



TOWN OF LAKESHORE



COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN



FINAL REPORT

April 2008



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

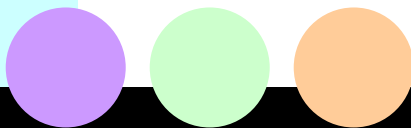
In the spring of 2006, the Town of Lakeshore initiated the development of a multi-faceted Community Services Master Plan. This initiative was part of a comprehensive planning program that included a Community Strategic Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Water / Waste Water Master Plan, New Official Plan, Economic Development Strategy and related initiatives. This integrated planning approach reflected a need by the Municipality to bring together a series of initiatives in the post-amalgamation era in order to create a strong research and planning foundation for developing priorities, guiding investment decisions and establishing strategic goals, directions and priorities for the future development of Lakeshore.

The Town of Lakeshore reflects an amalgamation of five former communities within the northwestern area of the County of Essex. The amalgamation partners involved the former Town of Belle River and the Townships of Maidstone, Rochester, Tilbury North and Tilbury West in 1999. Lakeshore is one of the fastest growing areas in Essex County, reaching a population of approximately 33,000 individuals by 2006. As a result of the amalgamation process and the need to integrate many municipal by-laws, plans and strategies; along with the evident growth being experienced by the community, a need to establish a strong planning foundation emerged.

The Community Services Master Plan was designed as a broad-based initiative with four key outcomes:

- ▶ Inventory and resources assessments and analyses, followed by recommendations;
- ▶ A Cultural Services Master Plan;
- ▶ A Tourism Development Strategy;
- ▶ A Multi-Use Recreation Complex Feasibility Study.

Two products from the Community Services Master Plan include the Trails Master Plan and the Ecological Land Donations webpage.



1.2 Situational Analysis Report

In support of the key outcome areas of the Community Services Master Plan, an integrated Situational Analysis Report was completed. This document is available under separate cover. It establishes the research, consultation and analytical foundation that was utilized as a basis for the various components of the Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan.

The key tasks completed in support of the Situational Analysis Report were as follows:

- ▶ A population profile, demographic analysis and projections analysis, along with a community development profile and related community development perspectives;
- ▶ Current leisure services participation profiles, facility utilization assessments and other use profiles;
- ▶ Review of relevant planning, policy and related strategic and policy materials for both the Town and comparable municipalities;
- ▶ A 300-unit random selection survey of Lakeshore residents generally and by three geographic areas, focusing on participation patterns, future perspectives, evaluation of current services, awareness and value ratings and other inputs;
- ▶ Over thirty focus groups, interviews and a public meeting involving some 200 plus community and organized group representatives soliciting their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the community services availability and delivery model in Lakeshore, future needs and perspectives and specific initiative inputs;
- ▶ A financial review of municipal investments in leisure services, as well as a department organizational review;
- ▶ A facilities and lands inventory, involving recreation facilities, libraries, museums, parks, open spaces, waterfront assets and related resources;
- ▶ A trends analysis related to leisure services, delivery models, partnerships and other considerations that will shape the future use of and involvement in community services within Lakeshore;
- ▶ Other key inputs and assessments.



1.3 Community Services Master Plan Format

Each of the four major components of the Community Services Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Cultural Services Master Plan, the Tourism Development Strategy and the Multi-Use Recreation Facility Feasibility Study are presented as separate sections within the Master Plan. Each of the Master Plan components is developed within its own format appropriate for that topic.

Section 3.0 of the Community Services Master Plan provides the Community Services Master Plan foundation, involving the Plan's philosophical and conceptual basis, Vision, Mission and Goals that support each of the four parts of the Master Plan.

1.4 Community Services Master Plan Document

This document represents the final draft of the Community Services Master Plan. It was reviewed by municipal staff and the Steering Committee, after which additional drafts will be prepared. It was approved by the Steering Committee and a public workshop with over seventy attendees was held in December 2007 to receive community feedback on the proposed recommendations.

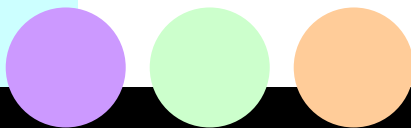
In March 2008 a final presentation was made to the Planning Committee of Council. This final draft was received by Council motion in April 2008.



2.0 STRATEGIC THEMES

From the Situational Analysis Report, a series of conclusions and strategic themes were developed that established a foundation upon which the Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan was based. This full Situational Analysis Report is available under separate cover. The following material represent the strategic themes that emerged from the research.

- ▶ The Town of Lakeshore is positioned to accommodate residential growth totaling 61,900 residents to 2031 and will need considerable investments in land, buildings, facilities, staff and programming to accommodate the parks, recreation, heritage, arts, culture and tourism interests of the community.
- ▶ The expected population changes will see an increasing proportion of senior and a steady number of youth categories. This will change the focus of community services facilities and programming to match these changing demands.
- ▶ The expectations of residents are changing as identified in the leisure trends with a greater focus on the links between community health, education and social services. The Town will need to work collaboratively with a range of partners to adjust to these changing needs.
- ▶ The identity of Lakeshore is comprised of a number of communities that are strengthened through common features of Lake St. Clair and cultural history. The Community Services Master Plan must address the means to recognize the diversity and the ability to offer high quality services at a centralized location in the Town.
- ▶ A shifting public interest in passive recreation activities and protection of environmentally significant features will support the acquisition, development and restoration of existing natural areas. The Community Services Master Plan should address the ability of Council in cooperation with other partner agencies to create these opportunities.
- ▶ The Town will need to protect and expand existing public access to Lake St. Clair through both the existing and unopened road allowances and public waterway access. This will provide opportunities for passive and active recreation opportunities related to the Lakeshore.



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- ▶ Opportunities to develop a non-motorized trail system connecting Lakeshore to other communities in Essex County is evident. Strategic choices in the acquisition and development of these resources will benefit both local and regional populations.
- ▶ The changing capacity of residents to volunteer and participate in service delivery will require a more consistent approach across the various community organizations to ensure equitable programming and standard of service across the community.
- ▶ The opportunity to create a multi-use centre for the Town of Lakeshore is likely over the time horizon of the Community Services Master Plan with the potential location and the range of uses to be considered thorough the Master Plan completion.
- ▶ The original Town history is significant in Ontario and Canada and provides a significant opportunity for preservation and development requiring leadership from Council and the committees assigned the responsibility to undertake this work.
- ▶ There is an increasing interest in the cultural and visual arts in response to the changing demographics of the community. An opportunity to develop a venue for performing and visual arts will require Community and Council leadership.
- ▶ The Town is facing strong competition for tourist investment. Any investment must be seen as a long-term secondary element in the Town's economic development strategy. There are opportunities in festival, events and sport tournaments and cultural/heritage attractions where Council can assist local organizations to position Lakeshore in the marketplace.
- ▶ Natural heritage and shoreline resources are worth upgrading and building upon, capitalizing on existing investments, such as community trails.



3.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN

3.1 Introduction and Corporate Alignment

A Vision, Mission and Principles have been identified for the Town of Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan. They have been developed based on key themes and content that emerged from the Town's Strategic Plan, the Department's roles and responsibilities, the community input received in the research phase, trends in the development of community services and other sources.

One of the foundations for the Master Plan's Vision, Mission and Principles is alignment with the Town's Strategic Plan. The Vision for this Plan is as follows:

A progressive Town of healthy, integrated communities

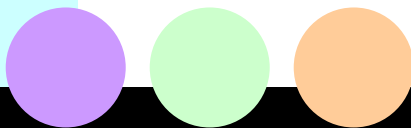
This Town's Vision Statement articulates a Vision of a progressive and leading community that is healthy in terms of the physical health of its residents, as well as the environmental and economic health of the Municipality. The Vision further identifies the concept of integrated communities that speaks to the fact that Lakeshore is made up of many different communities, including ethnocultural communities, former municipal communities, rural and urban communities and other clusters of people that have a common perspective.

The Town's Strategic Plan also has a Mission Statement that identified the nature of the community and the essence by which the Town will operate.

To nurture a unified Town that sees possibility, inspires innovation and realizes potential

The Mission Statement reinforces the notion of unification and also innovation, creativity and realizing the potential of its people and resources.

In support of the Vision and Mission within the Town's Strategic Plan, is a series of objectives that give substance to the outcomes the community is looking to achieve strategically, which will be important to the development of all the components of the Community Services Master Plan.



Lakeshore will ensure that our Town...

- ▶ **Is well serviced and well-equipped (servicing and facilities);**
- ▶ **Is economically progressive and successful (economy);**
- ▶ **Has character and a sense of place (community);**
- ▶ **Is naturally inviting and environmentally aware (environment);**
- ▶ **Is responsible, accountable and influential (administration);**
- ▶ **Is on the move (transportation).**

The objectives articulate an emphasis on a balance of services and facilities, having a strong economy, a clearly evident community character and identity and a sustainable and natural environment. Being accountable and ensuring transportation capacity are also key outcomes in facilitating these objectives.

3.2 Community Services Master Plan Vision Statement

A Vision Statement sets a horizon towards which all stakeholders can gravitate. It should be both inspirational and a statement that creates a common bond and sense of direction. The Vision Statement establishes a direction for the Master Plan and is a basis upon which the Plan evolves, both in terms of its development and its ongoing application.

Recommendation – Vision Statement

Town residents will experience a diverse array of accessible leisure opportunities and resources that improve resident health and well-being, strengthen the Town’s communities and encourage individual and community development.



