider	Located at all trail heads and access points such as at the Grand Trunk Trail, Milt Dunnell Field, and Pyramid Recreation Centre.
Wayfinding	Provides trail users with a graphic representation of the trail, including the users' current location, trail direction, length, key points of interest, and other key details.
Location to consider	Displayed prominently at all trail access points as well as at key points along trails (e.g., entry to the Avon Trail at Water Street and Glass Street.
Interpretive	Serves as an opportunity to showcase information that relates to the trail and surrounding environment. The information presented on the sign may include history, native species, or other interesting facts.
Location to consider	In visible locations along the trail, adjacent to key destinations such as the Grand Trunk Trail, Swimming Quarry, Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, and Riverview Walkway.
Route Marker	Provides users with information pertaining to the distance from a specified reference point (e.g, trail head, key destination, etc.).
Location to consider	Located at regular intervals along the trail (e.g., every 100 metres along Riverview Walkway, Grand Trunk Trail, or the Loop Trail).
Warning Sign	Warns users of potentially hazardous areas due to possibilities including, but not limited to, uneven terrain or naturally occurring hazards from changing weather conditions.
Location to consider	Trail heads or hazardous locations along trail routes (e.g., along the stairs that connect Grand Trunk Trail to Milt Dunnell Field).

Recommendations – Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities

28. Through an Official Plan Review, consider the following:

    a. Strengthen policies that support active transportation, trail development, and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, with reference to this Master Plan.

    b. Integrate the active transportation network (existing and conceptual trails) in Schedule "B-Road Classifications" or in a new Schedule to the Official Plan to serve as an awareness tool for Town staff, developers, planners, and interested members of the public.

    c. Establish policies requiring the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycling facilities as a condition of plan of subdivision approval, with consideration given to the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan.

29. Utilize a range of strategies to secure new lands for active transportation network development.

30. Engage the public in the planning and design process in advance of trail construction to facilitate opportunities for public input.

31. Prepare an Active Transportation Master Plan to assist with long-term implementation of the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan. The Active Transportation Master Plan should build upon the directions contained in this Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, including the following. The Town should identify other objectives for the Active Transportation Master Plan, as necessary.

    a. Establish a vision statement and guiding principles to reflect the Town's commitment to supporting and developing active transportation opportunities in St. Marys.

    b. Explore opportunities to enhance active transportation connections to the existing trail system. Modifications to existing conceptual trail routes may be permitted to recognize terrain and landscape features, as well as new trail opportunities.

    c. Identify active transportation design guidelines in the planning and development of trail routes, with consideration of provincial and municipal construction standards (including accessibility requirements).

    d. Engage the public and community groups to solicit input and feedback with respect to planning and designing active transportation infrastructure.

    e. Develop a trail hierarchy system to define types of active transportation routes, permitted uses, and design standards.

    f. Provide direction on the provision of active transportation amenities including, but not limited to, lighting, signage, parking, rest areas, and other ancillaries.

6.0 Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment

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

6.1 Overview of Recreation Facilities

Table 15 summarizes the indoor and outdoor recreation and leisure facilities owned by the Town of St. Marys. Recreation facilities provided by non-municipal organizations are excluded, although they are recognized for their contributions to the local recreation system and are referenced, where applicable.

Table 15: Summary of Recreation and Leisure Facilities

Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)
Ice Pads	2	Pyramid Recreation Centre (Blue Rink and Rock Rink)
Curling Pads	4	Lind Sportsplex
Indoor Aquatic Centre	1	Pyramid Recreation Centre
Fitness Spaces	0	-
Gymnasiums	0	-
Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms	10	**Halls:** Friendship Centre (2), Pyramid Recreation Centre, Town Hall, Lind Sportsplex Lounge **Meeting Rooms:** Friendship Centre (3), Pyramid Recreation Centre (2)
Youth Space	1	Pyramid Recreation Centre
Older Adult Space	1	Pyramid Recreation Centre (Friendship Centre)
Soccer Fields	6	**Full:** St. Marys DCVI (Lit), Meadowridge Park, Solis Park (2) **Junior:** Southvale Park, West Ward Park
Ball Diamonds	10	**Lit:** Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), Solis Park, Teddy's Field **Unlit:** Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame (2), East Ward Park (2), Milt Dunnell Field (2)
Tennis Courts	4	Outdoor Tennis Courts
Basketball Courts	0	-
Skateboard Parks	1	Skateboard Park
Outdoor Aquatics	2	Pyramid Recreation Centre (splash pad), St. Marys Swimming Quarry
Off-Leash Dog Parks	1	Junction Dog Park
Playgrounds	9	Cadzow Park, Early Learning Centre, East Ward Park, Kin Park, Meadowridge Park, Milt Dunnell Field, North Ward Park, Solis Park, West Ward Park

6.2 Arenas

Pyramid Recreation Centre

Supply

The Town has two ice pads – known as Blue Rink and Rock Rink – which are located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The Rock Rink was constructed in 1977 and accommodates over 1,000 spectators, while the Blue Rink was constructed in 2007 as a part of the Pyramid Recreation Centre expansion and has seating for over 300 spectators. Supporting amenities include 11 change rooms, two referee rooms, and storage spaces.

Market Trends

Winter ice sports such as hockey and figure skating have been definitive Canadian pastimes for decades. At a national level, Hockey Canada data indicates that participation in minor hockey is steadily declining across Canada and Ontario.[10] The decline in hockey participation is being driven by a number of factors including, but not limited to, escalating costs of equipment and travel along with concerns over safety. The increasing cost of renting ice is also a commonly stated concern among user groups in many communities.

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

Public Consultation

The Master Plan's community survey revealed that 26% of respondents participated in recreational skating over the past 12 months, while 23% participated in organized hockey, figure skating, and ringette. When questioned about municipal investment in recreation facilities, 60% of respondents were supportive of the Town spending additional funds on arenas, which ranked 12th out of 23 facility priorities.

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

[10] Hockey Canada. Annual General Meeting Reports.

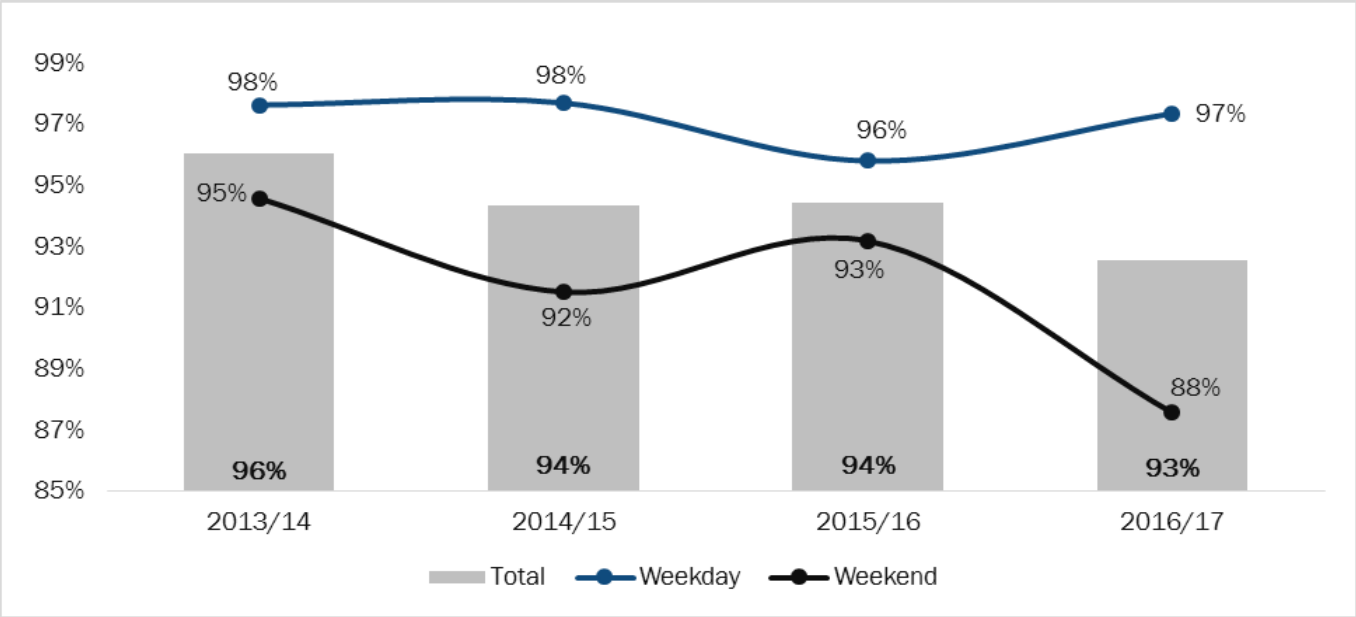
Usage Profile

Prime Time Ice Usage

The Town defines its prime time hours as 3 pm to 12 am during the weekday and 8 am to 12 pm during the weekend. Guided by these parameters, ice utilization data was reviewed for two core months of usage (November and February) and revealed the following notable findings:

- Over the past four ice seasons, Town-wide utilization declined from 86% to 82%. Town staff indicated that the root cause of this decline is due to tournaments that are no longer held during November and February, and the fact that ice rentals are not desirable during the weekend.
- The most popular times to rent ice is during the week, particularly between 5 pm and 10 pm. Ice utilization was 97% for the 2016/17 season, which is considered to be a very strong level of usage. As a result, there is limited surplus ice available during this period.
- Ice utilization during shoulder prime time hours – before 5 pm and after 10 pm during the week – as well as weekend hours have much lower utilization levels, which suggests that there is capacity to accommodate additional ice rentals. In a number of communities, there appears to be a cultural shift occurring whereby people are less willing to use arenas during shoulder and weekend timeslots compared to generations of previous arena users that would take the ice during those periods.

Figure 17: Town-wide Ice Utilization During Core Prime Time Hours, 2013-2017



Source: Town of St. Marys. Weekday: 5 pm to 10 pm. Weekend: 8 am to 9 pm.

Non-Prime Time Ice Usage

Non-prime time hours generally have low levels of usage given that the majority of users are not available during the day. As a result, the Town offers a number of free and low-cost drop-in skating programs including, but not limited to, Public Skate, Adult Skate, Lunch Hour Skate. Participation data for these programs are summarized in Table 16. Over the past four skating seasons, participation in drop-in skating programs have declined by 8% from 648 to 598 participants. The most popular programs is Public Skating, followed closely by PA Day/Holiday Skates and Tiny Tots Skating.

Table 16: Summary of Participation in Drop-in Skating

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Change
Tiny Tots Skating	194	87	117	174	-20 (-10%)
Adult Skating	42	18	2	4	-38 (-90%)
PA Day and Holiday Skates	45	50	128	172	+127 (+280%)
Noon Hours Skating	12	4	14	48	+36 (+300%)
Public Skating	355	399	549	200	-155 (-44%)
Total	648	558	810	598	-50 (-8%)

Source: Town of St. Marys

Needs Analysis

To determine ice pad requirements over the master planning period, a market-specific provision target is applied as it is able to consider the impact of participation trends, accepted standards of play, population growth, demographic factors, and other inputs. The St. Marys Recreation Complex Expansion Feasibility Study (2005) utilized a provision target of 700 participants per pad, which considers both minor and adult players. Given that the majority of the Town's prime time hours are used by minor groups and the fact that adult groups have a greater mobility to utilize ice in adjacent municipalities and on the fringes or less desirable prime time hours (e.g., after 10 pm or during the weekend), a market-based provision target for minor groups is recommended. Municipalities that have a similar ice usage profile as St. Marys utilizes a provision target of one ice pad per 400 to 450 minor participants to determine ice requirements.

The St. Marys Minor Hockey Association and the St. Marys Ringette Association reported a combined membership of 499 participants through the Stakeholder Survey (excluding non-residents, there are 443 players). In addition to these two users, there are other minor groups that utilize ice in St. Marys including the St. Marys Figure Skating Club and the St. Marys Lincolns (Junior B), which are estimated to have a total of approximately 81 participants.

As a result the Town has a collective membership of 524 minor players, which represents a capture rate of 43% of the total children/youth population (age 5-19). Applying the existing proportion of ice users to the estimated children/youth population in 2026 suggests that there could be approximately 599 participants by the end of the planning period. Given that there is a high proportion of the children/youth population that play ice sports, a provision target of one ice pad per 400 minor participants is assessed (noting that this standard also assumes that a sufficient degree of access will continue to be provided for adult usage, though primarily outside of early weekday evening hours).

Based on the recommended service target, there is currently a surplus of ice, reconfirming previous utilization data/findings, which indicated that the Town has capacity to accommodate additional rentals within the existing supply. It is expected that the Town's two ice pads will be sufficient to serve the needs of arena users. Although the Town's ice groups indicated their preference for weekday hours, efforts should be made to encourage the use of available ice, particularly during the shoulder and weekend hours to maximize the efficient use of the arena. In addition, the Town may wish to consider offering additional drop-in skating programs during weekend times, to further promote ice usage during these periods. While it is recognized that the Town practices blackout periods to reduce arena operating costs, this practise should only continue where it does not negatively impact the playing schedules. Blackout periods should be coordinated with the Town's arena users to avoid any foreseeable conflict.

Table 17: Projected Ice Pad Requirements

	2017 (Current)	2026 (Projected)
Population *Current year population assumed to be consistent with 2016 Census Population	7,265*	8,320
Children/Youth Population (Age 5-19) *Estimated population based on a proportion of 17% from the 2016 Census Population	1,230	1,409*
Participation Based on a children/youth penetration rate of 43%	524	599
Required Number of Ice Pads Based on a service target of one ice pad per 400 minor participants	1.3	1.5
Surplus (Deficit)	0.7	0.5

Recommendations – Arenas

32. To maximize the efficient use of the Town's ice pads, effort should be made to encourage greater use of available ice, particularly during shoulder and weekend hours. Other strategies may include, but not be limited to, promoting drop-in skating programs during available prime time hours on the weekend and co-ordinating blackout periods with user groups to ensure that it does not negatively impact playing schedules. (The existing supply of two ice pads is expected to be sufficient to serve ice users over the planning period)

6.3 Curling Pads

Supply

There are four curling sheets located at the Lind Sportsplex. Constructed in 1998, this facility is operated by the St. Marys Curling Association during the fall and winter months, while the Town operates the facility during the spring and summer for activities such as shuffleboard when the curling sheets are removed. While, the Lind Sportsplex is generally in good condition, staff identified the need to replace the roof as a part of a future capital renewal project.