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The Vision for this Master Plan is to create a diverse array of accessible leisure opportunities for Lakeshore residents. The key component of the Vision is that there will be a diverse and a balanced array of leisure opportunities to meet the varied interests of Lakeshore residents and that these opportunities will be accessible. Leisure participation opportunities represent the core of the leisure services delivery system and are the fundamental rationale for the Town's investment in the provision of these services, either directly or in partnership with others.

The second part of the Vision identifies the three key focuses that collectively identify the rationale for these investments and why residents benefit from participation in leisure activities.

The first benefit speaks to the health and well-being of the residents themselves. Active participation involves fitness, the development of the mind, the achievement of new skills and enhanced personal development, the pursuit of ones interest and the ongoing development of the whole person, as both an individual and as contributing member of the community.

The second benefit identified in the Vision is strengthening communities. Communities are identified in the Town's Strategic Plan as one of the centre points as to how Lakeshore needs to evolve and service the need of its residents. The Town is a collection of integrated communities that come together to form Lakeshore, each being unique, each having different needs and each contributing in differentiated and valued ways. The Master Plan needs to align itself within this Vision, with the communities and their importance, how they operate and to support their need to be vibrant, contributing and sustainable.

Personal and community development or capacity building is the third benefit, involving the opportunity for people to invest in their community through direct participation, volunteerism, leadership and other activities, whether as a coach for sporting activities, an instructor in an arts class or contributing to a community association's efforts to better their community or area of Lakeshore.

3.2.1 MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement speaks to the fundamentals and the focus of what is going to be achieved via the Master Plan. It articulates intent and the broad strategic approaches to be utilized.



Recommendation – Mission Statement

The Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan directs the Town’s achievement of a balanced array of accessible, participation-based leisure opportunities in support of a growing population. It brings together all the community’s leisure capabilities and resources that contribute to the enrichment of the quality of life for Lakeshore residents through both partnerships and direct delivery strategies that:

- ▶ **Inspire a true value for the benefits of leisure participation opportunities and encourage broad-based, active resident participation that supports improved resident health, well-being and personal development.**
- ▶ **Generate a strengthened sense of community identity, spirit and service amongst all residents.**
- ▶ **Support improved community unity and capacity, as well as positive municipal and local economic development.**

The overall outcome for the Master Plan is to enrich the quality of life for Lakeshore residents, that is, that all residents will be better off in terms of the quality of their day to day experiences by potentially being able to access leisure, culture and park facilities and services that respond to their current and evolving interests.

The first objective of this particular goal involves three considerations. First, to have a Master Plan and strategies that focuses on residents understanding the benefits of leisure participation as an important part of life within the community for both them and their families. A strong belief in the need for leisure services creates a positive values basis that allows the community to work collectively to ensure that it has an excellent array of opportunities in terms of its leisure facilities, services, parks and related resources.



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This objective also focuses on leisure opportunities within the community that enhance resident health, well-being and personal development. This could involve fitness in terms of physical activity through the maximization of natural recreation assets. It could include well-being in terms of reducing stress or being able to socialize and be with others and overcome isolation. It also could involve personal development in terms of expressing their artistic interests or being involved as a volunteer and contributing back to the community to satisfy their need to be a member of their community and to serve.

The second objective speaks to the community as a collective of its residents. Leisure services, through team sports, individual activities, external travel, etc. have the opportunity to strengthen the residents' sense of community through creating a stronger identity of the Town and its areas, as being a positive and good place that realizes success. It also can support a growing sense of community spirit and ownership. Another perspective, is that leisure services create unique opportunities for people to serve their community through voluntary roles and other supports that contribute to enhancing the quality of life of individuals in the community and the overall well-being of the community itself.

The third objective focuses on the growth and sustainability of the Town's geographic communities via providing a common identification and cause, that is a centre point in terms of building the leadership, interest and connecting points necessary for all these areas to be strong, vibrant and sustainable. The Master Plan, within a Town-wide perspective, also needs to be able to deliver key contributions to the Town's community and economic development roles and initiatives. These can be achieved through parks providing significant urban form resources and the ongoing physical development of the community or trail systems that connect various nodes within the Town to provide alternate transportation systems. Economically, sport and family tourism and other economic activities within the leisure services mandate can be vital to the community in terms of job creation, economic sustainability and enhancing the revenue generation capacities of key leisure facilities, thus reducing their financial impacts on residents and users.

The Master Plan's Mission is designed to be supportive to both Town's Strategic Plan and the Master Plan's Vision in its efforts to ensure that it is broad-based in serving all the community's members, supports the geographic communities and creates real value amongst the residences related to leisure services being a key priority and investment point for a healthy, active, vibrant, creative and sustainable municipality.

3.2.2 PRINCIPLES

The following Principles have been developed as a basis for the directions, strategies and recommendations within the Master Plan.

Principles have three applications at this level of planning. First, they provide an opportunity to further outline key components of the Mission. Second, they identify how the Master Plan and the service providers need to interact with people and the types of relationships that need to be developed in order to be successful. Third, they provide an opportunity to identify key accountability and outcome areas.

Recommendation:

The Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan will foster...

Balanced Array of Leisure Opportunities

The provision of a balanced mix of leisure opportunities, involving recreation, arts, culture, minor sports and education with linked access to social, health and related services.

Fair and Equitable

Fair and equitable leisure opportunities that encourage participation by all dimensions of the Town in terms of ability, culture, economic, geographic and related interests and backgrounds.

Integrity and Evaluation

Developing and implementing, programs and resources that operate with integrity, are continually evaluated relative to outcomes and respond to evolving resident needs and community growth.

Maximize Utilization

The maximum utilization of existing resources, through their on-going rehabilitation and renewal.

Community Accessible Services

The provision of geographically dispersed facilities to meet changing market demands and population growth patterns, while ensuring key linkages with local community and Town-wide servicing requirements.



Specialized Services

The continuation of specialized services for seniors, youth, the disabled, new immigrants, early years and other targeted populations whose citizenship and quality of life could be enhanced through improved access to and increased participation in leisure services.

Department Leadership

The Community Services Department developing a leadership role in the planning, development, facilitation and supports for leisure services availability, using an array of innovative delivery strategies involving partnerships, joint ventures, direct delivery and community-based service provider approaches.

Conservation of Natural Resources

Ensuring that the Town's parks, open space, the waterfront and stream corridors and natural areas continue being valued by the community, conserve key environmental resources, are accessible to the public for both programmed and non-programmed activities and contribute significantly to a positive urban form in Lakeshore.

Corporate Alignment

Developing leisure facilities linked to broader municipal strategies, priorities and initiatives related to health, economic and tourism development, transportation, education and growth management.

Flexible and Sustainable Facilities

Facilities and services that are flexible and sustainable over the longer term through innovative designs and effective operations, and that are adaptable and flexible, environmentally sound, affordable to construct and operate, facilitate an ease of maintenance and are energy efficient and actively support the inclusion of all residents.

The first Principle identifies the importance of a balanced mix of leisure facilities that includes recreation, arts, culture, education and other servicing dimensions. It is through this balanced mix that a spectrum of services is available that can meet the multitude of needs and variable interests of residents. Leisure services are not for one particular dimension of the community. They need to be reasonably available for the multitude of resident interests.

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Also vitally important, is that today, leisure services do not stand alone. In most cases, they have significant interconnectivity to social, health, educational and other related services. This trend focuses on the holistic development of each person and treating them as a whole person and not their individual needs. It is through this interchange and collective approach that individuals are better served, have more opportunities and achieve enhanced outcomes.

Another Principle supports the need for the fair and equitable provision of leisure services so that all residents can have a reasonable opportunity to access and participate. These services also need to not simply exist but efforts need to be made to encourage participation. This encouragement needs to be both generic in terms of the whole population but also needs to be targeted at specific groups who have barriers that need to be overcome, require different types of informational resources or have other considerations that need to be addressed in order to ensure fair and equitable access. In an increasing multicultural community, with some financial barriers and other challenges, these communication and encouragement process becomes increasingly important and diverse in order to serve the whole community.

The Master Plan includes a principle of not only investing in new facilities but that considerable effort needs to be made to renew existing facilities and to ensure that maximum use is being made of what is already available. Too often, the planning focus gravitates towards the new and exciting and loses sight of what currently exists. This is particularly important, as many municipalities, Lakeshore included, have many aging facilities that have been in existence for twenty to fifty years or more. Therefore, not losing sight of the need for rehabilitation and renewal is vitally important as identified in the household survey results.

There also should be an evident geographic distribution of leisure facilities and services across Lakeshore. This principle ensures that community level facilities service local areas, districts facilities support districts and Town-wide facilities support Town-wide access needs. Facilities should not be concentrated in one area but need to have a dispersion so that everybody feels that they have reasonable access, travel times are shared and all areas of the community feel served. This is supported by a linkage of communities and facilities along trail and natural heritage features.

Many segments of the population have specialized needs or could achieve a particularly enhanced benefit from participating in leisure activities. To date, seniors, youth, the disabled, new immigrants and early year populations have generally been identified as important target groups for various economic, health, social development and other considerations. Though these target audiences can change over time, they do represent areas of some importance and can get 'lost' in the general service deliver parameters that often evolve. Much of the participation of these individuals is tied to specific outcomes, such as better socialization which can effect the longer term successful development of a child, or keeping seniors active so that they are healthier and more connected to

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the community and less isolated, along with achieving greater inclusion for those with disabilities or new immigrants who cannot speak the language and experience significant barriers resulting in them being left out or behind.