Market Trends

Regional differences exist with respect to curling. Experience in other communities suggests that curling is a sport in decline as clubs are challenged with keeping doors open as their memberships decline, with some clubs folding completely. On the other hand, some clubs continue to thrive. Research completed by Curling Canada revealed that although the sport continues to appeal largely to older adults and seniors, many curling clubs are offering youth leagues and programs to recruit new members and help sustain membership levels as older members become less active in the sport.

Consultation

Membership data provided by the St. Marys Curling Association revealed that participation has remained stable over the past four years, reporting 194 members for the 2016/17 season. No input from the general public was received with respect to curling facilities.

Usage Profile

Given that the Town's curling pads are operated by the St. Marys Curling Association, usage data is not available. Discussions with Town staff and the Association indicates that the curling pads are generally well used as the organization offers a number of leagues for men, women, and junior curlers.

Needs Analysis

The Association has sustained membership at similar levels in recent years, representing demographic segments from children to older adults. Future membership growth may be anticipated due to the aging of the Town's population; however, there are many factors that may impact growth of the sport at the local level. Curling is considered to be a niche activity that, because of its small membership base, makes it more susceptible to fluctuations in market and sport trends. In addition, competition from surrounding curling clubs may limit the Association's ability to attract members over the long term. For example, the Ilderton Curling Club is strong community organization located within a 30 minute drive of St. Marys and draws many of its members from a similar regional market catchment as the St. Marys Curling Association which may result in some competition for the same player base.

Lind Sportsplex

As a general guide, one curling sheet for every 100 members/active participants is a common metric for evaluating facility needs. The Association's current membership represents less than 3% of the Town's population. Assuming that the proportion of curlers remains unchanged over the next ten years, it is estimated that there may be up to 222 curling participants by the end of the planning period. This implies that there is ample capacity within the existing curling facility to accommodate both existing and projected needs. As a result, no additional curling pads are required over the planning period. Recognizing that there is capacity to grow participation levels at the Lind Sportsplex, the Town is encouraged to work with the Association to collectively explore ways in which to maximize utilization and participation levels by attracting new members, programs, and events.

Recommendations – Curling Pads

33. The Town should work with the St. Marys Curling Association to explore ways in which to maximize utilization and participation levels by attracting new members, programs, and events. (No additional curling pads are expected to be required during the planning period)

6.4 Indoor Aquatics

Supply

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

Market Trends

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

Public Consultation

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

Usage

While there is a substantial cost associated with operating and maintaining an indoor aquatic facility, the Town has experienced an uptake in pool usage over the past three years. A summary of pool usage in registered and drop-in programs, as well as pool rentals, is summarized in Table 18.

The Town offers a number of registered and drop-in swimming programs that appeal to many age groups and skill levels. Participants may register in advance for programs including learn-to-swim and advanced aquatics. While registration in these programs is modest, the number of swimmers increased by 2% over the past three years from 1,363 to 1,396.

The Town also offers a number of drop-in swim programs such as lane swim, aquafit, public swim, and more. The Town's drop-in swim programs are very popular. Between 2014 and 2016, the number of participants in drop-in swim programs grew from 20,463 to 23,700 participants, representing an increase of 16%. With the exception of public swim, which declined slightly by 4%, all other program areas experienced varying levels of growth, with children/youth swims having grown the most by 63%.

Complementary to the municipal swim programs, the Town reported a modest level of utilization from private rentals and usage from regular swim team users. Over the past three years, the number of hours booked at the indoor aquatic centre increased by 7% from 420 to 448 hours. This growth is driven by an increase in

rentals from swim organizations as usage from these groups increased by 13%. This growth is offset by a drop in private rentals, which declined by 20%.

Table 18: Summary of Indoor Aquatic Usage, 2014 - 2016

	2014	2015	2016	Change
Registered Programs (Registrants)				
Learn to Swim, Advanced	1,363	1,517	1,396	33 (2%)
Drop-in Programs (Participants)				
Children/Youth Swim	509	605	830	321 (63%)
Lane Swim	4,545	4,444	5,789	1,244 (27%)
Public Swim	8,181	7,746	7,885	-296 (-4%)
Aquafit	7,228	8,347	9,196	1,968 (27%)
Total Drop-in Swim	20,463	21,142	23,700	3,264 (16%)
Rentals (Hours)				
Private Rentals	82	65	66	-16 (20%)
Swim Team Rentals	338	311	382	44 (13%)
Total Rentals	420	376	448	28 (7%)

Source: Town of St. Marys

Needs Analysis

Throughout the planning process, the indoor pool at the Pyramid Recreation Centre was cited as one of the most highly valued facilities in the Town. Residents are fortunate to have access to a facility of this calibre given that it is uncommon for communities of this size to offer a municipal aquatics centre.

A population-based service target of one indoor aquatic centre for every 30,000 residents is typically applied to identify facility needs in small to mid-size communities. With a 2016 Census population of 7,265, St. Marys enjoys a higher level of service since the expansion of the Pyramid Recreation Centre to include a pool. With the Town's population expected to grow to 8,320 residents by the end of the planning period, it is fully expected that the existing pool will be sufficient for meeting local needs for the next ten years.

The high level of service provided by the Town of St. Marys is well beyond the norm compared to the rest of the province as it relates to operating an indoor aquatics centre the size of the Pyramid Centre. Small to mid-size communities typically lack the critical mass of population and strength in their tax base to offset the substantial financial pressures generated by the cost to construct, operate and maintain indoor aquatic centres. Recent estimates place the PRC's indoor aquatics centre's net operating subsidy at over $600,000 annually and while operating expenditures appear in line with other indoor pools, St. Marys limited population base appears to be constraining revenue generation potential which is one reason the operating subsidy may be what it is (i.e. the Town is unable to generate economies of scale through its population base). Notwithstanding the fiscal challenges, smaller municipalities that have chosen to operate aquatic facilities, while few and far between, usually do so in recognition that costs are offset by intangible benefits - such as improved health and physical activity levels, enhanced quality of life, ability to attract new residents and businesses to the community, etc. - that are not easily quantified with a monetary value.

In St. Marys, the previous Town Council's decision to build the indoor pool exemplifies the dichotomy of balancing fiscal reality with enhanced community benefit, an argument that is very apparent in St. Marys today. Based upon community consultations and researching public sentiment over the past number of years, there is clearly a divide in opinion between residents that use the indoor pool and those that do not. Both parties contribute taxes that fund the cost of pool infrastructure and operations, though philosophically the conflicting opinions between users and non-users extends beyond the pool but also applies to other recreation facilities provided as a community service (for example, taxpayers are funding arenas and sports fields that are also used by certain segments of the population).

The most striking difference, however, is that the net operating subsidy for an indoor pool tends to be considerably higher than many other recreation facilities. For example, an arena can generate greater revenues per hour due to prevailing market rental rates while sports fields have much lower operating costs, which means these facilities can attain greater cost-recovery levels than would an indoor pool. As a result of the significant financial burden carried by the Town's indoor pool, Town Council and Staff have requested that the Master Plan provide guidance with respect to ongoing operations over the next ten years.

Three options have been advanced for further evaluation by the Town of St. Marys. A decision to continue operations is clouded by the fact that the indoor pool was constructed in 2008 - less than ten years ago - meaning the Town's multi-million dollar investment at that time needs to be strongly considered as part of any future decision. Potential strategies for the Town include seeking a partner to share in the operational costs of the pool, continuing to operate the pool itself under the status quo, or decommissioning the indoor pool altogether.

Option #1 (Preferred Strategy) – Seek a Third-Party Facility Operator/Partner

The preferred strategy is for the Town to investigate partnership opportunities with an interested community organization(s) to operate the indoor aquatic facility at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. This approach is consistent with the Town of St. Marys Strategic Plan's Strategic Pillar #4 that directs the Town to "investigate the ability to attract the YMCA or any other organization to locate within the PRC."[11] YMCAs across North America have long-standing experience in operating indoor aquatic centres and more regionally, YMCAs in southwestern Ontario have been increasingly developing facility partnerships with their municipal counterparts.

Through the Master Plan process, the Consulting Team was tasked with undertaking initial discussions with the YMCA of Stratford-Perth to investigate its interest in locating certain programs and services to the Pyramid Recreation Centre. Discussions revealed that the YMCA is amenable to continue exploring the potential partnership opportunity with the Town, including assuming operations of the indoor aquatic centre (contingent upon certain parameters). The details of discussions held with both the Town and the YMCA regarding the potential partnership is discussed further in Section 4.5 (Potential Partnership with the YMCA).

There are many benefits associated with this undertaking such as the ability to transition aquatic staffing and programming to a third-party group, thereby reducing municipal resources that are currently being allocated to this area. Securing a partnership with an experienced facility provider with an established membership base provides an opportunity to draw its members to the Pyramid Recreation Centre and provide an enhanced level of aquatic programming that may attract new facility users. Should the Town be successful in establishing a partnership with a third-party operator,

[11] Town of St. Marys. January 2017. St. Marys Strategic Plan Revision and Update. pp.14.

consideration should also be given to third-party programming of other community spaces within the Pyramid Recreation Centre, given that its multi-purpose spaces and community halls are underutilized (discussed further in section 5.6).

The disadvantages associated with this strategy should also be considered when exploring partnership opportunities. For example, shifting pool operations and program delivery to a third-party group could limit general public access to the pool, and as a result, programming costs and pool rentals may no longer be under the control of the Town. If the third-party operator is a membership-based organization, residents who wish to participate in aquatic programs may thus be required to purchase a membership.

This option should only be considered should the Town and YMCA, or another related recreation or community organization, reach a partnership agreement that is satisfactory to each party. In the event that the Town is unable to negotiate a third-party partnership agreement that the municipality deems to be in the best interest of its residents, the other options contained in this Master Plan should be considered.

Option #2 (Town-Operated) – Continue with Municipal Pool Operations and Maintenance

Under a continued Town-operated option, the Town of St. Marys would continue to be responsible for indoor aquatic operations including direct programming, staffing, and facility maintenance during the planning period. Doing so would ensure that all residents have access to indoor aquatic-based recreation activities. It is recognized that the Town has made efforts to increase pool usage over the past three years, which has led to positive results. Should this option be considered, it is recommended that the Town continue to explore opportunities to increase pool usage even further to maximize utilization (consistent with the 2012 Task Force's recommendation associate with 'Recreation Leadership' to work with an "entrepreneurial mindset"), including offering new programs, partnerships, or other opportunities to attract participants. However, this option also means that the Town is responsible for all costs of operation, no matter how sizeable they may be.

Option #3 (Not Recommended) – Permanent or Temporary Closure of the Indoor Pool

A third option would be to permanently or temporarily cease operations and decommission the indoor pool to provide financial relief to the Town and its taxpayers in terms of ongoing operating costs. It is recognized that the temporary closure of the pool was previously considered through the Town's 2012 Mayor's Task Force on Recreation, which recommended two options:

- Temporary Closure of the PRC Aquatic Facility – 2 years of full closure
- Temporary Closure of the PRC Aquatic Facility – Three Month (Spring/Summer) Seasonal Closure for Two Seasons

As a part of this master planning exercise, the option to permanently or temporarily close the indoor pool was again considered. There are a number of factors that must be considered when evaluating this option. The Master Plan identifies that swimming is a core level of service as the Town has made a conscious decision and investment in indoor (and outdoor) aquatic facilities. The ability and opportunity to learn to swim has become an essential life skill that all residents should have access to, regardless of age or ability.

Aquatic facilities are highly desirable community amenities as swimming is considered to be a 'cradle to grave' activity that can be pursued at any life stage. Young families may seek parent and tot sessions or swim lessons, while older adults and seniors may desire aquafit sessions. As St. Marys' population continues to age, proximity to an indoor pool will be highly beneficial to older adults and seniors, particularly for those who not able to travel far distances. Indoor pools may also serve to draw in new residents and assist with population retention as access to high quality recreation facilities is often a consideration when deciding where to live. While residents also have access to an outdoor swimming quarry, the indoor pool provides a swimming experience that users are familiar with as not all residents may be comfortable with swimming outdoors in a natural environment. Temporary closure of the indoor pool would be counter-productive to the benefits available to residents and it could quite likely push existing Aquatic Facility users to other facilities in adjacent municipalities during the interim or cause certain residents (e.g. seniors) to eliminate the activity from their lives. There is no certainty that existing users will return to St. Marys once the indoor is reopened, thus further impacting usage levels (and revenue) over the long term.

Moreover, the operations of the indoor pool need to be considered. Temporary closure of the indoor pool may suggest that the Town may shut off all mechanical equipment for up to two years. However, some equipment may not be able to be completely shut off and as a result, there will still be some operational and maintenance costs associated with the pool. Temporarily shutting down equipment for a two year period may also accelerate the deterioration of equipment, particularly given that the pool utilizes salt water.

Given the considerations described above, permanent or temporary closure of the pool is not recommended. The Town is encouraged to explore the options to retain the indoor pool, as they are presented in this Master Plan, in an exhaustive manner to ensure that all residents continue to have the opportunity to learn to swim as it has become an essential life skill and Canadian pastime. It is also noted that the 2012 Task Force indicated that should the Town not temporarily close the PRC pool, that the Cadzow Pool be decommissioned. With this later having occurred, the opportunity to rely on an existing outdoor pool is no longer an option placing greater local reliance on the PRC pool.

Recommendations – Indoor Aquatics
34. Recognizing the financial burden associated with operating the indoor pool at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the Town should investigate partnership opportunities in an effort to seek a third party facility operator / partner. Should this investigation fail to result in a partnership, the Town should consider the other, less desirable, option noted in the Master Plan.

6.5 Fitness Spaces

Supply

The Town offers limited community fitness programs within its multi-purpose spaces in the Community Centre space at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

Market Trends

The provision of fitness facilities varies in each community. While some municipalities offer full-service fitness facilities, other municipalities refrain from entering into this level service to avoid competition with the private

sector. Municipalities most often provide aerobics studio and multi-purpose spaces that can accommodate a broad range of active living programming as they can be easily accommodated within multi-use community centres and are generally low cost to operate. Locally, the YMCA of Stratford-Perth, which has dedicated space at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital, offers a number of fitness classes for YMCA members only. Other equipment-based fitness centres can be found within driving distance to area municipalities including Stratford and London.

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

Public Consultation

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

Needs Analysis

Fitness Centre

Equipment-based fitness facilities are traditionally provided by the private sector given their ability to provide a premium level of service and high quality facilities. For these reasons, smaller municipalities such as St. Marys often elect to not enter into this market than directly compete with for-profit entities that can expend greater resources on the latest fitness equipment and offer an enhanced fitness experience. Smaller municipalities that decide to enter into the market tend to provide basic fitness equipment and offer a more entry-level fitness experience, often in a turnkey environment, or through a third party operator. Given that there are a number of equipment-based fitness centres in the region, municipal entry into this service is not recommended.

As mentioned in the indoor aquatics assessment (Section 6.4), the YMCA expressed interest in working with the Town to explore the feasibility of shifting its operations from its current location at the Hospital to the Pyramid Recreation Centre to operate the pool component of the facility. The YMCA indicates that it would require a fitness centre within the Pyramid Recreation Centre if it is to attain a sustainable business model; however, the YMCA also noted that it would view any capital investment required to provide a fitness centre as being the responsibility of the Town. Opportunities to establish a fitness centre at the Pyramid Recreation Centre are limited, however, there are two facility provision options that could be considered in an effort to work with the YMCA to advance a potential partnership agreement. Both strategies are subject to further discussion and investigation between the YMCA and the Town, and preferably in consultation with the public. An architectural assessment will also be required for both options to confirm evaluate space requirements, repurposing feasibility, and capital costs.

Option #1 – Repurpose Existing Space within the Pyramid Recreation Centre

A potentially cost-effective solution to develop a fitness centre to accommodate the YMCA is to repurpose existing space at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. The most logical space to repurpose would be a community hall, meeting room, and/or multi-purpose space given that these spaces are generally provided to support community uses or other facility components and as a result, they tend to be underutilized. As discussed in Section 5.6, the community spaces in the Pyramid Recreation Centre are in fact underutilized but unfortunately the majority of these spaces may not be appropriate to repurpose to a fitness centre due to factors such as being undersized size and may not facilitate effective user circulation within the facility.

Should investigations reveal that repurposing an existing space to a fitness centre is not cost-effective nor functionally viable, Option #2 should be explored.

Option #2 – Expand the Pyramid Recreation Centre to Provide a Fitness Centre

Expanding the Pyramid Recreation Centre may provide an opportunity to offer a modern space that is purpose-built to effectively function as a fitness centre. A high level examination of the site suggests that suitable expansion options are limited. It is recognized that this option is contrary to the Town's strategic goals to optimize the use of existing facilities; however, this option is worthy of consideration (should existing space not be able to be re-purposed) as it may benefit the Town in reducing long-term pool operating cost by partnering with the YMCA.

Indoor Walking

According to recreation surveys conducted across Ontario, walking is typically the most popular recreational activity given that it is a self-structured activity that residents can engage at ones leisure. This is one reason, among many, that has resulted in the growing popularity of indoor walking tracks and/or walking routes as they offer several benefits such as year-round training for sport organizations and providing a safe and controlled environment for walking. Given Canada's varied climate conditions, walking tracks and/or routes within community centres offer intangible benefits by promoting physical health and activity as well as being attractive for older adults/seniors and caregivers (with strollers) particularly during the winter months. The steady volume of use and foot traffic through a facility can also bolster a facility's profile as a recreation hub.

It is recognized that the original proposed design for the Pyramid Recreation Centre included an indoor walking track; however, it was removed from the final design to reduce construction costs. As a result, a walking route within the facility would be more readily achievable. By identifying designated walking routes within circulation areas or having designated walking times within large open spaces such as in a community hall, gymnasium, or arena. This approach is currently implemented in the Town through the Friendship Centre as older adults can participate in indoor walking around the arena floor pad when the ice is removed in the summer. Senior Services also offers an indoor walking program at St. Marys DCVI. In an effort to respond to community requests for more indoor walking opportunities as well as bolster foot traffic through the facility, consideration should be given to offering the walking program to all residents and expand walking routes to include circulation areas and/or the Community Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

Recommendations – Fitness Spaces
35. If a third party partnership necessitates the provision of a fitness centre at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, investigate facility options through an architectural assessment.
36. Explore opportunities to offer the indoor walking program to all residents and expand walking routes to include circulation areas and/or the Community Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to provide the program on a year-round basis when the arena is in use during the skating season.

6.6 Community Halls, Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms

Supply

The Town provides a number of community halls, multi-purpose spaces, and meeting rooms that can be used for a broad range of activities including, but not limited to, municipal programs, meetings, birthdays, social gatherings, weddings, banquets, theatrical performances, and other special events. A summary of available spaces is listed below.

Multi-Purpose / Meeting Rooms	Community Centres / Halls
• P.R.C. Meeting Room (4) • P.R.C. End Zone • P.R.C. Friendship Centre Multi-Purpose Room • Lind Sportsplex Lounge	• P.R.C. Friendship Centre Main Hall • P.R.C. Community Centre • Town Hall Auditorium

Some spaces can also be partitioned into smaller facilities to accommodate users seeking smaller spaces. Space are equipped with a variety of amenities and features to accommodate an array of uses including, but not limited to, a full kitchen, table and seating, storage, washrooms, and more. The Town's capital budget allocates approximately $277,000 towards various projects related to improving community rooms located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre including updating sound systems and replacing flooring and kitchen equipment. Various upgrades are also planned to be undertaken to the Town Hall Auditorium, which is to be funded in part by an Ontario Trillium grant.

Market Trends

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

Public Consultation

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

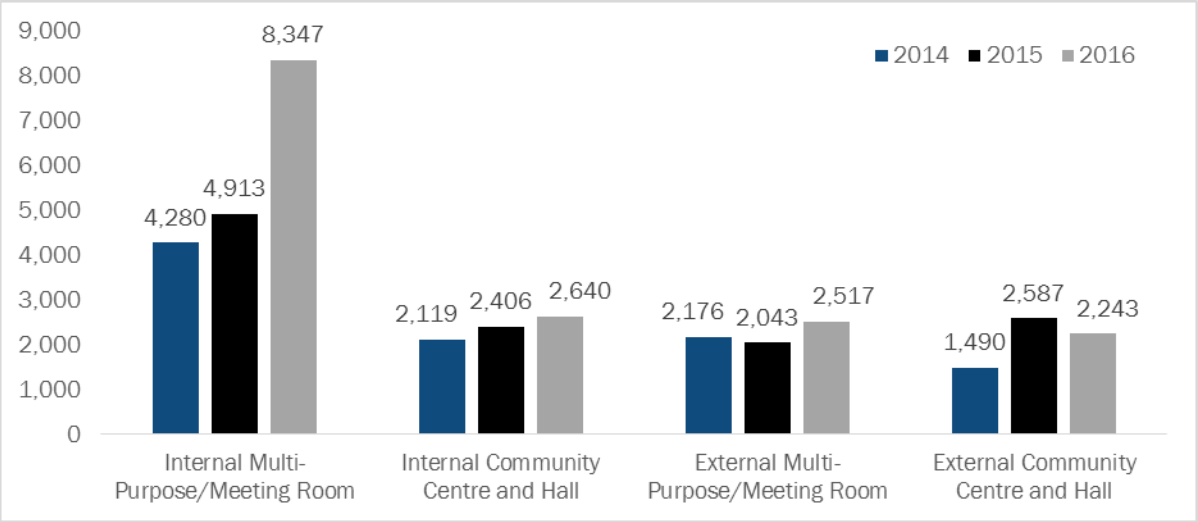
Usage Profile

A review of usage data provided by the Town reveals that its multi-purpose spaces and meeting rooms are moderately used. In 2016, these spaces were booked for approximately 15,700 hours, representing a utilization rate of 22%. This level of usage is generally expected for these types of facilities given that they are not high demand facilities but rather support spaces to accommodate various community uses. This statistic also includes daytime hours, which contributes to the low level of utilization. It is noted that usage of these spaces have grown by 6% compared to 2014, which represents an increase of nearly 5,700 hours. This finding suggesting that the Town has made improvements in how these spaces are used, although it is recognized that the majority of this increase is driven by internal usage; increases in external rentals have been modest (Figure 18). On a Town-wide basis, there are approximately 57,000 surplus hours available for booking. According to the utilization data, the following trends were observed:

- **Multi-Purpose/Meeting Rooms** are most commonly used type of community space. In 2016, multi-purpose and meeting rooms were used for nearly 11,000 hours, which accounted for over two-thirds of all Town-wide bookings. The End-Zone and Friendship Centre Room A were the most frequently used rooms, which each had approximately 2,600 hours of bookings. Friendship Centre Room C had the fewest number of bookings (800 hours). There are approximately 29,000 surplus hours available.

- **Community Centres and Halls** were booked for approximately 4,800 hours in 2016. The auditorium at the Town Hall was the most used space with 1,625 booked hours. The least used space is the whole Community Centre Hall, which had 324 booked hours. There are approximately 28,000 surplus hours available.

Figure 18: Summary of Multi-Use Space and Meeting Room Usage (Number of Hours), 2014 – 2016



Source: Town of St. Marys. Internal uses include municipal meetings and programs. External uses includes community rentals.

Needs Analysis

There are many factors influencing the level of usage of these spaces such as location, cost, capacity, number and type of amenities, and more. Regardless of these factors, these spaces tend to have low to moderate usage levels as they are typically used as supporting or secondary spaces. Nevertheless, the availability of convenient and affordable community space is essential to ensure that residents and community groups have formal gathering places to engage in a range of activities. With an abundance of surplus time available within the Town's existing supply, additional large or small community space is not required. This is supported by the fact that no new indoor recreation facilities are recommended during this planning period that would warrant the co-location of new multi-purpose and meeting spaces. As a result, the recommended approach is to maximize the use of existing spaces.

Recommendations – Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms

37. Continue to promote and encourage the use of the Town's multi-use spaces and meeting rooms to facilitate a broad range of uses and to ensure that the community is aware of the facilities that are available.

6.7 Gymnasiums

Supply

The Town does not provide a gymnasium, nor does it have regular access to any school gymnasium. The Town does, however, provide a select number of active indoor recreation and fitness programs at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in its multi-purpose rooms and community halls.

Market Trends

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

Public Consultation

Support for a gymnasium in St. Marys was somewhat mixed through input received through community consultations. On one hand, community survey results showed 57% support for municipal investment in gymnasiums, ranking 16th out of 23 facility priorities and suggesting there were greater community priorities among survey respondents. While the community survey did not survey respondents about gymnasium usage, it revealed that participation in certain gymnasium-based activities was low with 9% and 8% of respondents participating in basketball and pickleball, respectively, which were some of the least popular activities over the past 12 months (though this may also be due in part to few offerings being available for gym-based activities).

On the other hand, participants at the Master Plan's Launch Event made a number of requests for a multi-purpose gymnasium which is understandable given that the lack of a gymnasium and difficulties in accessing quality gym space through schools. For the latter, Launch Event attendees noted a need for the Town and the school boards to explore ways to improve community access to school gyms by way of better scheduling and

greater affordability. The stakeholder survey submitted by the St. Marys Friendship Centre articulated a need for gymnasium space in the Town while a number of requests for pickleball courts were also received through the community survey, a sport that is typically played in gymnasiums (for indoor play). St. Marys Minor Soccer also expressed the desire for a large indoor space to facilitate indoor soccer programs.

Needs Analysis

Across the Province, gymnasium sports continue to exhibit high levels of demand among all age groups, especially youth and young adults. Gymnasiums provide flexible space where a variety of activities can be scheduled. Most often, gymnasiums are used for active sports such as basketball, volleyball, ball hockey, and, targeting the older adult demographic, pickleball. In addition, gymnasiums can be used for active living programs such as aerobics, fitness, and dance. In communities that do not have gymnasiums, such as in St. Marys, some of these types of programs can be accommodated in multi-purpose spaces and community halls provided adequate space and ceiling height exists.

Moving forward, the preferred approach is to secure regular access to school gymnasiums given that there are currently a number of schools in the area. Through the consultation process, it was identified that the Town was previously in discussions with the Avon Maitland District School Board to formulate a reciprocal use agreement, however, ultimately this agreement was never finalized. A reciprocal agreement would allow the Town to access gymnasiums and other school facilities, in exchange for the schools being able to utilize municipal facilities. Reciprocal agreements have been successfully utilized in other municipalities (e.g. London) as a means to maximize facility utilization and share responsibilities and resources, while minimizing facility duplication. Given these benefits, it is recommended that the Town continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to finalize a reciprocal use agreement on agreeable terms. There is also merit in opening dialogue with the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board to explore access at Holy Name of Mary Catholic School. Achieving consistent gymnasium access to schools would allow the Town to cost-effectively expand its programming complement, particularly for youth and older adults, as well as address the pent up demand for gymnasium space from community groups such as minor soccer.

Augmenting efforts to access to school gymnasiums, the Town should continue to develop its offering of active indoor recreation programming that can be accommodated through existing multi-purpose spaces, community halls, and arena floor pads. This strategy has been employed by the Town for some time with success and it should continue on the basis that these spaces are currently underutilized.

Recommendations – Gymnasiums

38. Engage the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board and continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to formalize reciprocal agreements to facilitate regular access to school gymnasiums located in St. Marys (and other school facility space, as required).

39. Continue to develop and offer, where feasible, gymnasium-based recreation activities in the Town's community halls, multi-purpose spaces, and arena dry floor pads, to improve utilization levels in those spaces.

6.8 Youth Space

Supply

The St. Marys Youth Centre, located within the Pyramid Recreation Centre, is open to all youth and teens between Grades 3 to 10, while some general fitness programs are also available for older teens outside of the youth centre. According to the Town's Program and Services Guide, the Youth Centre's mission is to provide local and area youth with a safe and inclusive space to socialize and build positive relationships, encourage development and reinforce positive play. The Youth Centre is open daily during the week between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm where youth can drop-in to use the computers, play games, watch TV, do homework, play dodgeball, use the kitchen, and more.

St. Marys Youth Centre

Market Trends

The provision of space for youth and teens offers a number of benefits, particularly given that these age groups are often under-represented segments of the population. Youth and teens have specific recreational needs and preferences, resulting in the need to ensure that spaces are designed appropriately. Research has revealed that youth between the ages of 10 and 19 years tend to prefer unorganized and self-structured activities, prompting the emergence of drop-in youth spaces that allow users to engage in their desired activities on their own schedule. These spaces also function as a safe environment to facilitate positive reinforcement to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health among youth.