Another key Principle is to sustain an important focus on the geographic communities in Lakeshore. This Plan addresses key opportunities to provide leisure programs and activities locally, whether through an enhanced access to local schools or other community-based facilities. It also reflects the fact that there needs to be investment in community groups in terms of their ability to be able to sustain themselves, develop leadership capacities, communicate and other important activities that will foster their success and ongoing viability.

One of the key Principles of the Master Plan is that the Community Services Department has a definable and an important leadership role in the planning, development, facilitation, delivery and evaluation of leisure services in Lakeshore. The department represents a significant resource in terms of the assets they have to work with, their technical skills and capabilities and other inputs that are vital to both the services they deliver directly and the supports they can provide to other parties who are central to the overall leisure services delivery strategy. The Town does not need to be all things to all people or undertake every thing directly. In fact, the ability to work with community associations, organized leisure services groups and other third parties is an integral strategy in expanding the array of services, their geographic distribution, the opportunities for people to contribute to their community through volunteerism and to ensure greater levels of resident participation.

The Town's parks, open space, waterfront and natural areas represent a very significant community resource. They impact the urban form and development pattern of the community, as well as conserve key natural resources that are valued by the residents and are necessary to sustain a healthy ecological and environmental balance. Also, these resources need to support both program and non-programmed activities. Not all leisure services need to be programmed. In fact, there is significant importance in ensuring that there are opportunities for spontaneous and unorganized activities which fosters more creativity, social interchange and adaptability. Key areas of consideration within this Principle involve a community trail system which is highly valued, the Town's Lake St. Clair waterfront which is a very significant resource, along with the river and stream corridors and the Town's parks and sportsfields.

Leisure facilities no longer stand alone as they can become important investment instruments in terms of broader community strategies. Therefore, the Master Plan needs to ensure that the facilities being proposed are supportive to various senior government initiatives, eg: Smart Growth, the Town's economic development and tourism strategy, transportation priorities and investments and other initiatives.

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Investments in leisure facilities and services also need to be sustainable over the long term. This can come in the form of innovative designs and energy efficient operations or it may involve facilities that are adaptable and flexible to support changing uses. The Town must develop a financial formula linking growth in recreation facilities with a corresponding increase in operational budget. There is a host of considerations in facility and venue designs that are important to this Principle in terms of ensuring the Town's investments maximize the outcomes to be realized, the long term sustainability of services and user benefits and satisfaction.



4.0 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN AND WATERFRONT STRATEGY

4.1 Leisure Services Delivery Policy and Strategies

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

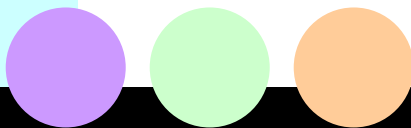
Section 4 provides recommendations on the first dimension of the Parks and Recreation component of the Master Plan related to the Town's leisure service delivery policy and delivery strategies. These recommendations set out the framework upon which Town decisions on leisure facilities and services need to be assessed and go forward. This area has two dimensions. First, is the Leisure Services Delivery Policy recommendation that guides the Town's actions and investments. Second, are the potential array of delivery strategy recommendations designed to achieve the outcomes desired.

4.1.2 TOWN OF LAKESHORE LEISURE SERVICES DELIVERY POLICY

Overview

Municipalities are coming under increasing expectations to being able to deliver a wider range of leisure opportunities, many of them involving increasingly sophisticated facilities, integrated services delivery approaches and growing long term capital, operating and financial / sustainability requirements. Society has moved to a point where there is a growing array of leisure activities that people want to be involved with, many of them involving smaller clusters / segments of individuals within the community and beyond. Also, many activities / services are subdividing into groups that want high performance experiences or individuals who just wish to try something out or have a more limited experience. In the middle, are expectations or a hobbyist or regular participant at a recreation level of interest, eg: jogger.

The increasing mix of leisure activities, and the differentiated connecting points that participants have with each of these activities, is generating a more complex service delivery environment. Further complicating this environment is that new groups are forming that need support while established groups go through cycles of strength and weakness variability, eg: off-road cyclists. As a result, the Town can be approached to support the launch of a new service initiative by organizations that are experiencing sustainability challenges or when significant leadership challenges occur.



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As a basis for the Town to express its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services, it requires a policy framework upon which to ensure that it is not seen as the sole party responsible and that everything does not lead back to the Town. However, the policy also needs to recognize that the Town is in a unique position within the leisure services delivery model in terms of skills and capacities, assets and financial resources, service stability and other key delivery factors. Finding a balance that is a basis to undertake this role is a part of the long term planning process for leisure services and facilities in Lakeshore.

Recommendation – Leisure Services Delivery Policy

The following Leisure Services Delivery Policy recommendation has been developed for the Town of Lakeshore's Community Services Department.

- ▶ **The Town of Lakeshore is a leader in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services needs and opportunities within the municipality.**
- ▶ **The Town firmly believes in the value of and need for community organizations to successfully operate leisure services as a primary means to expand the accessibility, availability, affordability and mix of leisure services that are available to its citizens.**
- ▶ **The prioritization process for the Town of Lakeshore's participation and investments in the leisure services facilities and venues will focus on servicing Town residents as the primary users within the following priority framework:**
 - **First – leisure services that facilitate and encourage broad-based participation amongst Town residents at a recreational level of activity, including in-town, regional and provincial competitive oriented activities for children and youth.**
 - **Second – leisure services and accessibility supports that link to the specialized needs of targeted populations, such as those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new immigrants, etc.**
 - **Third – leisure services that are primarily intended to support key strategic initiatives of the Town, such as conservation of major open space resources development of the Town's waterfront and specialized services that ensure a broad mix / array of leisure opportunities for Lakeshore residents.**

- ▶ **The Town will fulfill its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of leisure services based on the following hierarchy of responses and roles.**
 - **First – will actively work to facilitate and support community groups and individuals in the development and delivery of leisure services by providing technical supports, access to grants, and other supports involving data information, volunteer training and recognition, access to facilities, trends research and related strategies and supports.**
 - **Second – will enter into partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborative initiatives, at variable levels of involvement, that result in a shared responsibility for a leisure facility, venue or service's delivery where:**
 - **The interest of the residents of Lakeshore are fully realized**
 - **Need is apparent**
 - **Sustainability within acceptable risk parameters exists.**
 - **Third – to undertake the direct delivery of leisure services venues and facilities where other delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as Town staff operating alone or in partnership with volunteers.**
- ▶ **Any Town involvement in leisure services delivery should be based on the following conditions:**
 - **Identification of demonstrated need at reasonable participation levels**
 - **Evidence of long term sustainability for the service**
 - **Assured public accessibility, participation and affordability**
 - **Involvement by the Town at a scale reflective of the benefits to be achieved to both the participants and the community at large.**
 - **The use of business case analysis and preparation as a basis to support Town investments in a leisure facility or services initiative.**
- ▶ **The Town will establish a data collection and outcomes / performance monitoring capacity that will effectively assess the value of the Town's role in the various delivery strategies, the degree of participation that is being realized and the benefits being realized by the Town's investments.**

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This policy focuses on the fact that the Town is best served if organized groups and individuals within their own perspectives can be integrated into and drive the delivery of leisure facilities and services. This strategy generally focuses on program dimensions, as most facilities become too costly and often require some form of direct or partial Town involvement. The Town can not be all things to all people. Therefore, groups of individuals with a particular interest need to galvanize themselves to a point where they can take on many of the administrative, program development and delivery perspectives.

The Town has a strong role in facilitating these groups in order to assist them to form, to provide technical supports and to aid them in terms of overcoming the challenges that may occur from time to time. This role allows the Town to engage with these groups at points where the groups can remain independent but do not have the capacity to access some key resources which could range from marketing and advertising, to registration, to volunteer training and development, to program evaluation, to accessing grants, to assessing new opportunities, etc. The Town has many of the skills and capacities in-house or has access to such resources that can be very beneficial to these groups, especially if they are experiencing difficulties and their sustainability becomes threatened.

The second level of the policy, indicates that the Town, before it will undertake direct involvement in the delivery of a leisure facility, venue or service, will look for alternative approaches. This could be through partnerships, joint ventures or other collaborative initiatives. This is not a new perspective for the Town. But asking the question early in the review and development process, as to whether other strategies are available, needs to be formalized. It may be that these opportunities are not apparent to proponent groups, and that partnerships and joint ventures may need to be initiated by the Town or even organized by the Town in terms of forming groups or operations that could eventually be a partner with the Town.

The third dimension of the hierarchy, is that the Town, based on evident need and policy compliance, decides to make a direct investment in the development of a leisure facility and venue or the delivery of a leisure service. This will occur when no other available alternatives exist and need is apparent. The policy assigns the Town a very important role, particularly with respect to leisure facilities.

This policy further articulates key criteria and related considerations that need to be addressed whenever the Town becomes involved in a leisure facility, venue or service initiatives. The affordability and accessibility of the public becomes a major criteria, as does sustainability and other considerations. Another important consideration is that the scale of the Town's involvement needs to be in balance with the benefits that are going to be realized. It is possible that the ideas that come forward are out of scale with the benefits that will be realized. This needs to be assessed, all within a business case model.

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From a policy implementation perspective, the Town will need to further develop the application dimensions of the policy, giving particular consideration to the last point which is ensuring the data recording systems are in place to assess both participation and benefits, as well as performance monitoring of the outcomes desired and how they are achieved.