Public Consultation

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

Needs Analysis

There are no specific provision targets for the development of dedicated youth space as the need for these spaces are generally based on the ability to be co-located with other complementary facilities to leverage potential cross-programming opportunities, and complement available services that are offered in the area. At present, the St. Marys Youth Centre is well positioned to respond to the needs of youth and early-teens given that it is presently located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. Its location within close proximity to the Little Falls Public School and St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute results in an ability to draw many children and youth. The existing St. Marys Youth Centre is expected to serve the needs of youth over the time frame of this Master Plan while the absence of recommended new indoor recreation facilities precludes the Town from constructing new youth space.

Moving forward, the Town should continue to focus on developing engaging youth program opportunities. The Town has made strides in this regard by exploring new program areas, including non-sport opportunities that

are complementary to youth drop-in times. Should the Town be successful in formalizing a reciprocal agreement with the public and/or catholic school board (Recommendation #38), youth programming opportunities could be expanded considerably, thereby reducing the need to provide a new youth space). Most recently, the Town has expanded the membership program to the St. Marys Youth Centre to enhance outreach, which is now open to students from grade 3 to 10 (previously from grade 4 to 8). The uptake in youth memberships as a result of this change has been very popular as the number of memberships has increased four-fold from 42 to 173 memberships. This indicates that there is demand for youth memberships and programming.

Recognizing the success of the Town's efforts of expanding opportunities for youth and early-teens in St. Marys, it is recommended that the Town continue to expand access to the Youth Centre. This will require the Town to expand the eligibility requirements for purchasing a membership to the Youth Centre to include senior high school students to enhance the recreational opportunities for this segment of the population, recognizing the fact that respondents from the Online Community Survey believed that recreation opportunities for this age cohort is underserved.

There are other strategies that the Town can explore to ensure that youth feel engaged in the community particularly as it is expected that this portion of the population is expected to increase. While the Town does not have age cohort projections for the planning period, it is estimated that there will be approximately 940 youth (ages 10-19) by 2026, assuming that the existing proportion of youth remains the same (11%). Regardless of this statistic, it can be expected that there will be some level of youth presence in the community and there is a need to ensure that they feel that their voices are heard and that their needs are being met. This can be achieved by establishing an annual youth forum to identify programming gap areas such as indoor and outdoor sports and non-sport activities, discuss opportunities to improve recreation and leisure, and other relevant matters related to youth. Soliciting input from participants at the St. Marys Youth Centre or through municipal programs or schools would represent an excellent point of departure in engaging youth in this process.

Recommendations – Youth Space
40. Continue efforts to enhance children and youth opportunities and access to the Youth Centre and expand eligibility requirements to include senior high school students. (No additional youth spaces are recommended during this planning period)
41. Establish an annual youth forum to identify programming gap areas, discuss opportunities to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters related to youth.

6.9 Older Adult Space

Supply

The Town provides an older adult space known as the Friendship Centre, integrated within the Pyramid Recreation Centre, which provides a place for persons over the age of 50 to gather, socialize, and to participate in a broad range of recreation activities. The Friendship Centre also provides older adults with access to a number of home and support services such as Meals on Wheels, shopping services, wellness seminars, and more. Membership in the Friendship Centre is optional, although members are eligible for benefits such as discounts on programs and facility rentals.

St. Marys Friendship Centre

Market Trends

The provision of older adult space is an important consideration when designing and/or improving recreation facilities as it provides a location for a growing segment of the population to gather, share common interests, and remain socially engaged within their community. As older adults and seniors become more sophisticated with their recreational expectations, municipalities are faced with increasing pressures to provide a range of recreation pursuits that respond to broad interests. Users continue to seek traditional activities such as reading and guest speakers, while others desire active recreation programs and activities centred on socialization. While communities have responded to the rise of the 'active' older adult and seniors through the provision of low impact fitness activities, municipalities frequently receive requests for new or expanded recreation activities (e.g. pickleball courts which is a popular sport among older adults and has become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada). As the majority of population growth is expected to occur among the older adult and senior population, it is essential to ensure that the needs of this age group are addressed, while ensuring that the Town offers a balanced spectrum of recreation and leisure opportunities that appeal to all age groups.

Public Consultation

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

A Stakeholder Survey was also submitted by the St. Marys Friendship Centre. The group reported a membership level of 343 members; this does not include the number of non-members, so the actual number of users is greater than noted. The group expects that the number of Friendship Centre users will continue to grow given the Town's aging population. The group did not suggest any facility improvements to the existing space, although they suggested that a multi-purpose gymnasium should be developed to support active recreation programs for the benefit of all residents.

Needs Analysis

There are no specific provision targets for the development of dedicated older adult spaces. These facility types are primarily constructed based on need, ability to be co-located with other complementary facilities, and potential for cross-programming opportunities. In the Stakeholder Survey, the Friendship Centre did not indicate any immediate pressures of additional seniors' space and thus it is expected that the current facility will satisfy the need for dedicated older adult space in St. Marys over the next ten years. Continuing to meet the needs of St. Marys' older adults and seniors over the planning period is crucial given the overall aging of the population. With a broad range of activities and services provided through the Friendship Centre, together with the addition of outdoor pickleball courts recommended through this Master Plan, the Town will be well-positioned to meet the growing needs of this age segment. Efforts should be made to ensure that the Friendship Centre, and other spaces used by older adults and seniors are complemented with supporting amenities that are inviting and comfortable for older adults and seniors such as appropriate and sufficient seating and accessibility retrofits. Should the Town negotiate access to gymnasium or classroom space within public and/or catholic schools (Recommendation #38), this may also alleviate future pressures for older adult programming during the planning period.

With nearly half of the Town's population over the age of 50, there is merit in exploring opportunities to becoming an "Age-Friendly Community". This movement was established by the Public Health Agency of Canada to ensure that the appropriate policies, programs, and services related to physical and social environment are in place to help older adults and seniors lead independent, active, and healthy lives. This may involve ensuring that all public areas are accessible, ensuring that the appropriate programs and services are in place, and more. The Town has already implemented a number of strategies to enhance the lives of older adults and seniors. For example, the Town offers a range of Home and Support Services including, but not limited to, health and wellness clinics, shopping services, Meals on Wheels. To build upon these services, the Town is encouraged to facilitate regular engagement opportunities with older adults and seniors to discuss opportunities to make St. Marys more age-friendly. This may involve identifying gaps in programs and services, areas to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters.

Recommendations – Older Adult Space
42. Facilitate regular meetings to engage older adult and seniors to discuss opportunities to become an "Age-Friendly Community" which may involve identifying gaps in programming and services, areas to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters. (No additional dedicated older adult and seniors spaces are recommended during this planning period)

6.10 Soccer Fields

Supply

The Town offers six soccer fields at five locations (Figure 19). The supply consists of four full fields, one of which is lit and irrigated, and two junior fields. The lit soccer field is assumed to be equivalent to 1.5 unlit soccer fields to account for extended hours of play. As a result, the Town's has an unlit equivalent supply of 6.5 soccer fields. This supply includes the soccer field located at St. Marys DCVI, which is maintained and permitted by the Town. Supporting amenities found at most soccer fields include players' benches and on-site parking. The Town's soccer fields are generally in good condition and can be found at the following parks:

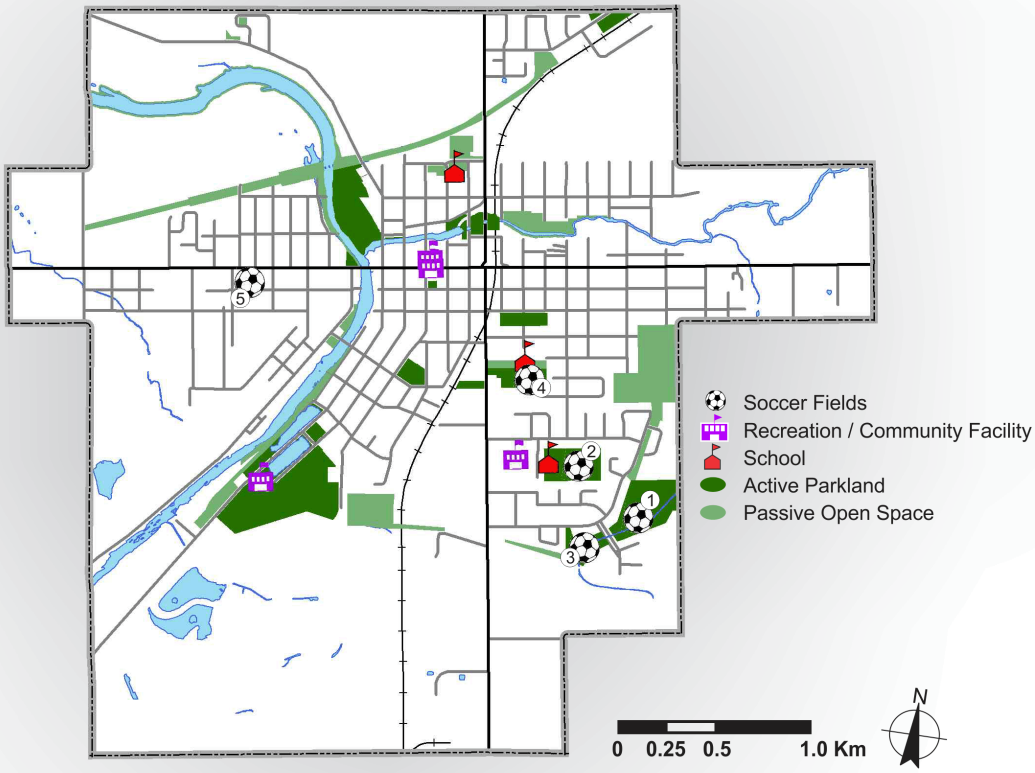
- **Full Soccer Fields:** St. Marys DCVI (Lit), Meadowridge Park, Solis Park (2)
- **Junior Soccer Fields:** Southvale Park, West Ward Park

Market Trends

Soccer experienced substantial growth in participation and popularity during the 1990s when it overtook baseball and hockey as the most popular organized sport among Canadian youth. According to the Ontario Soccer Association (O.S.A.), participation in organized minor soccer peaked in 2007 with 385,000 participants. Since this time, registration levels among sanctioned clubs declined slightly overall and has stabilized due to a number of factors such as shifting demographic trends as well as the emergence of soccer clubs and academies that are not affiliated with the O.S.A. Nevertheless, the sport's worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate translates into demand for soccer fields in most municipalities. These factors drive the need for soccer fields, particularly ones that are designed to a suitable size and configuration to meet the needs of soccer groups. Since the O.S.A. adopted the Long Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) model, which is expected to be fully implemented by 2017, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs, which have impacted soccer field needs.

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

Figure 19: Distribution Map of Soccer Fields



Soccer Fields

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

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

Public Consultation

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

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

Meadowridge Park

Usage Profile

Utilization data provided by the Town revealed the following findings:

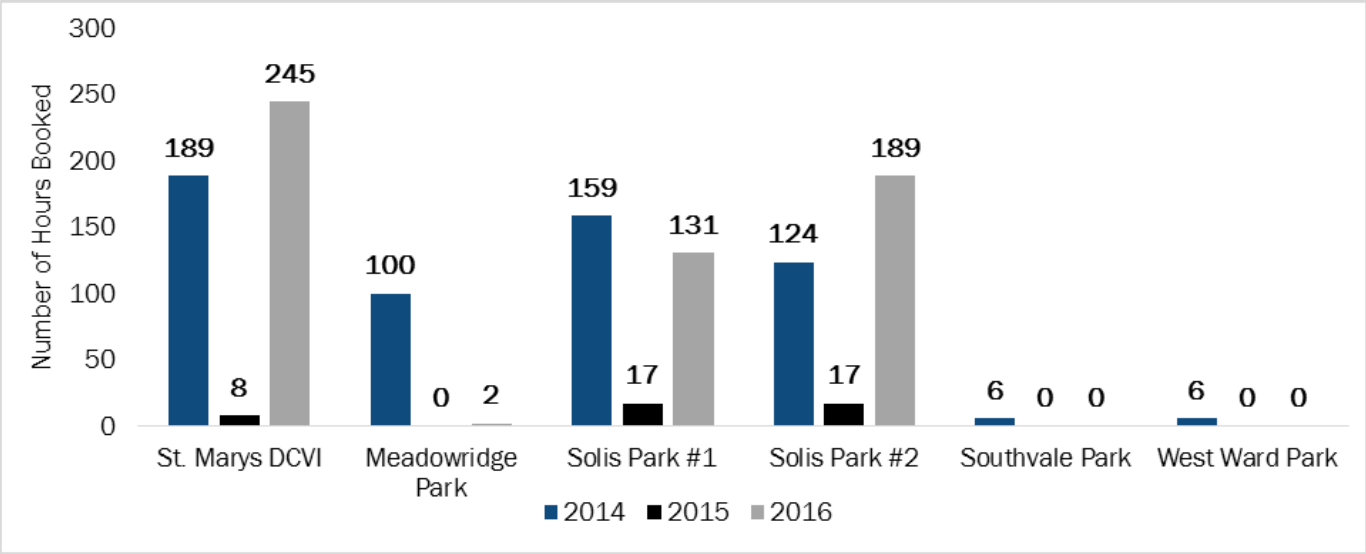
- The Town's soccer fields have very low levels of utilization. Over the past three years, the Town achieved a utilization rate of 15%, which represents 563 booked hours. To put this in perspective, the number of hours used equates to the capacity of just one soccer field being optimally used Monday to Thursday across a nine week period.

- The majority of soccer field usage occurs at Solis Park (East and West Field) and at St. Marys DCVI, which had 561 booked hours in 2016 (Figure 20).

- The low levels of soccer field usage are attributed to the fact that the Town's sole soccer group –St. Marys Minor Soccer– is comprised of youth participants and as a result, the group is able to accommodate more players on these full size fields through simultaneous programming.

- The soccer fields located at Meadowridge Park, Southvale Park, and West Ward Park receive little to no organized use. The Town indicates that these unused soccer fields are not used due to the fact that they are simply not required by the Association.

Figure 20: Summary of Soccer Field Usage, by Soccer Fields, 2014 – 2016



Source: Town of St. Marys

It is recognized that there are limitations to the data presented. Based on discussions with Town staff, the data collected may not accurately represent actual field usage given that the Town may not be fully aware of when the soccer fields are being used given that the Town does not have a sports field allocation policy nor does it have the resources to allocate staff to visit parks to observe actual usage. Nevertheless, these usage trends and discussions with staff suggests that there is ample capacity to accommodate additional usage at existing fields.