4.1.3 COMMUNITY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEES / BOARDS

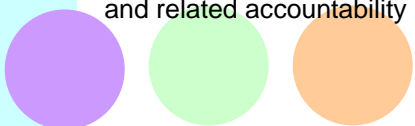
Overview

Lakeshore is a growing community with an increasing array of leisure services programs and facilities. The Situational Analysis Report consultation program identified strong interests in the ability of residents to access leisure services programs within the Town and to improve the quality of the venues and facilities. Also, the community is geographically diverse with a host of leisure services venues and facilities throughout the community, each having a variable level of utilization. As a result, the overall community service organizational fabric is fragmented, independently operated and promotes multiple community identities without a common perspective for Lakeshore.

There are also variable service delivery and governance models. As an example, community services in Belle River are variably maintained and operated by the Town, such as the Belle River Arena and selected parks, etc. However, Optimist Park is operated by the Belle River Optimist Club and Lakeshore Soccer Complex has a joint operating framework between the Association and the Town. In Stoney Point, a local organization operates the park. Local park and facility committees also exist in Comber, Woodslee and Lighthouse Cove and other areas.

One input provided by representatives of some of the community organizations that operate municipally-owned facilities and sites, was the fact, that though they can garner significant project-oriented volunteers for clean up days and operating tournaments, etc., there is a general concern as to the ability of some local groups to successfully recruit and retain governance and leadership volunteers. In several cases, these representatives cited situations that the governance body or the principal operating volunteer are dependent on a few individuals, generally people who are retired or of an older age. It was not evident to some of them, as to who would be able to pick up these roles when leadership transitions occur. It was identified by some, that the current model has a potential vulnerability in terms of continuity and consistency.

From a municipal perspective, concerns were raised around health and safety, consistency and continuity of operations, fairness and equity for all citizens to be engaged and to participate and other broad-based policy considerations, some of them relating to tendering, financial accounting and related accountability perspectives.



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What was also clearly evident from the consultation results, was the importance of volunteers, local autonomy and not allowing all the leisure services facilities and programs to be concentrated in Belle River. The importance of local identity and 'ownership' of the facilities, especially since many of these facilities have arisen from local fundraising and support over the years, was seen as an important policy perspective that needs to be sustained and supported, but also needs to recognize that there are strategic transitions occurring.

Also in this vein, is that the scheduling activities are handled differently in different parts of the community. In some areas, a local service provider undertakes the scheduling of sportsfields and / or indoor facilities, eg: Lakeshore Soccer Complex, Woodslee Park. Some of the scheduling of halls in the hamlets is undertaken by the local committee.

Overall, there is no coordinated scheduling strategy that:

- ▶ Tracks utilization levels;
- ▶ Markets all the available spaces across the spectrum of venues available in Lakeshore based on a single point of contact;
- ▶ Makes an effort to use all the resources available, as each organization is focused only on its particular venue or venues relative to maximizing revenue, etc.

In assessing the situation, a perspective emerges that the fragmentation of the local delivery system, which typically involves municipally-owned lands and facilities, may benefit from operating within a more integrated framework, but also needs to facilitate local engagement and use priority.

In the end, two levels of integration and coordinated services planning and delivery need to be considered:

- ▶ Town-wide, in terms of broader policy, planning and operational perspectives, health and safety, risk management and accountability;
- ▶ Local area considerations and operating approaches.

Another major theme in this area, is the contracts the Town utilizes for the operation of its various leisure facilities and park, open space and trail venues. The review of such contracts in the Situational Analysis Report, identified the multiplicity of contracts at varying levels of specificity and standardization. The Town would benefit, as owner of these important assets, from a more comprehensive contract template that focuses on ownership and asset management, the benefits



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to be accrued through third party operations, clarity of roles and functions in detail and risk management and related considerations.

A number of the current contracts appear to be working satisfactorily and there were no concerns, other than they reflect a different era in terms of concerns and focus. Today, issues around liability, risk management and capital repairs and maintenance are much more significant. Also, contracts such as with the Lakeshore Soccer Complex, do not appear to have the level of detail, buy-in and mutuality necessary for them to be successful. As a result, performance expectations, capacities and related considerations have not evolved to the level of trust and workability that would be beneficial both to the service providing group and to the Town.

The third party operation of municipal assets is seen as a way to evolve community engagement and to ensure continuing availability of services and facilities in the hamlet areas. However, with the Town owning these assets, there has to be increased attention on liability, capital maintenance asset management and other dimensions of these contracts due to the inherent and growing complexity of these operating environments. This ranges from ensuring that playground structures meet Canadian Standards Association's continually changing guidelines and standards, to ensuring the effective asset management of buildings and lands to protect the investments and ensuring policy considerations in terms of affordability for accessibility for individuals with challenges and other considerations are fully represented within a publicly-owned facility.

In the end, a contract is the arbiter of the relationship and the key goals, benefits and outcomes desired by the parties involved. Therefore, enhancing the quality of the contracts in terms of specificity, benefits, roles, etc. is critically important to the Town and ultimately to the service providing organization and Lakeshore taxpayers. Need exists to take all existing contracts and bring them into a more comprehensive format, which will require negotiations with various parties to achieve this, but the mutuality of the concerns needs to be fully developed and supported.

Another key consideration in this area of endeavour for the Town, is supporting ongoing community engagement. By supporting a governance model that allows local oversight and service provision when utilizing municipal resources is a key strategy. A second key strategy, is not facility-based, but market or participant based, involving Activity Councils that support interest groups, particularly around targeted populations where substantive change is occurring, needs and benefits are more closely aligned and policy outcomes exist. As a result, the development and support by the Town of seniors, youth, arts and culture, sports and trails represents an initial opportunity to bring together common interests that provide focus on a particular targeted service area. These groups can provide input, undertake assessments, can galvanize volunteers, become a key communication resource and give presence and substance to major leisure services areas of importance to the residents and the community.

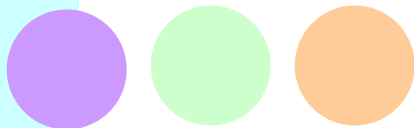
These are volunteer groups and a mechanism needs to be established that allows for the Town to provide supports such as meeting rooms, secretarial assistance as required and other opportunities for them to work within a framework that includes a defined terms of reference, agenda template and reporting mechanism that engages the participants to participate fully, and gives them a sense that their role is important, their work is valued and that positive outcomes are being realized.

Recommendation – Governance and Local Community Engagement

The intents of the following recommendations are as follows:

- ▶ To create a more consistent and equitable leisure services delivery model across the Town;
- ▶ To ensure policy compliance with health and safety, tendering and other areas that have potential liability considerations for the Town, volunteers and users;
- ▶ To initiate a response to some of the volunteer leadership challenges identified by local organization representatives in order to provide consistency and continuity of operations;
- ▶ To clarify the role of the Town and the local volunteer leaders and organizations, which allows the local bodies to focus on services, programs and other activities that involve their residents, with the Town focusing on asset management, health and safety and related perspectives.

- ▶ **That the Town of Lakeshore form and support a multi-dimensional Community Services Advisory Committee to replace the existing Parks Committee with a community-based model, constituted as follows and with the identified roles as outlined below:**
 - **Membership**
 - **Two representatives from hamlet / local area parks / recreation boards, committees and service providers;**
 - **Two minor sports representatives from the Belle River area (eg: hockey, soccer and baseball);**
 - **Two representative of adult leisure activities delivery across the Town;**



- **Two representatives involving groups or populations involving individuals with disabilities, early years and seniors;**
- **One representative from environmental and trail groups;**
- **One representative from arts and culture activities;**
- **Two municipal Councillors;**
- **Two Community Services Department staff.**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
 - **To support the development of the Annual Community Services Communications Plan;**
 - **To initiate, where appropriate, and to review leisure services policy initiatives of the Town prior to Council consideration;**
 - **To coordinate the marketing and use of facilities across the Town;**
 - **To advise on the implementation of the Community Services Master Plan and other related leisure services and facilities planning initiatives;**
 - **To support and plan ongoing volunteer recruitment, development, recognition and related initiatives;**
 - **To provide ongoing advice to staff and Council on specific initiatives, policies, directions and leisure service delivery strategies.**
- ▶ **That the Town of Lakeshore develop a governance and operations model for municipally-owned facilities and parks as follows:**
 - **That the Town be responsible for venue and facility maintenance (custodian, grounds maintenance, etc.) for all municipally-owned assets, including management of all capital projects;**
 - **That local service clubs and/or service provider organizations continue to plan, operate leisure service programs and venues and utilization in conformity with municipal policy and criteria, including health and safety, participant inclusion, affordability, an integrated operations strategy and related considerations;**



- That a member of the Community Service Department represent the Town on each of the local governing bodies relative to providing coordination, communications, policy interpretation and related supports (Example: St. Joachim Athletic Association);
- That when a local community service board and / or committee (eg: Staples Athletic Association) is not able to continue in its role for whatever reason, the Town undertake the direct operation, scheduling and coordination of the venues and facilities at that location;
- That the Town establish annually, a consistent user fee schedule for its directly operated programs and venues, as well as charges for services provided to local area boards and committees, based on a user fee policy to be developed by the Town and input provided annually by the Community Services Advisory Committee.
- ▶ That the Town ensure a current contract exists for the operation of each of its venues and facilities and that all contracts be reviewed and aligned with the following content:
 - A preamble that identifies the parties involved, and the rationale and benefits to be achieved from this agreement;
 - Reinforces the Town as owner of the venue or facility, who has ultimate responsibility for effective asset management. Use, scheduling and maintenance undertaken by the other party is to conform to Town policies, criteria and standards for:
 - Risk management
 - Health and safety
 - Insurance coverage
 - Cleanliness
 - Public access
 - Fees, rates and charges
 - On-site advertising.
 - Details capital and annual cost responsibilities amongst the parties and how revenues will be generated and shared and the rates to be charged;

- **Has detailed rates and performance clauses for both the Town and the other party or parties related to regular maintenance, scheduling, ranges of permissible intended uses, as well as a regular performance review framework;**
- **Has a termination clause and conditions that can be used at the sole discretion of the Town;**
- **Has a defined timeline for renewal and renewal conditions and terms;**
- **Provides a detailed conflict resolution clause;**
- **Outlines an annual reporting clause to Council, possibly as part of a larger Department Monitoring Report on leisure services delivery.**
- ▶ **That the Town continue and / or form and support specialized Activity Councils as a means to generate input relevant to these groups, better supporting communications and assessing and reviewing programming and facilities planning and operations that will improve their access to services:**
 - **Seniors Council;**
 - **Youth Council;**
 - **Arts and Culture Council;**
 - **Sports Councils;**
 - **Accessibility Council;**
 - **Trails Council.**

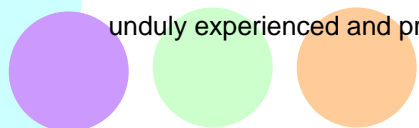
4.1.4 LEISURE SERVICES DELIVERY STRATEGIES

There are multiple approaches relative to leisure service delivery strategies for the Town. The following material is a basis upon which to develop an overall services delivery strategy.

Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation Resources

OVERVIEW

Currently, some of the Town’s statistical gathering formats are not as comprehensive or offer the needed depth of analysis necessary to formulate and support investment or policy-based decisions. At the level of complexity that is being experienced, an enhanced data collection and analysis system needs to be considered. Complimenting the data collection process, is the need for an ongoing monitoring process to ensure that the benefits cited are being realized, risk is not being unduly experienced and preventative actions can be taken prior to major problems evolving.



This latter consideration becomes increasingly important as non-profit organizations become more invested in major facilities, longitudinal volunteer leadership challenges exist within key non-profit organizations and other considerations become more active in the operating environment that could threaten sustainability or create substantive issues that need to be addressed to support the consistent delivery of services.

Recommendation

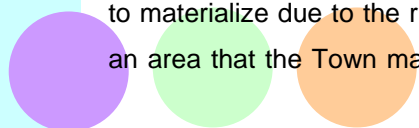
An enhanced data and analytical based monitoring process is required, involving the following considerations.

- ▶ **A comprehensive review and further development of the Department's data collection, analytical and evaluation activities, potentially using the CLASS system as the platform, to ensure increasingly relevant, accurate and timely data to support decision-making with emphasis on:**
 - **The Town's leisure services operations to ensure that revenues are being optimized, expenses are being minimized and participation opportunities are maximized.**
 - **Changes that are occurring in the regional market context that could influence participation patterns and which might impact financial results, related to reduced revenues, increased expectations or other changing market conditions.**
 - **Supporting organizations that the Town is significantly connected with in terms of grants or related to the potential impacts if the organization were to cease operations or run into a major financial issue.**
- ▶ **Use of Leisure Services Delivery Policy as the primary basis for any current or future leisure services evaluations related to philosophical fit, criteria, goals, etc.**

Partnerships / Joint Ventures

OVERVIEW

Over the last ten years, there has been considerable discussion and experimentation with private-public partnerships, joint ventures and other initiatives. Some have worked, and others have failed to materialize due to the rigors and risk management requirements that are often in place. This is an area that the Town may wish to increase use where opportunities exist. However, to increase



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the use of these techniques will likely require some form of increased flexibility and risk taking. The Town will need to assess the levels of risk and their reasonableness on a case-by-case basis. However, it is becoming increasingly demonstrated that partnerships and joint ventures have the ability to expand the array of leisure opportunities, reduce financial pressures on the municipality and provide other benefits. However, they also require the development of new skills in terms of contract management, partnership evaluation and other inputs, along with enhanced risk taking and other change perspectives.

Recommendation – Partnerships and Joint Ventures

To continue Town lead or supported partnership, joint venture and related initiatives where:

- **Need is identified and demonstrated;**
- **Public access and affordability are assured;**
- **The partnership is financially reasonable and sustainable;**
- **The scope of investment is reflective of the benefits to be realized by residents of the Town.**

Community Partnership Fund

OVERVIEW

The Town operates a Community Partnership Fund that involves two differentiated themes to programs/facilities and event support based on mostly leveraging funding. In 2006, the value of the Fund was approximately \$90,000. In 2007, the value of Community Partnership Funds awarded to date is approximately \$71,000. Interest is high for the fall 2007 Fund allocation with sixteen applications totalling over \$100,00 in requests compared to \$15,000 available. In total, Council has awarded \$162,000 of funding for 34 projects in Lakeshore, leveraging a total amount of almost \$500,000 in the community.

Each of the streams has its own intake process, criteria and target audiences. The grants are mostly one time, such as for equipment or events.

The granting program is incentive driven and will become more popular as it becomes better known and the funding need of organized community groups intensify. Also, municipalities are moving to a more integrated funding support program that incorporates all subsidies and grants, such as the



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cost of reduced ice fees or fields for minor sports groups and similar perspectives. Increased emphasis for environmental causes / uses is also growing.

This approach results in consolidating a municipality’s contributions and subsidies into one program for enhanced transparency, management and prioritization. These programs tend to evolve towards annualized and one time granting streams with priorities for:

- ▶ Children, youth and teens;
- ▶ People with disabilities;
- ▶ Arts and culture services;
- ▶ Environment initiatives;
- ▶ Community and volunteer development and recognition;
- ▶ Special events and festivals.

Recommendation – Community Partnership and Investment Fund

With respect to the Community Grants Program, the following is recommended:

- ▶ **That the Community Partnership Fund be continued and be repositioned as the Community Partnership and Investment Fund to be utilized as a basis to fulfill the Town’s facilitation role as an alternative to direct delivery and to sustain a broader mix / spectrum of leisure services across Lakeshore.**
- ▶ **That a review be completed to determine whether the complexity and the number of components of the Fund can be enlarged to incorporate all the Town’s investments, support and subsidies for community leisure service provider organizations, involving both one time and annualized support.**
- ▶ **That the following criteria be further developed and be created as a foundation for the allocation of funds and within the Fund:**
 - **Non-profit leisure service providing groups – based on the number of Lakeshore residents involved, i.e.: 80% or higher Town registrants, level of volunteerism, economic impact and identifiable benefits within two categories:**

- **Emerging groups operating less than three years**
- **Established groups operating for more than three years**
- **Sport, event and festival tourism – economic impact statements and measures**
- **Capital and one time grants - based on benefits derived and Town cost displacement criteria**
- **Targeted populations / audiences - based on policy priorities for:**
 - **Disabled / disenfranchised**
 - **New immigrant populations**
 - **Fairness and equity balancing**
 - **Other principles / values as identified and approved**
- **Volunteer development, recognition and related initiatives**
- **A review of organizations receiving continuing grants every three years related to strength, accessibility and connectivity to Town priorities and directions.**

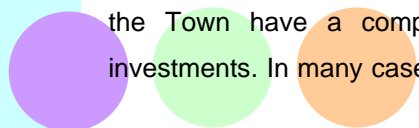
The actual amount of funds expanded through the Fund is fundamentally a policy-based decision related to what resources are available and the level of investment the Town wishes to undertake. There is no apparent formula that will necessarily dictate the actual investment level year to year, however how the distribution occurs could be developed around a more integrated model, within a more developed set of criteria and based on an outcomes-oriented evaluation process. These evaluations should occur every three years for the annualized and / or continuing grants.

New Policy Development Initiatives

OVERVIEW

The Town has some policies with respect to their specific involvement in key areas of leisure services and some of the principles and criteria that are involved. This involves special events, parks, harassment and related considerations. Most of these have been developed at a procedures level.

During the course of analysis for the development of this MasterPlan, which involved the review of some existing policies, a trends analysis, and input received from the consultation program, other areas of potential policy development as well as policy format where identified. It is important that the Town have a comprehensive policy framework to support its leisure evaluations and investments. In many cases, the Town has active programs in these areas but requires them to be



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connected to a strategic framework. Also, the Town has responsibility for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, health and safety and accessible issues which are key policy areas.

Recommendation – New Policies Development and Format

The following policy development areas and format are recommended:

1. Policy Development Priorities

That the following policy areas be given Department priority:

- ▶ **Fairness and equality of accessibility.**
- ▶ **Affordability parameters.**
- ▶ **Targeted populations in terms of ability, new immigrants and others who have significant barriers to participation.**
- ▶ **Funding formula linked to population and utilization trends.**
- ▶ **Economic impact and development expectations from Town investments.**
- ▶ **Community group operating contracts.**
- ▶ **An evaluation and monitoring program and associated processes.**
- ▶ **Local Board governance and operational roles and accountabilities.**
- ▶ **Naming rights and corporate sponsorships.**
- ▶ **Comprehensive risk management and health and safety.**
- ▶ **Other specific areas.**

2. Policy Format

That Department policies should have the following content components:

- ▶ **Policy rationale and need**
- ▶ **Policy principles / foundation**
- ▶ **Policy statement and content**

- ▶ **Linkages to all regulatory and / or statutory acts or legislation, regulations and / or Town policies**
- ▶ **Implementation and monitoring procedures**
- ▶ **Mandatory policy review date**
- ▶ **Amendment tracking component**

The use of policy development and review linkages identification and procedure components provides a more rigorous and consistent policy framework for use involving multiple staff, departments and groups.