Needs Analysis

In line with provincial best practices, a market-based provision standard is the recommended approach to identifying soccer field needs. As previously identified, St. Marys Minor Soccer is the Town's only soccer field user, reporting a total of 250 participants. This translates into a service level of one soccer field for every 42 participants, which is much higher compared to a typical provision target of one field for every 80 participants. This provision target is commonly used in comparable municipalities as it considers general standards of play, participation rates, field capacities, and other field-related inputs.

Assuming that participation rates continue to increase in line with Town-wide population growth, it is estimated that there could be up to 286 minor soccer participants by 2026. Applying the recommended provision target to the forecasted number of participants suggests that there will be a need for up to four soccer fields in total. With an unlit equivalent existing supply of 6.5 soccer fields, the Town has a surplus capacity in its existing supply of soccer fields confirming facility utilization data.

During this planning period, consideration should be given to redirecting maintenance levels and future improvements to soccer fields that are in high demand – namely those fields at Solis Park – while reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields so that they can be promoted as casual open field areas serving passive or pick-up field play for the broader community. Efforts should be made to engage St. Marys

Minor Soccer to collect annual soccer game and practice schedules and participation rates to improve accuracy in tracking field usage during the preparation of the next Master Plan.

In an effort to enhance the use of municipal resources, there may be an opportunity to decommission or remove underutilized fields. According to the usage profile, only three of the six soccer fields are used frequently. As such, there is merit in reviewing the provision of soccer fields located at Meadowridge Park, Southvale Park, and West Ward Park:

Meadowridge Park has a full soccer field that is supported with on-site parking and complemented with a playground and over the past three years it was permitted for approximately 100 hours (the majority of which were booked in 2014). It is recommended, however, that this soccer field remain in the Town's supply due to the fact that it is a full field with the potential to program simultaneous minor soccer games, which may be a valued asset to the Association should the Town no longer have access to the full size soccer field located at St. Marys DCVI, which is currently one of the most used fields (note: there is no reason to believe that the Town will lose access to the soccer fields at St. Marys DCIV at present time).

Southvale Park and **West Ward Park** both offer junior size soccer fields, which have had a combined usage of 11 hours in 2014. Since this time, the Town's utilization data suggests that they have not been used since. This is contradictory to information provided by St. Marys Minor Soccer as the organization indicated that these fields are in fact being used. Due to these factors, it is premature at this time to recommend adjusting maintenance practices or decommissioning these fields until the Town has a strong understanding of how these fields are being used. Once consistent field usage data has been established, it is recommended that the Town revisit the need to consolidate field usage, adjust maintenance practices, or decommission the soccer fields at Southvale Park and West Ward Park.

Recommendations – Soccer Fields

43. Direct greater levels of maintenance and future improvements to soccer fields at Solis Park. In doing so, redirect resources through reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields and reposition them as casual open field areas intended for unstructured, passive and pick-up forms of play.

44. As a condition of soccer field permitting, require St. Marys Minor Soccer to collect and submit to the Town annual soccer game and practice schedules as well as membership figures to improve accuracy in tracking field usage and demand.

45. Once the Town has established a strong understanding of field usage trends, re-evaluate opportunities to consolidate, readjust maintenance practices, or decommission the soccer fields at Southvale Park and West Ward Park.

6.11 Ball Diamonds

Supply

The Town maintains a supply of 10 ball diamonds at five locations across St. Marys (Figure 22), consisting of four lit diamonds and six unlit diamonds. Each lit diamond is equivalent to 1.5 unlit equivalent diamonds due to its extended playing opportunities in the evening and as a result, the Town has an equivalent supply of 12 ball diamonds. Supporting amenities such as spectator seating and parking can be found at most of these ball diamond locations to support games. Site visits indicate that various ball diamond components are aging and in need of replacement including replacing fencing, backstops, drainage, netting, light posts, and more. The Town has made efforts in this regard such as replacing fencing, re-grading diamonds, and general maintenance and upkeep. The Town's ball diamonds can be found at the following locations:

Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame

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

Market Trends

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

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

Public Consultation

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

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

Usage Profile

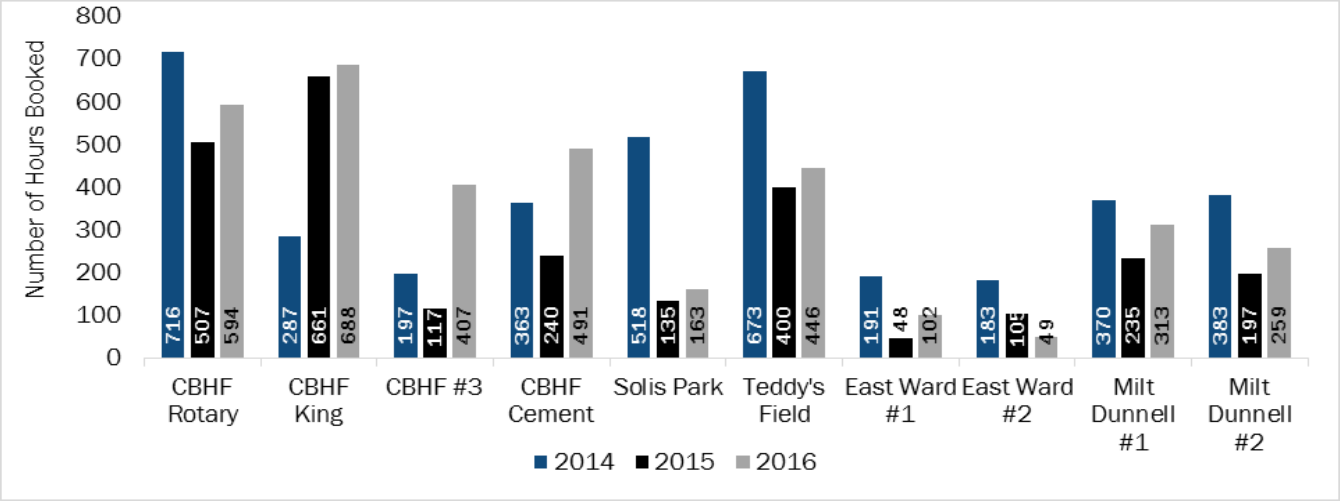
Utilization data provided by the Town revealed the following findings:

- St. Marys' ball diamonds are moderately used. In 2016, the Town's ball diamonds were used for approximately 3,500 hours, which translates into a utilization rate of 34%. This is a decline from 2014, where ball diamonds were used for nearly 3,900 hours (utilization of 38%).

- The ball diamonds at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame are the most used diamonds. In 2016, the four ball diamonds at this site were used for a combined total of 2,100 hours, representing an average of 545 hours per diamond.

- Ball diamonds in other areas of St. Marys had lower levels of usage, ranging between 50 and 450 hours booked (Figure 21). Ball diamonds with the lowest number of hours booked were those at East Ward Park, which were used for a combined total of 150 hours in 2016. Discussions with Town staff indicate that the variation in ball diamond usage is due to the fact that the majority of the ball games take place at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame ball diamonds, while the other Town diamonds are primarily used for practices. It should be noted that these utilization figures include time that was booked for unrelated baseball events such as for Summerfest, picnics, private park rentals, and other municipal events.

Figure 21: Summary of Ball Diamond Usage, by Ball Diamond, 2014 - 2016



Bookings include times where the ball diamonds were in use for unrelated baseball events such as Summerfest, picnics, private park rentals, and other municipal events
Source: Town of St. Marys.

Needs Assessment

A participant-based standard is recommended to determine ball diamond needs, with communities of similar size utilizing a provision target of one ball diamond for every 100 participants, which is recommended for St. Marys. This metric considers field capacities and playing schedules that accommodate both minor and adult organizations. Through the Stakeholder Group Survey, the St. Marys Minor Baseball Association reported 236 participants. In addition, the Town has approximately 560 adult players in mens and womens slo pitch leagues. As a result, the Town has a combined membership of 796 ball diamond participants. Applying the current participation level to the recommended provision target suggests that the Town currently requires 8 ball diamonds, which implies a surplus of two diamonds (in line with current utilization data).

To determine ball diamond needs over the next ten years, the current capture rate of ball participants is applied to the projected 2026 population. A participation level of 796 participants represents approximately 11% of the Town's population. Applying the capture rate to the projected population suggests that there will be 912 players by 2026. Applying the forecasted number of participants to the recommended provision target indicates that there could be a need for 9 ball diamonds by the end of the planning period indicating a long-term surplus of one diamond. As a result, the Town is not expected to require any new ball diamonds over the next ten years, something that is confirmed by the fact that there is ample capacity at existing ball diamonds.

The presence of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in St. Marys suggests that the sport an important aspect of the Town's identity and that baseball is generally valued in the community. The Hall of Fame is held in high esteem and there is benefit to the Town to continue to work with the organization to provide a quality ball-playing experience for residents, visiting teams and spectators. In attempting to maximize the sport tourism and economic spin-off potential, the Town should continue to work with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, with input from its regular users, to identify and prioritize ball diamond improvements to ensure that the facility continues to operate and function as a destination for baseball sports. For example, the St. Marys Minor Baseball Association expressed the desire for washrooms and a shelter pavilion. Given that the municipality is limited by the financial resources available and there is a need for financial prudency, a cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken prior to undertaken any improvements.

With the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame being the preferred location for games and practices, the Town's own ball diamonds generally experience low levels of utilization. While this assessment indicated that the Town currently has a surplus of ball diamonds, it is recommended that all diamonds remain in the Town's inventory to facilitate informal and neighbourhood level play. Furthermore, continuing to maintain a surplus of ball diamonds provides flexibility for the Town to respond to any participation growth – and absorb any resulting future demand – in organized ball sports that may emerge over the master planning period.

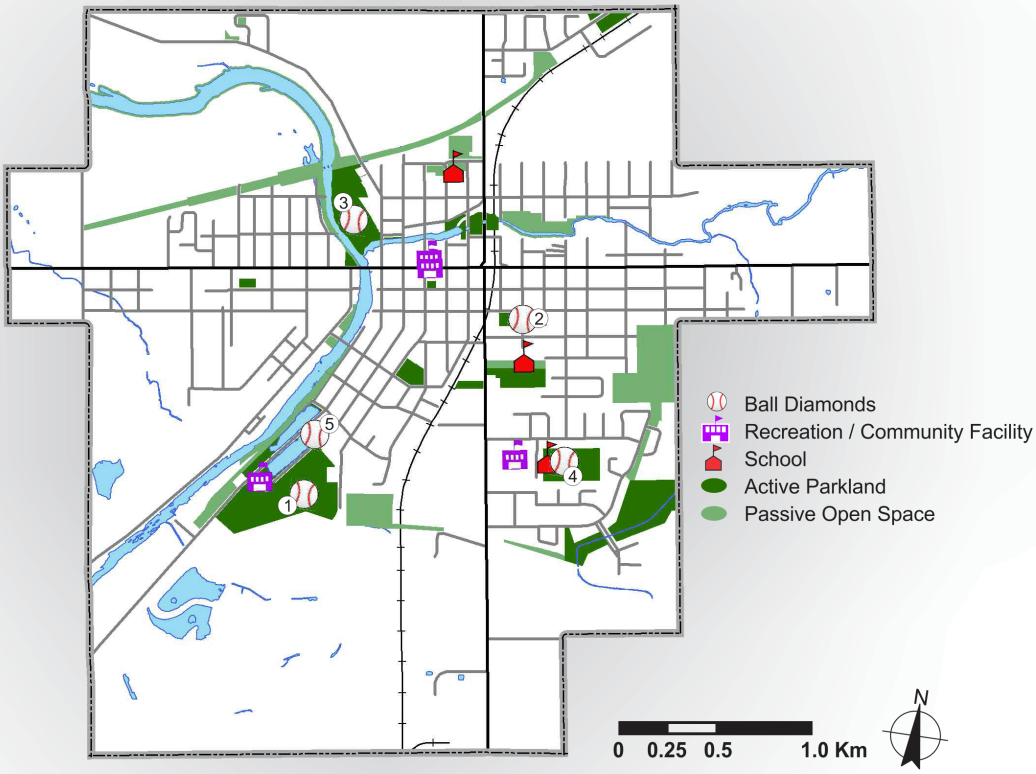
Cost efficiency gains should be targeted through reduction of maintenance levels associated with such neighbourhood-level diamonds where little to no organized usage takes place (and thus where little revenue is generated for specific diamonds to offset their costs). Although site observations revealed that most municipal ball diamonds are aging and in need of updates (such as new fencing and screening), any investments in renewing diamonds should be carefully scrutinized based upon level of organized usage or whether they are desirable for tournament play. As a result, the Town should monitor ball diamond usage during the master planning period as enhanced improvements and maintenance at neighbourhood ball diamonds may be required should registration and utilization levels increase.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

46. Continue to work with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, with input from its regular users, to identify and prioritize improvements while a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out prior to undertaking any improvements.

47. Readjust maintenance practices at ball diamonds with low utilization to a suitable level to support neighbourhood play and the occasional rental. As a result, the Town should be strategic in undertaking ball diamond renewal projects at these locations. The Town should also continue to monitor usage at these locations as enhanced improvements and maintenance may be required should utilization levels increase.

Figure 22: Distribution Map of Ball Diamonds



Ball Diamonds

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

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

6.12 Tennis Courts and Pickleball Courts

Supply

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

Market Trends

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

St. Marys Tennis Courts

The sport is predominantly played by the baby boomer community, though there is also a growing focus on promoting the sport at the youth level through club memberships for youth and programming opportunities that emphasizes the Long Term Athlete Development model. Tennis Canada reported that in 2013, more than 600,000 children between the ages of six and 11 played tennis.

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

Public Consultation

Participants at the Master Plan Launch Event made suggestions to improve the tennis courts in St. Marys, including installing a timer for the court lights, adding lighting to the adjacent parking lot, and varying views on painting multi-use markings on the courts to accommodate pickleball games. Comments were also received to construct new pickleball courts rather than utilizing the tennis courts. The tennis courts are currently utilized by the St. Marys Social Tennis Club, which has maintained approximately 45 members over the past three years. Through the stakeholder survey submitted by the Club, the cost of renting courts is currently the primary concern. In addition, Town staff indicates that the number of pickleball players is on the rise. For 2017, there are approximately 35 players (twice as many compared to 2015) that participate in indoor pickleball programming through the Friendship Centre.