Multi-Municipal Approaches

OVERVIEW

One distinctive characteristic of organized leisure service in Lakeshore involve participation patterns in Tilbury, Essex, Tecumseh and Windsor, that is beyond the municipal boundaries. The prevalence of broader municipal organizations and / or regional service organizations is evident, especially for minor sports. The Town currently has variable financial relationships for its residents using leisure services in other communities.

Some neighbouring municipalities are developing a wide range of new leisure facilities, policies and planning initiatives that impact leisure services delivery and investment in Lakeshore and / or with Town of Lakeshore support, eg: Ice Track in Tecumseh and twin pad arena in the Town of Essex. Sometimes, the rationale for these facilities and plans are to attract users from other municipal jurisdictions in order to create the volume levels that warrant the investment. These types of issues have emerged around the Ice Track proposal. Also, some of this facility development can result in potential over capacities and diseconomies.

The Town will need to assess such opportunities to determine their risk, benefit and costs for its residents. Also, regional initiatives may be appropriate for community-based requests such as for a cross-country bike facility.

It is recognized, that joint planning on a multi-municipality basis can be challenging and raise sensitivities. However, with the cost of leisure services facilities and services, a question needs to be addressed as to whether there is an alternate delivery model or models that more intensively integrate leisure facilities and services amongst the neighbouring municipalities. The key issue is,

can service delivery models be developed that better utilize existing facilities, reduce the need for additional facilities targeted to support residents within municipal boundaries and reduce overall capital and operating costs when the market behaves significantly differently than how the service delivery model operates, i.e.: on a municipality by municipality basis.

Recommendation – Multi-Municipal Approach

That the Town of Lakeshore, through Council and staff efforts, pursue initiatives to enter into discussions with neighbouring municipalities and beyond if reasonable, to explore whether a more integrated services delivery model involving enhanced collaboration, could be developed and implemented to facilitate increased public accessibility to facility resources and improved investment outcomes for all parties involved.

This strategy could be a significant initiative, but the capital cost and annual operating cost considerations, and the market behavioural characteristics warrant a reasoned and methodical effort in selected leisure service areas based on a broader geographic delivery model.

When one considers that single pad arenas are costing in the \$4 million to \$6 million area, indoor swimming pools can cost up to \$7 million to \$9 million and major sportsfields complexes are multi-million dollar operations, all of these with significant annual operating deficits, the ability to achieve greater multi-municipal capacities on a single site and potentially building fewer facilities while still providing adequate service levels in the overall market, could have significant financial benefits for all the partners involved.

Facilities Project Development

OVERVIEW

Lakeshore has undertaken important recreation facility developments based on various inputs, assessments, etc. However, it has not made use, on a consistent basis of a Business Plan model for individual facility initiatives. Many communities have this as a requirement prior to final decision-making on major capital investments that have long-term operating cost requirements. The Town is currently moving to a business case model that would be a basis for this initiative.

A Master Plan is a process that brings together significant amounts of research to identify priorities, needs and strategies over an extended period of time, often ten to twenty years. It identifies not only facilities but also criteria, strategies, etc. However, Master Plans do not, in and of themselves, typically deal with the Business Plans for individualized leisure facility resources due to the changing characteristics of the market and demand over time, community growth patterns, trends,

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the municipality's financial resources and commitments, etc. The Master Plan sets the overarching facilities development framework for leisure services and priorities. Then, individual Business Plans would be undertaken based on timelines established within the Master Plan and the Town's business case template. A Business Plan should focus on:

- ▶ Locational considerations.
- ▶ Governance and management plans.
- ▶ Connections to the Town department's Strategic Plan and goals, policies, objectives, etc.
- ▶ Alternative development strategies in terms of using existing facilities, building new facilities, undertaking additions, etc.
- ▶ Need and demand profiles, marketing requirements, etc. and related feasibility assessment components.
- ▶ Determining market competitive profiles, etc.
- ▶ Identification of space and size needs and special equipment, often involving conceptual / simplified floor plans.
- ▶ Identification of the total square footage as a basis to develop more detailed capital costs and funding sources.
- ▶ Three year operating pro formas in order to identify revenues, expenses, staff requirements, etc.

These and other elements are developed to focus on a specific facility. This is an excellent strategy in order to ensure these major capital investments are targeted with clear outcomes, solid capital cost projections and other key outcomes.

Recommendation – Business Plan Development

That the Lakeshore Community Services Department require a Business Plan on all capital facility proposals as follows:

- ▶ **That any new facility initiatives or major addition to an existing leisure facility with a potential capital cost of over \$250,000 be supported by a Business Plan.**

- ▶ **That the Town direct the undertaking of the Business Plans, seeking broad-based public consultation, and working in partnership where appropriate with community proponents.**
- ▶ **That the results of the Business Plan, when finalized and accepted, become the basis for a new or expanded leisure facility being incorporated into the capital budget forecast for the Town related to timing, capital cost projections, etc.**
- ▶ **That the capital cost projections be developed in detail within the Business Plan and be incorporated into the Town's capital cost forecast program considering future adjustments upwards in the capital costs based on:**
 - **The potential impact of inflation that may not be predictable or certain.**
 - **Any alteration in the proposed facility's design clearly articulate the appropriate rationale and need for significant changes that may have occurred between the time of the Business Plan's development and the time of final approval.**

Multi-Use Facility Development

OVERVIEW

Over the last decade or more, there has been a significant move towards the development of leisure and community facilities on a multi-use / multi-partner basis. The key rationales for this strategy are as follows:

- ▶ Potential capital cost savings, often in the order of 10% to 25%.
- ▶ Significant potential for operational savings, up to 25%.
- ▶ Enhanced customer / user satisfaction relative to convenience and visiting one site only as an individual and/or a family.
- ▶ Greater critical mass, visibility and community identification.
- ▶ Potential for more enhanced facilities relative to scope, quality and volumes.



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There are significant benefits to this strategy and it can be creative in its application. These facilities can involve arenas, community centres, branch libraries, school facilities, social service facilities, community policing offices, fire stations, transit depots, etc. The Town has utilized this model on a limited basis, such as the Belle River Arena and Branch Library. The Community Services Master Plan requires a feasibility study for a larger initiative.

The continuation and enlargement of this strategy is a key facilities delivery approach that needs to be continued and enhanced wherever possible in order to improve user satisfaction and quality experiences, as well as achieving the maximum capital and operating economies of scale.

Recommendation

That Lakeshore, for all major facility renewal and new leisure facility development initiatives, investigate in depth the potential for a wide range of multiple use opportunities within a single facility venue, as well as multi-partner participation.

Community Use of Schools

OVERVIEW

The community use of schools has been a long established practice in Ontario and many other jurisdictions. Due to the significant expansion of public schools, colleges and universities, taxpayers have supported the development of a wide array of facilities that have significant potential to support leisure activities. These facilities include gymnasiums, resource rooms, outdoor sports fields, specialized facilities, classrooms, etc.

Since the mid 1990s, there has been a significant decline in the community use of schools due to the gravitation towards increased fees for utilization, customer service challenges, accessibility consistency concerns and other issues. Some communities have divested their responsibility to coordinate community group use of these facilities, while others are experiencing significant challenges in regards to their user groups wishing to develop more stand alone or separate municipal facilities as substitutes for school accessibility.

In the summer of 2004 and again in the spring of 2007, the Province of Ontario announced a \$20 million program as part of an overall initiative to facilitate and encourage increased utilization of publicly funded schools by community organizations. Considering that these facilities are built by the same taxpayer, and that there is a wide array of gymnasiums and leisure oriented facilities, these present a potential resource for leisure programming, often located in neighbourhoods, and local communities.



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The Town could take leadership, along with other municipalities to explore with the local school boards with facilities in Lakeshore, the opportunity for municipalities to access publicly funded schools on behalf of organized groups, in order to provide more local leisure facility capacity and to reduce the pressures and need for additional long-term municipal investments in stand-alone leisure facilities.

Advantages to public use of schools include:

- ▶ More extensive use of existing public facilities.
- ▶ Good location in proximity to urban areas.
- ▶ Reduced need for municipal capital investment.
- ▶ Access and on-site parking is available.
- ▶ Residents are familiar with venues.

Two new schools have recently been opened in the Town of Lakeshore. Lakeshore Discovery School is a public elementary school opened in January 2007. St. Anne's Separate High School opened in September 2007. The two schools are located on Oakwood Drive in a fast-growing area of Lakeshore. Between the two schools is a municipally-owned park site with potential for active and passive recreational uses. Both schools include outdoor sports fields and tracks. There are ongoing discussions between the municipality and the two school boards with respect to joint use of the public park comprising some 4 ha of available space. There are also indoor opportunities for shared use of facilities including the cafetorium at St. Anne's Secondary School, gymnasiums and the potential for shared parking areas.

Bell River High School also has indoor recreation opportunities.

Recommendation:

That Lakeshore initiate discussions with local School Boards to develop strategies and protocols that effectively enhance community accessibility to publicly funded schools for leisure services as a key support and service to community service providers.



4.2 Park and Open Space Delivery Strategies

There are multiple approaches relative to parks and open space delivery strategies for the Town. The following material is a basis upon which to develop an overall parks and open space delivery strategy.