The online community survey found that 15% and 8% of responding households participated in tennis and pickleball, respectively, in the past year, suggesting that these hard surface court activities have moderate to

low participation compared to other activities. There was also a moderate level of support for investing in tennis courts with 58% support. 34% of respondents supported investment in pickleball courts, which ranked last, suggesting that it may not be a high priority among respondents and, as a relatively new activity, may not be well-known.

Utilization

According to Town staff, the St. Marys Social Tennis Club uses the tennis courts for two hours a night on Tuesdays and Thursdays whereas the general public has access to the courts at all times outside of these hours.

Needs Analysis

A population-based target of one tennis court per 4,000 to 6,000 residents is typically used to determine tennis court needs. With a projected population of 8,320 residents by 2026, the Town's four tennis courts result in a provision level that well exceeds typical levels.

From a tennis club perspective, a provision target of one club court for every 100 members is generally used to ensure that there are a sufficient number of club courts available to support simultaneous games and tournaments. The Club currently has a membership of 45 members. Typically, a club of this size does not require the use of four courts simultaneously, although all courts may be required a few times per year for events and tournaments. A club of this size may use up to two tennis courts on a regular basis.

As a result, there is merit in exploring opportunities to add pickleball playing boundaries to two of the existing tennis courts at the complex in order to respond to growing interest in the sport and requests for pickleball courts. This strategy is the ideal approach to respond to pressures for outdoor pickleball courts as it maximizes the use of existing facilities and resources, which is one of the primary objectives of the Master Plan. In the application of pickleball playing boundaries, consideration should be given to the use of a contrasting colour to differentiate playing areas to avoid confusion between the two activities. Going forward, the Town should work with the Tennis Club and pickleball players to ensure that the nets are adjustable or changeable to respond to allow for flexibility in times of increased demand (e.g. tournaments, special events, etc.) for both sports.

Recommendations – Tennis and Pickleball Courts
48. Delineate playing boundaries for pickleball on two of the existing tennis courts (tennis court lines are to remain). Consideration should be given to using a distinct boundary colour to differentiate playing areas in order to avoid confusion between the two sports as well as installing a strap system to allow the net to be adjusted. The Town should subsequently monitor utilization, as well as work with the St. Marys Social Tennis Club and pickleball players to ensure that game scheduling does conflict between the two activities, particularly during tournaments and special events.

6.13 Basketball Courts

Supply

The Town does not provide any outdoor basketball courts within its parks, however, basketball hoops are located at each of St. Marys' schools including St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Little Falls

Public School, and Holy Name of Mary School. School courts can be accessed for general community use outside of school hours and while high level visual observations of these courts reveal that they are generally in good condition, it is noted that court maintenance standards at schools are not always on par with generally accepted municipal standards.

Market Trends

Basketball courts are flexible outdoor recreation facilities as they can accommodate many informal and unstructured activities that require a large, hard surface. Basketball continues to be a popular pastime activity due to its national appeal, driven by the popularity of the Toronto Raptors, and low barriers to participation. Basketball tends to be easy to learn, safe, affordable to play, and can be played with one person or in small groups which makes it more attractive at an introductory level compared to certain other sports.

The design template of basketball courts has remained unchanged for many generations as they are fairly rudimentary, typically constructed from concrete although asphalt is often the preferred surface material due to lower cost. Basketball courts can be provided in a variety of configurations given they are generally not programmed and primarily focus on facilitating spontaneous opportunities for active play. The traditional basketball court template consists of a full basketball court with posts, nets, and painted lines, although half courts are becoming increasingly popular as they utilize a smaller footprint that allow easier integration within smaller parks. In addition, municipalities have constructed multi-use courts with various paint markings to increase the flexibility and range of uses on a court surface (e.g. ball hockey).

Public Consultation

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

Needs Analysis

The geographic distribution of basketball courts is assessed to ensure that youth have safe and convenient access given that youth tend to be more limited in the distance that they can travel. While the Town's parks do not contain any basketball courts, courts can be found at each school and are likely sufficient to facilitate casual neighbourhood level play.

In an effort to avoid duplication of facilities, the Town has refrained from providing basketball courts given the availability of outdoor courts at the schools. While the Town does not have age cohort projections for the planning period, this Master Plan estimates that there could be up to 940 youth (ages 10-19) by 2026, assuming the current proportion of youth (11%) is carried forward. There is a need to ensure that this segment of the population is well served with a variety of geographically accessible recreation facilities. Coupled with the fact that basketball courts are generally low-cost recreation facilities to construct and maintain, the provision of at least one new basketball court to meet the needs of underserved areas should be contemplated.

Using the intersection of Queen Street and James Street as a reference, a visual scan of existing courts in the Town reveals that they are generally well distributed in the southeast quadrant of St. Marys, as well as in a

portion of the northwest quadrant. Underserved areas are identified in the southwest and north area of Town. While there are limited opportunities for a new basketball court in the southwest area, the Town should explore potential sites. An examination of parks in the north area suggests that North Ward Park is a suitable location for a basketball court, which is a complementary outdoor recreation facility that currently exists on site. Alternatively, a basketball court could be integrated within a future park as the area continues to develop. At a minimum, a basketball court should include basketball hoops and markings,

Recommendations – Basketball Courts

49. Explore opportunities to construct at least one new basketball court in a future or existing park in an underserved area(s) to enhance outdoor recreation facilities for youth. Areas of focus include the southwest and north area of St. Marys.

6.14 Skateboard Parks

Supply

The Town provides a concrete skateboard park located adjacent to the St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute and within close proximity to the Pyramid Recreation Centre. Constructed in 2013, the skateboard park provides a quality experience featuring a number of components including ramps, rails, edges, as well as a pavilion.

St. Marys Skateboard Park

Market Trends

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

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

which can be moved from one location to another, have also been used in communities where youth populations are dispersed across large geographical areas.

Public Consultation

The online community survey found that 2% of responding households participated in skateboarding in the past 12 months, which was the second least popular activity. 42% of respondents also supported additional investment in skateboard parks, which ranked 22nd out of 23 facility types and suggesting that skateboarding is not a high priority (although it is also recognized that with an average age of 46 years for survey respondents, many individuals completing the survey may not represent the target market for skateboarders).

Needs Analysis

The existing skateboard park is located adjacent to the St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute and within close proximity to the Pyramid Recreation Centre and the Little Falls Public School. This location is expected to generally satisfy local youth needs in the immediate area of St. Marys.

However, it is recognized that future residential growth is expected to occur in the north end of St. Marys. The 2016 Census indicated that there are approximately 230 youth living in the north end and residential development has the potential to draw additional youth to the area. It is estimated the travel time to the existing skateboard park is approximately 15 to 30 minutes by foot or skateboard and crossing Queen Street, which is a busy arterial, is required. On this basis, consideration should be given to integrating a few basic skateboarding components (e.g. a ramp, curb, and/or rail) into the design of an existing or future park to serve local youth in an introductory manner. Doing so could provide an opportunity for younger children and novice-level skateboarders to practice certain foundational skills prior to transitioning to the large St. Marys Skateboard Park and would also improve geographic distribution by creating a basic skateboarding "zone."

Recommendations – Skateboard Parks
50. Integrate a limited number of basic skateboarding components - such as a ramp, curb, and/or rail - into the design of a future park or within an existing park in the north end of St. Marys as a means to enhance geographic accessibility and provide local children and youth with introductory-level skateboarding opportunities.

6.15 Outdoor Aquatics

Supply

Outdoor Pool

Unique to St. Marys is the Town's Swimming Quarry, which is Canada's largest outdoor freshwater "swimming pool". This local treasure has been providing residents and visitors with a refreshing recreational amenity for over 70 years and is situated adjacent to the Town's tennis courts and the Lind Sportsplex. Amenities found at the Quarry include a water trampoline and paddle board rentals (municipally-operated). An outdoor pool previously located at Cadzow Park has since been permanently closed due to its deteriorating condition.

Splash Pad

St. Marys currently offers one outdoor splash pad at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. A second outdoor splash pad is planned to be located at Cadzow Park as a replacement to the decommissioned pool.

Market Trends

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

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

St. Marys Splash Pad

Public Consultation

Participants at the Master Plan Launch Event praised the Quarry as it provides unique swimming opportunity in St. Marys. As previously identified, swimming is a very popular activity in St. Marys. The online community survey found that 50% of responding households participated in recreational swimming in the past year, which was the second most popular activity. 34% of respondents also participated in instructional swimming or aquafit classes.

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

Needs Analysis

St. Marys' Swimming Quarry is one of the Town's most unique natural assets that is cherished by residents and visitors. Given that the Swimming Quarry functions as a recreation destination, the Town continually invests in various improvements to draw in users. Most recently, the Town invested approximately $70,000 to renew the cliff dive.

The construction of outdoor municipal pools has become more uncommon due to a number of factors. As articulated in previous assessments, the provision of aquatic facilities are financially intensive to construct

and operate and coupled with a short operating season for outdoor facilities, they are generally not financially viable recreation facilities especially in smaller municipalities that offer indoor aquatics facilities. Additionally, the quarry provides an outdoor swimming venue to Town residents. Due to these factors, some municipalities have elected to close aging outdoor pools. St. Marys is no exception to this trend as the Town closed the outdoor pool at Cadzow Park, following the construction of the indoor pool at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.

As a replacement facility to the former outdoor pool, the Town is currently in the planning process to construct a splash pad at Cadzow Park, which will be complementary to the existing splash pad located at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. While splash pads are not considered to replace larger aquatic facilities, they are more cost effective to provide to help residents of all ages to cool off on hot summer days. With the development of a second splash pad already in the planning process, it is expected that these two locations will satisfy community needs during this planning period.

Recommendations – Splash Pads
51. Proceed with the construction of a splash pad at Cadzow Park to support outdoor aquatic needs.

6.16 Off-Leash Dog Parks

Supply

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

Market Trends

With municipal by-laws regulating the use of leashes, off-leash dog parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs in a controlled area. However, dog parks should be not viewed strictly for pets as observations suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, such as residents living in isolation.

Public Consultation

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

Needs Analysis

There are no measurable provision standards for the development of off-leash dog parks as this facility type is generally assessed based on qualitative needs. The decision to consider the provision of an off-leash dog park is typically evaluated on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to whether significant local demands exist or if there is a willing partner available to assist with operations. At present, St. Marys' dog park at Junction Station is located within walking distance of many residents, although these facilities are typically not viewed as walk-to neighbourhood amenities. As a result, it is expected that most dog owners drive to the Town's off-leash dog park. There is currently insufficient evidence to warrant the development of a second off-leash dog park in St. Marys. As such, the existing dog park at Junction Station should continue to be

maintained; however, no additional dog parks are recommended in St. Marys over the time frame of this Master Plan.

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Parks
In the absence of quantifiable needs, no recommendations have been made for off-leash dog parks.

6.17 Playgrounds

Supply

The Town provides nine playgrounds at parks throughout St. Marys (Figure 23). This supply includes the Town-owned playground at the Early Years Learning Centre, although it is not open to the public. In addition to these locations, residents also have access to school playgrounds outside of school hours. A cursory review of the Town's playgrounds during site visits reveals that St. Marys' play structures offer both basic and creative play experiences. The Town recently completed a new playground at Cadzow Park as a part of the Canada 150th birthday celebration.

Market Trends

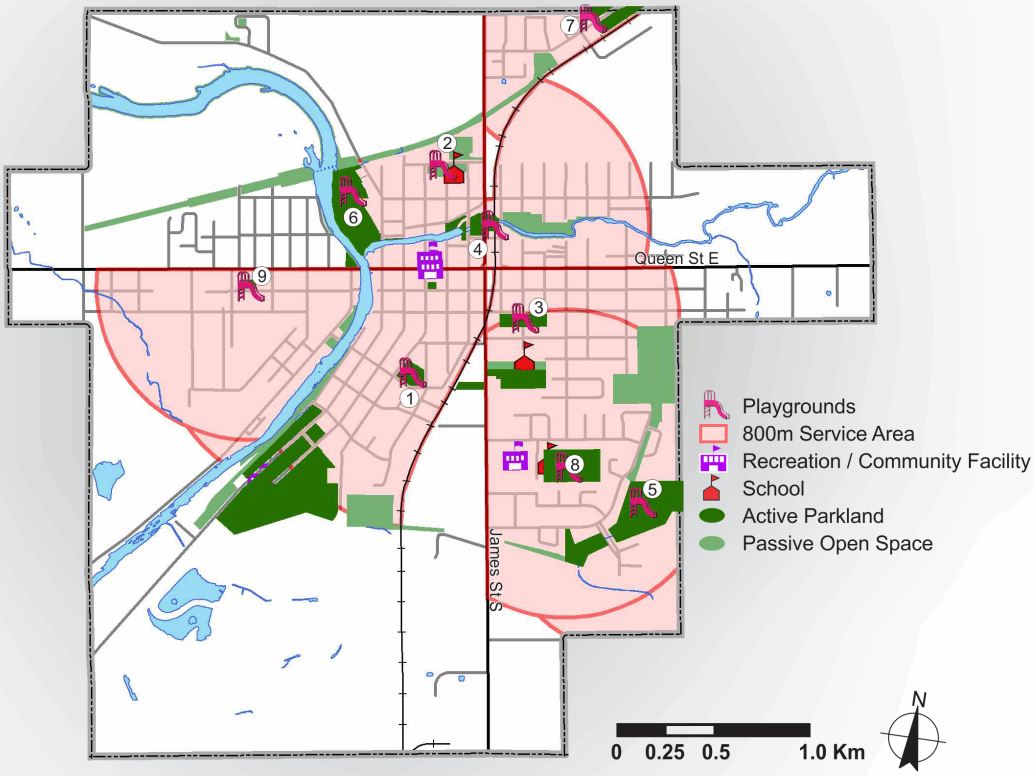
The design of playgrounds has evolved from the traditional playground equipment, which typically consists of swings, slides, and other basic elements that generally do not provide engaging playing experiences. Modern playgrounds are uniquely designed to facilitate creative play that allows the user to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

Risky play and outdoor playgrounds are becoming more popular across the world. There is no standard definition for what a risky playground is as they are intended to be designed to be unique play spaces, although risky playgrounds utilize natural materials, equipment that is positioned higher, firm surfaces, elevated walkways, climbing structures, zip lines, and more. This new styles of play encourages children and youth to take more risks through climbing, exploring, moving vigorously, and creating their own activities using their imagination. These styles of play are popular in the U.K. and U.S.A., and are gaining traction in Canada. This may be beneficial for children across the County, particularly given that the most recent ParticipACTION report card identified that the over-protection of children (due to the perceived need to ensure that they are healthy and safe) is negatively impacting their ability to be physically active and develop valuable skills. In Ontario, the Lawson Foundation is dedicating $2.7 million towards risky play in Canada and in 2016, awarded the Y.M.C.A. of Western Ontario with $160,000 for a pilot project focusing on self-directed and unstructured risky play.

Public Consultation

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

Figure 23: Distribution Map of Playgrounds



Playgrounds

1. Cadzow Park
2. Early Learning Centre (No public access)
3. East Ward Park
4. Kin Park
5. Meadowridge Park
6. Milt Dunnell Field
7. North Ward Park
8. Solis Park
9. West Ward Park

Data provided by the Town of St. Marys.

Needs Analysis

Playground needs are evaluated based on geography given that these facilities are primarily utilized by families with small children. Playgrounds are best suited in neighbourhood parks that are within walking distance of residential areas to maximize access, particularly as children and some young families may not have access to a vehicle. Best practices indicate that playgrounds should be located within 800 metres of all residential areas, which generally equates to a 10 minute walk. This service area should not be intersected by major obstructions that may pose as walking barriers to children such as high volume roads, railways, and waterbodies. Application of this service area in St. Marys reveals service gaps in the following areas:

Kin Park

North of Queen Street West, west of Thames River – There is a residential neighbourhood in this area that is currently not served by a playground within walking distance. This area is characterized by industrial and commercial land uses, as well as an older adult lifestyle community and single family dwellings. While potential locations are limited in this area, the provision of a playground should be contemplated on an opportunity-basis.

North of Grand Trunk Trail, west of James Street North – While this area of St. Marys is currently undeveloped, the Town's Official Plan indicates that this land is designated 'Residential'. Furthermore, Discussion Paper #4 to the Official Plan Review suggests that this area of St. Marys is poised for future residential development over the coming future. As a result, the Town should pursue opportunities to provide playground(s) in this area through future park development.

Southwest portion of St. Marys – A visual review of this area reveals that it is predominantly composed of industrial and extractive industrial land uses. As such, no playground is recommended for this area.

The location of a playground is also an important aspect of its success. From a safety perspective, playgrounds that are easily visible from the street tend to be more used compared to playgrounds that are hidden or tucked away within a park. A scan of the Town's playgrounds suggests that the majority of play structures are well sited within the park and are easily visible from the street, with the exception of the playground at Meadowvale Park. The location of this park is a challenge in itself given that it has limited road visibility and as a result, the playground is positioned within the interior of the park. Given that this playground is aging and due for replacement near the end of this planning period (2025), an opportunity exists to replace and relocate this playground to a more meaningful location. Southvale Park is located within a short walking distance of Meadowvale Park, thus these parks share the same service area. It is recommended that the Town remove and relocate the play structure from Meadowvale Park to Southvale Park through its replacement to enhance its use. Future playground construction should be consistent with the A.O.D.A. (2005), which requires that the design of new and redeveloping playgrounds incorporate accessible playground features such as using a firm and stable surface.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

52. Explore opportunities to resolve playground gap areas through future park development. Consistent with the A.O.D.A. (2005), the design of new and redeveloping playgrounds should incorporate accessible playground features, such as using a firm and stable surface.

53. Through the replacement of the play structure located at Meadowridge Park at the end of its lifespan (2025), remove and construct a new playground in a more visible location in Southvale Park.

6.18 Lawn Bowling Facilities

Supply

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

Market Trends

Lawn bowling is largely played by seniors, although there is evidence that suggests that the sport is gaining interest among younger demographics. This is largely due to its social nature and the Ontario Lawn Bowling Association's (O.L.B.A.) buddy program that partners younger or entry-level players with experienced veterans. The O.L.B.A. estimates that there are approximately 8,800 members and 155 clubs across the Province.[12]

Public Consultation

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

Needs Analysis

Generally speaking, provincial trends suggest lawn bowling is not a growth sport, although aging population trends has the potential to increase participation rates. Growth in the sport is dependent upon whether the baby boomer generation takes an active interest in the sport. Limited input was received through the consultation process. It is expected that the existing facility will be sufficient to serve the needs of lawn bowlers in St. Marys over the planning horizon of this Master Plan.

Recommendations – Lawn Bowling Facilities

In the absence of quantifiable needs, no recommendations have been made for lawn bowling greens.

[12] Bowls Club. Bowls Canada Boulingrin. Retrieved from http://bowlsclub.org

6.19 Other Recreation Facilities

Over time, the Town can expect to receive requests for recreation facilities - beyond those identified in this Master Plan - that are not part of its core service mandate (i.e. facilities that are currently available in St. Marys). The Town should be prepared to respond to such requests after giving consideration to several factors such as quantifiable local and regional market demand, best practices in other municipalities, local resources that are available, partnership opportunities, etc. Unsolicited proposals received from established and newly formed organizations should be supported by a proponent-led assessment and business plan that demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Town becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, as well as a funding strategy that is suitable to the Town.

Recommendations – Other Recreation Facilities

54. Unsolicited proposals from established organizations should be supported by a proponent-led assessment and business plan that demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Town becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, as well as a funding strategy that is suitable to the Town.

St. Marys Lawn Bowling Club

7.0 Implementation

This Section contains a framework for reviewing and updating the Master Plan. The recommendations put forth within this Master Plan are summarized, along with their suggested priority/timing.

7.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

The Town should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the recommendations contained in this Master Plan in order to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and continue to be responsive to community needs. This will require monitoring activity patterns, tracking user satisfaction levels, dialogue with stakeholders and community organizations, annual reporting on implementation, short-term work plans, and undertaking a 5 year high level review and a detailed 10 year update to the Master Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Master Plan may be required.

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

- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, etc.).
- Review the Master Plan to identify short-term projects and priorities based on staff review and consideration (e.g., financial limitations and opportunities – endowment fund, capital reserve fund, etc.; public input; partnership/funding potential; etc.).
- Identification of issues or constraints anticipated for the coming year.
- Communication to Town staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and upcoming projects.
- Budget requests/revisions, as necessary.

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan
55. Establish a system for the regular implementation, monitor, and review of the Master Plan, including the creation of an annual work plan to identify accomplishments and priorities for the coming year. A high level 5 year review and a detailed 10 year update should be undertaken. As part of the implementation, the Town should seek ways to improve the sustainability of the recreation system (e.g. creation of an endowment fund, developing a capital reserve fund, etc.)

7.2 Implementation Strategy

Throughout this Master Plan, recommendations have been identified at the end of each sub-section. This is not intended to be a definitive list of recommendations for the Community Services Department, as ongoing capital projects/repairs, operating expenditures, and other initiatives outside the scope of this Master Plan may be identified and prioritized by Town staff and Council on a case-by-case basis. By approving this Master Plan as a guiding document, the Town is not bound to implementing every recommendation; rather, this Master Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting community needs as they are presently defined.

Priority is generally synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. All recommendations are important and, if properly implemented, will provide the community with enhanced parks, recreation and leisure services in St. Marys. The priority/timing of recommendations is organized into the following three categories:

- Short-term priority (1-3 years) – 2017 to 2019
- Medium-term priority (4-6 years) – 2020 to 2022
- Long-term priority (7-10+ years) – 2023 to 2026+

It bears noting that the recommendations are based on what is needed and not what is financially achievable by the Town at the present time, particularly given the Town's goal of ensuring that the use of municipal resources are scale-appropriate for current and future residents. The proposed priority/timing of each recommendation has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public consultation, trends and demographic variables, assessment of parks, facilities, services, etc.), and is based on ideal circumstances. Budget pressures, changes in participation rates or demographics, availability of volunteer resources, and other factors may impact the implementation of these recommendations. The pursuit of external funding opportunities and partnership opportunities may also be a contributing factor to the timing of implementation.

The following tables contain the recommendations in the order in which they are presented in the body of the Master Plan.

Service Delivery Assessment	Term
Service Delivery Model	
1. Provide opportunities for all recreation, leisure and sport services providers to gather bi-annually (at a minimum) to discuss joint vision, guiding principles, and strategic priorities for recreation and leisure in St. Marys. Other opportunities should include the ability to share resources and training opportunities, engage in joint planning, marketing, better understand total market penetration, legislative compliance and reduce duplication where it exists.	Ongoing
2. Complete an annual analysis of trends, social issues, community priorities and determine the opportunities that are offered through other accessible organizations. Offer programs where there are gaps in the fulsome provision of programs and services.	Ongoing
3. Develop an Affiliation Policy to ensure that all volunteer based community groups are supported in a consistent fashion.	Short
Key Result Area #1 – Programs and Services for All	
4. Test the list of Recreation and Leisure Core Services offered in the Master Plan with the public to ensure that these are reflective of their needs. Further ensure that Non-Core services are fully cost recoverable to profit making to offset costs of Core Services.	Medium
5. Develop an Access Policy to Recreation that is proactive in engaging and supporting marginalized populations.	Short
6. Implement the Parks and Recreation Ontario's High 5 Active Aging quality assurance program as it applies to providing/enabling recreational opportunities to older adults.	Short
7. Work with other recreation and leisure providers to develop a level of service for each discipline (aquatics, programs, camps, etc.) and age group. Further discuss the primary organization to provide the suggested level of service with a view to decreasing duplication and sharing resources.	Ongoing
8. Implement, where possible, the newly revised criteria of the Playworks Partnership to enable the Town of St. Marys to be designated a Youth Friendly Community.	Short
9. Work to better understand market penetration of the various age groups in recreation and leisure services by identifying the unique clients of the various agencies and organizations offering programs and services.	Ongoing
10. Develop an online central data source where all programs and services regardless of the provider can be promoted. Use social media, where possible, to cross promote all opportunities.	Ongoing

Service Delivery Assessment	Term
Key Result Area #2: Fiscal Sustainability in Recreation and Leisure Services	
11. Develop a policy on Core and Non-Core Services and levels of service in concert with the community.	Medium
12. Articulate the costs to provide individual units of service to develop an equitable and fair-minded Pricing Policy.	Ongoing
13. Further investigate the cost reductions and revenue enhancements suggested in the Service Review and create a formalized Business Plan for the Pyramid Recreation Centre to be approved by Council – increase arena rentals during prime time, food services cost reductions/revenue enhancements, arena overtime reduction and cost recovery for contracted services at the Friendship Centre, etc. Further, develop Program Based Budgets (program and operational costs) for Recreation and Leisure to fully understand the cost to provide these services. To ensure the successful delivery of this Plan, implement a process for annual reporting to Council with effectiveness measures based on the performance measures recommended as articulated in Recommendation 19.	Ongoing
14. Consult with the public on the principles of the potential partnership between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA. Host discussions between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA regarding any preliminary and beneficial (no cost/low cost) arrangements that could be made in the short term. Bring any short term recommendations and longer term vision to Council for discussion.	Short
15. Obtain volunteer software to offer online volunteer opportunities, provide an online screening process, training and tracking of volunteer hours with a view to increasing volunteerism in St. Marys.	Long
16. Apply for alternate funding to cover the costs of the Swim to Survive program.	Medium
17. Coordinate discussions with Town staff to articulate the Departmental culture and supporting values and behaviours.	Medium
Key Result Area #3: Organizational Effectiveness and Governance	
18. Develop a Communications Plan that engages community groups and serves to better inform the public as to the recreation and leisure opportunities available using traditional and social media communications vehicles at a minimum.	Short
19. Gather the data required to support the development of performance measures. Report annually to Council and the public and compare results year over year to inform continuous improvement initiatives in community engagement and service delivery.	Short
20. Provide the tasks involved and an implementation schedule on the development of a Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee. Articulate the skills and competencies needed to implement the Master Plan recommendations and ensure that the Town recruits and selects members transparently based the needed skills and competencies.	Short

Parks and Trails Recommendations	Term
Parkland Classification System	
21. Incorporate a revised parkland classification system to provide greater clarity and accuracy towards locational characteristics, service area, permitted uses and amenities, and other details into the Town of St. Marys Official Plan at the time of its next review to guide the development and redevelopment of parkland in St. Marys.	Short
Parkland Supply and Distribution	
22. On an opportunity basis, pursue opportunities to rectify any parkland gaps that exist, utilizing parkland development strategies identified in this Master Plan, in addition to working with local non-municipal organizations (e.g., schools, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Conservation Authority, etc.) to maximize access to a wide range of active and passive open spaces.	Ongoing
23. Strive to achieve a minimum parkland service area of 800 metres, unobstructed by major barriers such as major roads, railways, waterbodies, etc.	Ongoing
Park Naturalization	
24. Consider naturalization of select areas of parklands, including Meadowvale Park and Southvale Park, in order to reduce parkland maintenance efforts. The naturalization of these parks or park areas may require the removal and/or relocation of certain recreation facilities, as articulated in this Master Plan.	Ongoing
Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines	
25. During the next Official Plan Review, explore opportunities to bolster existing parkland policies, with consideration given to the following:	Short to Medium
a. Review the Town's parkland dedication policies to ensure that they consistent with the amended *Planning Act* as a result of Bill 73.	
b. Outline criteria for accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland, such as when the required dedication fails to meet an area of suitable shape, size, or location stipulated in the Town's parkland classification system or if parkland dedication would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development, or other constraint preventing suitable park or land use development.	
c. Clarify that the where policies currently state that 5% of land be dedicated for parkland through development applies only to residential subdivision development. Consistent with the *Planning Act*, a new policy should be developed stating that 2% of land shall be required for all other forms of development (e.g., commercial or industrial). Additionally, policies should be established to consider applying the alternative parkland rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units.	
d. Woodlots, storm water management ponds, naturalized areas, and environmentally sensitive areas should not be accepted as a part of parkland dedication, although the Town may assume these lands (over and above) for the purposes of protecting, natural areas for passive recreation (e.g., trail development) and educational uses.	