4.2.1 DEVELOPER RESPONSIBILITIES

Overview

Typically, municipalities do not advance the development of parks until certain population thresholds are identified and developed. However, the development of parkland and trails during initial phases of subdivision development provides immediate opportunities for passive and active recreational activities. This encourages active living and participation in various active and passive recreational activities.

Municipalities use a mix of parkland dedication, other land conveyances, and development charges in new residential developments in order to secure land and develop leisure facility resources. There has been a movement towards the developers preparing parkland, in addition to rough grading and also undertaking completion of park development. Some developers believe that their residential developments will have a significant advantage if parks and trails are developed earlier within the overall development process.

A policy needs to be established for early development of parks in new subdivisions. Such a strategy would be an incentive for developers to take on the early preparation of parks and facility sites to municipal standards through Development Charge credits.

Such a strategy could result in several benefits:

- ▶ Promotion of active living for residents in early stages of development.
- ▶ Reduced municipal tendering requirements and potentially some cost savings.
- ▶ Protection of municipal standards.
- ▶ Reduced pressure from residents for earlier development of facilities in evolving areas.
- ▶ A more integrated approach to the development of new communities / neighbourhoods in terms of roads, services, utilities and parks.



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- ▶ A more linked scheduling of park and open space resources in new areas to the rate of growth in these areas, and potentially reduced pressure on leisure resources in other neighbourhoods that need to support both their local area, as well as emerging neighbourhoods on a transitional basis.

This approach will require further investigation and discussion with the development community. However, that represents an opportunity to address some anticipated challenges for the provision of parks, trails and open space and is increasingly reflective of the expectations of residents in newly developing areas.

Recommendation: Developer Responsibilities

That the Town assess how developers could take on a larger role in the preparation of parks, open spaces, community trails and potentially leisure facility sites for the early development of parks in new subdivisions.

4.2.2 NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT

Overview

Natural areas and the waterfront within the Town of Lakeshore are vital and unique resources. They are extensively used by both residents and visitors for a wide array of leisure activities, primarily on a self-directed basis, including walking and hiking, jogging, bicycling, photography, fishing, beach / waterfront uses, natural interpretation, children's play, non-programmed activities, nature appreciation and other activities.

A need exists to ensure that there is a policy framework for the ongoing acquisition, management and utilization of these resources in order to sustain their long-term ecological and environmental viability and their availability as part of the urban form and leisure resources base of the Town. It is also anticipated that increased numbers of open space sites could come under municipal jurisdiction as more lands are designated as non-developable and increased statutory emphasis is placed on protecting environmental sites and features.



Recommendation: Natural Areas Management

That the Town of Lakeshore consider policies and strategies for their natural areas and their use and enjoyment by the public involving:

- ▶ **Conservation and management plans for each site to ensure their sustainability in harmony with compatible leisure pursuits by the public**
- ▶ **Operational and capital funding at a level consistent with current and future conservation needs and public use**
- ▶ **Development of appropriate infrastructure which supports the use of natural areas by the public, including trails, boardwalks, parking, signage, interpretive facilities, washrooms, litter and garbage control, security and safety**
- ▶ **Engaging multi-disciplinary approaches that focus on the conservation and human use of the natural areas through the planning and engineering phases of subdivision development**
- ▶ **Encourage and foster existing and additional stewardship partnerships; including the preparation of guidelines to direct the development, maintenance and organization responsibilities of stewardship groups and the Town**
- ▶ **Participation in partnerships with other agencies including ERCA, LTVCA, Ducks Unlimited, Canada South Land Trust, etc. for acquisition, planning and operation of natural heritage areas.**
- ▶ **Encourage rural and urban trail development adjacent to natural areas and "blue trails" along waterways.**

4.2.3 PARKLAND DEDICATION, LAND TRUST AND PARKLAND DEDICATION POLICIES

Parkland Dedication is one of the means by which the Town acquires lands in support of its parks, open space, trail and related developments. Parkland dedication is a function of the Ontario Planning Act which permits the Town to receive up to five percent (5%) of a development's lands for public park purposes or an equivalent value in funds.

Over many years, there have been considerable negotiations amongst municipalities and developers as to what type of lands a developer would dedicate including suggestions involving ravine lands, slopes and other non-developable lands as parkland dedications. However, many of

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these non-developable lands are also not suitable for the desired park functions, such as sportsfields, playgrounds, ancillary buildings and trails, or have safety and hazard conditions associated with them. The Town has not developed a comprehensive park classification system that identifies the types of parks and open spaces required in the community, their size, function and use requirements. Therefore, in order to successfully implement the parks classification and parks provision standards, parkland dedication requirements need to secure appropriate lands to support these policies and to ensure the Town’s park venues meet the needs and aspirations of the residents.

A Parkland Dedication strategy is required to give direction to the negotiations for dedicated parklands. This is also important in light of the fact that Provincial environmental, planning and other initiatives are resulting in increased amounts of lands being deemed non-developable for various reasons, and that municipalities are under pressure to absorb more of these lands as part of the parkland dedication requirements. Such pressure could jeopardize the ability to secure table lands for park-based activities, could result in some parks that are not in the preferred locations and could create a host of potential other challenges.

Further, with the Town already having significant open space and waterfront lands, and in anticipation of an increased amount of non-developable lands coming into municipal ownership, the Town may also need to explore other management and funding supports related to these particular lands. This could result in the need for a ‘Land Trust’ type strategy similar to what is happening with the Nature Conservatory of Canada and other organizations who work in partnership with community organizations and granting bodies to fundraise, to develop technical capacities and to undertake other initiatives to more effectively manage and preserve these lands.

Recommendation: Parkland Dedication and Land Trust

- ▶ **That the Town only accept parkland dedications that:**
 - **Meet the park and open space hierarchy and provisioning standards of the Official Plan and Community Services Master Plan;**
 - **Effectively support the development of park-based facilities and amenities as per the parks hierarchy development guidelines;**
 - **Do not include designated environmentally sensitive areas, significant woodlots, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related lands.**



- ▶ **That Parkland Dedication Funds would only be taken by the Town if the size of dedicated land(s) is too small to support the park and open space provisioning requirements and / or the geographical area is well serviced with parks and open space lands and no additional land requirements are needed.**

- ▶ **That the Town explore with community members and other government agencies such as the Essex Region and Lower Thames Valley Conservation Areas, County of Essex, Ontario Heritage Foundation, Essex Waste Management Authority, etc., the potential to establish a ‘Land Trust’ as a possible organizational vehicle to acquire, manage and sustain non-developable lands that may come into public ownership but represent capital and operating investments beyond the Town’s capabilities and / or interests.**

- ▶ **That the Town continue to maintain and initiate the Ecological Land Donation web page on the Town’s internet site to facilitate further stewardship.**

Recommendation: Official Plan Policies

- ▶ **That the Town ensure the following recommended standards are incorporated into its Official Plan:**
 - **The Town shall require the conveyance of land suitable for park and other public recreational purposes as a condition of the subdivision of land or development pursuant to the Planning Act. All conveyances shall be made in accordance with the criteria and standards set out in the Community Services Master Plan at the following rates:**
 - **The conveyance for commercial and industrial purposes shall be 2 percent of the land.**

 - **The conveyance for residential and other purposes shall be 5 percent of the land, or one hectare of land for each 300 dwelling units proposed, whichever is greater.**



- ▶ **The Town may, in lieu of land dedication, require the payment of money by the owner of the land equal to the value of the land conveyance otherwise required under the following circumstances:**
 - **Where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development of public parkland. Generally a parcel of land may be considered to be of an unsuitable size if its area is less than 0.5 hectare.**
 - **Where, using the guidelines established in the Community Services Master Plan, it is determined that existing park and recreational facilities in the planning area are adequate to serve the projected increase in population.**
 - **The determination of the value of the land should be in accordance with either Section 42 or 51 of the Planning Act.**
 - **The Town, where appropriate and in compliance with the Parkland Dedication Policies of this Plan, may consider portions of protected natural areas for parkland dedication purposes where sufficient active parkland is provided for the neighbourhood and / or community and where the lands are of particular value, either because of their physical, or if appropriate social or environmental character, or because their location provides a link with other portions of the open space system, such as trails. The acceptance of woodlots and other natural areas, in specific circumstances, will encourage the protection of the natural amenity and allow for passive recreational use and educational opportunities.**

4.2.4 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE HIERARCHY

A Parks and Open Space Hierarchy is proposed as an effective guide for planning the distribution and servicing of the Town's existing and future parks. It is based on commonly accepted criteria provides the Town with classifications suited to its unique situation.



The new Hierarchy will consist of three classifications:

1. Neighbourhood / Local Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Specialized Parks

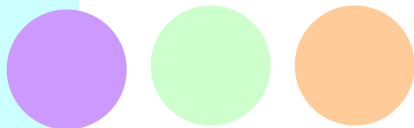
The Hierarchy provides a clear separation of traditional park and recreation facilities (sports fields, playgrounds, parking, building, amenities) that have desirable provision standards, and “specialized” facilities that rely on unique natural or recreation resources and / or have vague service standards. This is necessary in order to avoid bias in the provision standard analysis that will serve as a guideline for the distribution of new parks. Though the service level of Specialized Parks may be less standardized, it does not mean that these resources are any less important. There is a significant trend in the increasing value of natural heritage and waterfront and environmental protection. Placing these parks into a single specialized category allows the Town the flexibility to develop these resources without being tied to a more limited facility standard.