Parks and Trails Recommendations	Term
Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines	
26. Accepting parkland smaller than 0.5 hectares will be discouraged, except in instances that may be advantageous to the Town to reconcile gap areas and to address shortages in parkland.	Ongoing
27. Utilize alternative parkland acquisition tools, as necessary, to supplement parkland dedications and to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.	Ongoing
Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities	
28. Through an Official Plan Review, consider the following:	Short to Medium
a. Strengthen policies that support active transportation, trail development, and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, with reference to this Master Plan.	
b. Integrate the active transportation network (existing and conceptual trails) in Schedule "B-Road Classifications" or in a new Schedule to the Official Plan to serve as an awareness tool for Town staff, developers, planners, and interested members of the public.	
c. Establish policies requiring the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycling facilities as a condition of plan of subdivision approval, with consideration given to the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan.	
Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities	
29. Utilize a range of strategies to secure new lands for active transportation network development.	Ongoing
30. Engage the public in the planning and design process in advance of trail construction to facilitate opportunities for public input.	Ongoing

Parks and Trails Recommendations	Term
Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities	
31. Prepare an Active Transportation Master Plan to assist with long-term implementation of the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan. The Active Transportation Master Plan should build upon the directions contained in this Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, including the following. The Town should identify other objectives for the Active Transportation Master Plan, as necessary. a. Establish a vision statement and guiding principles to reflect the Town's commitment to supporting and developing active transportation opportunities in St. Marys. b. Explore opportunities to enhance active transportation connections to the existing trail system. Modifications to existing conceptual trail routes may be permitted to recognize terrain and landscape features, as well as new trail opportunities. c. Identify active transportation design guidelines in the planning and development of trail routes, with consideration of provincial and municipal construction standards (including accessibility requirements). d. Engage the public and community groups to solicit input and feedback with respect to planning and designing active transportation infrastructure. e. Develop a trail hierarchy system to define types of active transportation routes, permitted uses, and design standards. f. Provide direction on the provision of active transportation amenities including, but not limited to, lighting, signage, parking, rest areas, and other ancillaries.	Ongoing

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Arenas	
32. To maximize the efficient use of the Town's ice pads, effort should be made to encourage greater use of available ice, particularly during shoulder and weekend hours. Other strategies may include, but not be limited to, promoting drop-in skating programs during available prime time hours on the weekend and co-ordinating blackout periods with user groups to ensure that it does not negatively impact playing schedules. (The existing supply of two ice pads is expected to be sufficient to serve ice users over the planning period)	Ongoing
Curling Pads	
33. The Town should work with the St. Marys Curling Association to explore ways in which to maximize utilization and participation levels by attracting new members, programs, and events. (No additional curling pads are expected to be required during the planning period)	Medium

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Indoor Aquatics	
34. Recognizing the financial burden associated with operating the indoor pool at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the Town should investigate partnership opportunities in an effort to seek a third party facility operator / partner. Should this investigation fail to result in a partnership, the Town should consider the other, less desirable, option noted in the Master Plan.	Short
Fitness Spaces	
35. If a third party partnership necessitates the provision of a fitness centre at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, investigate facility options through an architectural assessment.	Short
36. Explore opportunities to offer the indoor walking program to all residents and expand walking routes to include circulation areas and/or the Community Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to provide the program on a year-round basis when the arena is in use during the skating season.	Short
Community Halls, Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms	
37. Continue to promote and encourage the use of the Town's multi-use spaces and meeting rooms to facilitate a broad range of uses and to ensure that the community is aware of the facilities that are available.	Ongoing
Gymnasiums	
38. Engage the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board and continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to formalize reciprocal agreements to facilitate regular access to school gymnasiums located in St. Marys (and other school facility space, as required).	Short
39. Continue to develop and offer, where feasible, gymnasium-based recreation activities in the Town's community halls, multi-purpose spaces, and arena dry floor pads, to improve utilization levels in those spaces.	Ongoing
Youth Spaces	
40. Continue efforts to enhance children and youth opportunities and access to the Youth Centre and expand eligibility requirements to include senior high school students. (No additional youth spaces are recommended during this planning period)	Ongoing
41. Establish an annual youth forum to identify programming gap areas, discuss opportunities to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters related to youth.	Ongoing
Older Adult Space	
42. Facilitate regular meetings to engage older adult and seniors to discuss opportunities to become an "Age-Friendly Community" which may involve identifying gaps in programming and services, areas to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters. (No additional dedicated older adult and seniors spaces are recommended during this planning period)	Ongoing

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Soccer Fields	
43. Direct greater levels of maintenance and future improvements to soccer fields at Solis Park. In doing so, redirect resources through reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields and reposition them as casual open field areas intended for unstructured, passive and pick-up forms of play.	Short
44. As a condition of soccer field permitting, require St. Marys Minor Soccer to collect and submit to the Town annual soccer game and practice schedules as well as membership figures to improve accuracy in tracking field usage and demand.	Ongoing
45. Once the Town has established a strong understanding of field usage trends, re-evaluate opportunities to consolidate, readjust maintenance practices, or decommission the soccer fields at Southvale Park and West Ward Park.	Short
Ball Diamonds	
46. Continue to work with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, with input from its regular users, to identify and prioritize improvements while a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out prior to undertaking any improvements.	Ongoing
47. Readjust maintenance practices at ball diamonds with low utilization to a suitable level to support neighbourhood play and the occasional rental. As a result, the Town should be strategic in undertaking ball diamond renewal projects at these locations. The Town should also continue to monitor usage at these locations as enhanced improvements and maintenance may be required should utilization levels increase.	Short
Tennis Courts and Pickleball Courts	
48. Delineate playing boundaries for pickleball on two of the existing tennis courts (tennis court lines are to remain). Consideration should be given to using a distinct boundary colour to differentiate playing areas in order to avoid confusion between the two sports as well as installing a strap system to allow the net to be adjusted. The Town should subsequently monitor utilization, as well as work with the St. Marys Social Tennis Club and pickleball players to ensure that game scheduling does conflict between the two activities, particularly during tournaments and special events.	Short
Basketball Courts	
49. Explore opportunities to construct at least one new basketball court in a future or existing park in an underserved area(s) to enhance outdoor recreation facilities for youth. Areas of focus include the southwest and north area of St. Marys.	Medium
Skateboard Parks	
50. Integrate a limited number of basic skateboarding components - such as a ramp, curb, and/or rail - into the design of a future park or within an existing park in the north end of St. Marys as a means to enhance geographic accessibility and provide local children and youth with introductory-level skateboarding opportunities.	Long

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Outdoor Aquatics	
51. Proceed with the construction of a splash pad at Cadzow Park to support outdoor aquatic needs.	Short
Playgrounds	
52. Explore opportunities to resolve playground gap areas through future park development. Consistent with the A.O.D.A. (2005), the design of new and redeveloping playgrounds should incorporate accessible playground features, such as using a firm and stable surface.	Ongoing
53. Through the replacement of the play structure located at Meadowridge Park at the end of its lifespan (2025), remove and construct a new playground in a more visible location in Southvale Park.	Long
Other Recreation Facilities	
54. Unsolicited proposals from established organizations should be supported by a proponent-led assessment and business plan that demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Town becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, as well as a funding strategy that is suitable to the Town.	Ongoing

Implementation	Term
Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan	
55. Establish a system for the regular implementation, monitor, and review of the Master Plan, including the creation of an annual work plan to identify accomplishments and priorities for the coming year. A high level 5 year review and a detailed 10 year update should be undertaken. As part of the implementation, the Town should seek ways to improve the sustainability of the recreation system (e.g. creation of an endowment fund, developing a capital reserve fund, etc.)	Medium / Long

Appendix A – Master Plan Launch Event

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

Community Values

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

Improving Parks and Outdoor Recreation/Leisure Facilities

Parks

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

Outdoor recreation facilities

- Skateboard park improvements
    - To improve safety and visibility of the skate park, it needs enhanced lighting. It is still very hard to see users at night (2)
    - Vandalism at the skatepark needs to be brought to public's attention.
- Tennis court improvements
    - Tennis courts could be multi-purpose surface (to accommodate basketball, pickleball and badminton)
    - Have tennis court lights on a timer or have someone turn them off (2)
    - Could tennis courts be shared with pickleball players?
    - Parking lot south of tennis courts needs to be larger and have lighting (benefit to shufflers, curlers, tennis players and swimmers).
- Cadzow Park
    - Cadzow Park needs to be developed as soon as possible to provide a picnic area (roofed) with provision area for the addition of washrooms and food preparation area for groups.

Location must be where the existing services are located and an area for a splash pad must be included.
    - A plan for Cadzow Park- Can we get a swim area for young children?
- Increased checks at playgrounds/outdoor facilities in spring/summer for damage, glass, litter etc.
- Easier access to Quarry for those who cannot jump or dive.
- Splash pad improvements.
- Shade for baseball diamonds in East Ward Park.
- Baseball Hall of Fame needs a pavilion for their league participants.

Improving Indoor Recreation/Leisure Facilities

General Improvements

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

Access and Comfort

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

Improving Programs and Services

Advertising and promotion

- More awareness of what's available.
- Need to advertise the programs available for all age groups
- More advertising to improve the pool's use for all age groups
- Show a printed schedule of what is going on at ball diamonds to make public aware
- Less 'areas' of advertisement—just one internet page.

Increase programs

- Increase family programs, especially outdoor programs in the summer (i.e. campfire nights similar to seniors one, or communicate that it is a community campfire)
- More family events not just family skate/swims (i.e. Foam Fest/Mud runs at Boler Mountain).
- Have older adult programs in other locations such as parks and other facilities (i.e. exercise in the park).

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

Future Priorities

- Continue maintenance (5)
    - lighting, signage and usability of existing trails and parks and extending those trails and parks into newly built communities.
- Continuing on senior focus—friendly and accessible programs (3)
- Financially accessible (3)
    - Strive for equitable rates of subsidy between different programs; give preferential support to groups less able to afford their own recreation.
    - Consider a higher rate of fees for out-of-town users.
- New facilities (3)
    - Multi-purpose gymnasium space with accessories (i.e. basketball, pickleball etc.)
    - Indoor walking track.
    - Lighting and washroom facilities of outdoor facilities and trails.
- Revitalize Cadzow Park (2)
- Communication of local parks, trails, events and programs (2)
- Inter-generational programs; 'learn to' programs for sports and leisure.
- More partnerships with high school and senior public school to assist in programs as part of their 40 hour requirement

Appendix B – Online Community Survey Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Top 10 activities participated in outside of St. Marys	Top 10 locations to participate in activities
• Swimming (e.g., outdoor swim, public swim, aqua fit, paddleboard, etc.) • Walking, Hiking, Running • Fitness training, Weight-training, Aerobics, Yoga, Crossfit • Gymnastics • Dancing • Ice sports (e.g., hockey, ringette, figure skating, etc.) • Soccer • Cross Country Skiing / Skiing • Baseball / Softball • Performing / Fine Arts (e.g., theatre, art classes, music)	• Stratford • London • Mitchell • Waterloo / Kitchener • Kirkton • Provincial Parks • Thames Centre • United States • Woodstock • Exeter

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

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

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

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

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

Top Facilities	Top Activities
• Fitness studio • Indoor walking track • Outdoor pool • Squash courts • Indoor playground • Pickleball courts • Outdoor skating rink • Splash pad • Indoor soccer	• Gymnastics classes • Fitness classes (Crossfit, yoha, tai chi, etc.) • Dance classes • Volleyball • Canoeing / Kayak / Paddleboarding • Recreational soccer • Archery • Rock climbing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

	Oppose / Strongly Oppose		Neutral		Support / Strongly Support		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Unpaved Nature Trails	16	4%	63	14%	363	82%	442
Paved Multi-use Trails	21	5%	59	13%	358	82%	438
Playgrounds	17	4%	69	16%	349	80%	435
Passive Parks and Open Spaces	16	4%	74	17%	348	79%	438
Outdoor Swimming Pools	39	9%	79	18%	319	73%	437
Dedicated Youth Centre	16	4%	102	24%	316	73%	434
Fitness Centres	35	8%	94	21%	312	71%	441
Indoor Walking Track	51	12%	79	18%	313	71%	443
Splash Pads	54	12%	88	20%	299	68%	441
Soccer Fields	30	7%	113	26%	284	67%	427
Dedicated Older Adult / Seniors' Centre	41	9%	115	26%	279	64%	435

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

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

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

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

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

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

Number of Persons	#
1	38
2	166
3	68
4	118
5	50
6	14
7+	4
Total Respondents	458
Average Household Size	3.1
2016 Census Household Size	2.3

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

	Number of People	Proportion of Sample	2016 Census
Under 10 years	271	19%	11%
10-19 years	182	13%	11%
20-34 years	237	17%	16%
35-54 years	361	25%	25%
55-69 years	247	17%	21%
70 years and over	128	9%	16%
Total Persons	1,424	100%	100%
Total Respondents			456

20. In what year were you born?

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

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

	#	%
Yes	389	85
No	68	15
Total Respondents		**457**

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

Other Municipalities	
• Perth South	• Kirkton
• Thames Centre	• London
• Stratford	• Woodstock
• Granton	• Zorra

Appendix C – Stakeholder Group Survey Summary

Arena Groups

St. Marys Minor Hockey Association

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

St. Marys Model T Hockey Club

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

St. Marys NBC Hockey

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

St. Marys Ringette Association

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

Outdoor Sports Groups

St. Marys Minor Soccer

St. Marys Minor Soccer provides recreational and competitive soccer to children and youth. The organization has maintained about 250 participants over the past few years and expects to remain stable over the foreseeable future. The group uses the soccer fields throughout St. Marys, including those located at

Southvale Park, West Ward Park, and Solis Park. The meeting rooms at the Pyramid Recreation Centre are also used, as well as storage rooms for equipment. Soccer field improvements suggested by the group included reseeding and grading, particularly at Solis Park. The use of a large indoor space to facilitate indoor soccer programs was also suggested, in addition to the desire for additional storage space. A number of ongoing concerns were raised by the organization including securing and retaining volunteers, costs associated with field lining, referees, and associated Town fees.

St. Marys Minor Ball Association

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

St. Marys Social Tennis Club

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

Service Clubs and Other Provider Themes

McConnell Club

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

Rotary Club of St. Marys

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

St. Marys Community Players

The St. Marys Community Players is a non-profit community theatre group that offers live theatre productions. The theatre company has 125 members with expectations to increase as there are more interest in being involved in productions every year. The Community Players provides 20 shows each year at the Town Hall auditorium, which draws over 2,000 patrons each year. Suggested improvements to the Town Hall auditorium

included updating the kitchen and adding more washrooms. The need for air condition was also suggested, which was also the biggest concern raised by the group.

The Friendship Centre

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