Provision of traditional park and recreation facilities in the Hierarchy is provided by a straightforward, two-level classification. The categories of Neighbourhood / Local and Community Parks are clearly differentiated on the basis of size, facilities, provision standards and services areas. As recreational facilities are expensive to develop, the Hierarchy is optimized to meet the essential level of service in each park category, both in park size and facility quantity and quality. The Neighbourhood / Local Parks will provide the basic level of passive and informal activities, which the Community Parks will be the primary source of active recreational facilities.

Recommendation: Parks and Open Space Hierarchy

That the Municipality adopt the following parks and open space hierarchy:

- 1. Neighbourhood / Local Parks**
- 2. Community Parks**
- 3. Specialized Parks**



4.2.5 PARKLAND CLASSIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA

The proposed classifications and recommended criteria are discussed in detail below and summarized in Tables 4-1 to 4-3. The Town's parks according to the proposed Classification are shown in Table 4-4.

Neighbourhood / Local Parks are the foundation of the open space system and satisfy the basic open space and recreational needs of the Town's residents. They usually service one or two urban neighbourhoods with a recommended service radius of 600 to 800 metres for built-up areas. They accommodate both passive activities and informal active recreation and serve all age groups of the population. The recommended size range of Neighbourhood / Local Parks are between 0.5 – 2.0 hectares. Their programming should be based on neighbourhood interest preferences and at the minimum, provide areas for passive activities such as sitting, viewing, conversing and contemplating, as well as play areas for children and open turf areas for unstructured active play. Informal active recreational areas in the form of play fields or play courts are optional, and these optional facilities should reflect the needs and preference of the local population. Neighbourhood / Local Parks provide visual relief and add aesthetic quality especially to higher density areas as well as serving as meeting areas for small informal groups. Their location should be central to the neighbourhood they serve, within safe and convenient walking distance for most of the neighbourhood residents and uninterrupted by major thoroughfares or other physical barriers. Neighbourhood / Local Parks are primarily accessible by walking trails and cycling, thus provision of good local linkages in form of walkways and cycling routes is a key to the success of the park. Their location and facilities could be coordinated with elementary schools where this possibility exists.

Community Parks serve three or more adjacent, urban neighbourhoods or a designated hamlet community and provide for active and passive recreational activities. They have a recommended service area of 1.6 to 2.0 km in built-up areas. They are multipurpose and can offer both passive and active recreational areas for both programmed and non-programmed use. They should offer year round recreational opportunities, where possible. They can accommodate major sports, community and specialized facilities, such as multiple play fields, outdoor swimming pools, splash pads, and play courts. The size of Community Parks will vary according to the nature of proposed facilities, but should be a minimum of 4.0 hectares. Community Parks may also serve as Neighbourhood / Local Parks for their immediate neighbourhood and especially in hamlet areas, and should fulfill all the requirements set for Neighbourhood / Local Parks where this opportunity exists. They are accessible by walking, cycling, driving and other means. Good local linkages in the form of walkways / trails and cycling routes are very important. Their location and facilities could be coordinated with schools where this possibility exists and is feasible.

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Specialized Parks are those that do not fit within the standard, outdoor recreation facilities model, but offer unique, special purpose facilities. They take advantage of a variety of important resources, such as natural features (Lakeview Park), historically significant sites and structures, areas of unique character or significant recreational facilities (Belle River Arena and Lakeshore Soccer Complex). Alternatively, they might offer a unique recreational facility that will attract users from across the Town. This might include a skatepark facility, outdoor aquatic facility, or a spray pad / playground complex. These parks serve a large cross-section of the Town's population and may attract visitors from outside the town. Specialized Parks include:

- ▶ Outdoor Recreation / Waterfront Venues and Sites
- ▶ Trails and other Linear Parks
- ▶ Cultural and Historic Parks, Memorials, Monuments, etc.
- ▶ Natural Reserves
- ▶ Urban Greens, Beautification Areas, Public Gardens and similar sites

While a general facility guideline is provided, the size of these parks will vary depending on the land resource and their facility requirements, and should be decided on an individual basis.

The new Park Hierarchy includes generic facilities provision standards for each relevant class of park along with a minimum recommended park size, to ensure that the required space is available to accommodate current and future facility needs. This will ensure the basic infrastructure of parkland and the essential level of associated facilities that will serve the Town for the long term.

Recommendation: Parkland Classifications and Criteria

That the Municipality adopt the parkland classifications for Neighbourhood / Local Parks, Community Parks and Specialized Parks and the criteria as outlined in Table 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3.



**Table 4-1
Recommended Criteria – Neighbourhood / Local Parks**

Neighbourhood / Local Parks							
Basic Facility Requirements	Optional Facilities	Access	Service Area	Preferred Size	Service Standards	Identity and Location	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Playground ▪ Informal seating area ▪ Open turf area for play ▪ Provide shaded areas (with planting or shade structure) for passive recreation ▪ Park name and signage ▪ Waste receptacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play courts ▪ Play fields ▪ Toboggan hills ▪ Horseshoe pits, etc. ▪ Trail / Trail Connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walking ▪ Cycling ▪ Trails 	<p>600 to 800m radius or 15 to 20 minutes of walking, uninterrupted by major roads and other physical barriers.</p> <p>1.0 km radius for urban fringe areas</p>	<p>0.5 to 2 hectares</p>	<p>1ha/1,000 population</p> <p>A balance of active and passive park spaces</p>	<p>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use and provide extensive street frontage for safety and visibility.</p> <p>Location to be central to the neighbourhood / local area it serves, in a way that the service area is not interrupted by major roads and other physical barriers.</p> <p>Screen park from negative adjacent impacts.</p>	<p>Serves one or two neighbourhoods / local areas</p> <p>Location and facilities should be coordinated with elementary schools where the possibility exists</p>

**Table 4-2
Recommended Criteria – Community Parks**

Community Parks							
Basic Facility Requirements	Optional Facilities	Access	Service Area	Preferred Size	Service Standards	Identity and Location	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To fulfill all requirements as Neighbourhood / Local Parks, where fulfills that function as well ▪ Major playground ▪ At least two competitive level play fields and one play court (basketball, ball hockey, tennis or multi-purpose) ▪ Seating area for viewing ▪ Provision of shade with plating or shade structure ▪ Parking and parking lot lighting ▪ Provision of bike racks ▪ Park name signage ▪ Waste receptacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional play fields or play courts ▪ Splash pads ▪ Toboggan hills ▪ Natural areas, horticultural displays ▪ Informal activity areas, eg: horseshoe pits, etc. ▪ Informal seating areas ▪ Open turf areas for play ▪ Concession facilities ▪ Washrooms ▪ Play area, play court and play field lighting ▪ Walkway lighting ▪ Informational signage ▪ Trails / Trail Connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walking ▪ Cycling ▪ Trails ▪ Driving 	1.6 to 2.6 km radius in built-up areas; 2.0 km in urban fringe areas	Minimum 4 hectares	<p>1ha/1,000 population</p> <p>Primarily active park spaces with the provision of passive spaces to fulfill the requirements of a neighbourhood / local park where applicable.</p>	<p>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use and provide extensive street frontage for safety and visibility.</p> <p>Location to be central to the community it serves and be accessible from a major local road</p> <p>Screen park from negative adjacent impacts.</p> <p>Screen neighbouring residences from negative park impacts (play court lighting etc.) where applicable</p>	<p>Serves identified communities such as Woodsee, Stoney Point, Comber, etc.</p> <p>Can serve as a neighbourhood park for hamlet areas</p> <p>Location and facilities should be coordinated with elementary or secondary schools where the possibility exists.</p> <p>Potentially also attracts visitors from other areas of the Municipality and the outside the Municipality</p>

**Table 4-3
Recommended Criteria – Specialized Parks**

Specialized Parks							
Basic Facility Requirements	Optional Facilities	Access	Service Area	Preferred Size	Service Standards	Identity and Location	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic facility requirements to be determined on individual basis ▪ Park signage ▪ Waste receptacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking as required ▪ Parking lot lighting as required ▪ Washrooms as required ▪ Display info or guide to park facilities where applicable ▪ Visitor support amenities, ▪ Trails, trail connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ walking ▪ cycling ▪ trails ▪ driving 	Serves the entire town and beyond	Size varies depending on land base, facilities and venue purpose	3ha/1,000 population	<p>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use</p> <p>Location dependent on availability of areas with features these parks can rely on</p>	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreational buildings ▪ Waterfront Parks / Beaches / Accesses ▪ Trails ▪ Cultural, Civic and Historic Parks, Memorials, Monuments ▪ Public Gardens, Arboreta ▪ Cemeteries ▪ Conservation Areas, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Natural Areas ▪ River corridor ▪ Ecologically significant lands <p>Potentially attracts visitors from outside the Municipality</p>

4.2.6 PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION OF PARKS

The Town's existing parks and open spaces are assigned to their new categories based on substantial conformance to the size, resource and facility criteria. Table 4-4 profiles the parks and open spaces and their proposed classification.

Recommendation: Parkland Classification of Parks

That the Municipality adopt the parkland classification of parks as outlined in Table 4-4:

Table 4-4

Township of Lakeshore Park Classification Model			
NAME	CLASSIFICATION	AREA	ADDRESS
Duck Creek Park	Neighbourhood	2.3 ha	St. Peter Street Belle River, ON
Helena Park	Neighbourhood	0.2 ha	743 Helena Crescent Belle River, ON
Johnson Riverview Park	Neighbourhood	0.04 ha	Abutting the River in Belle River, ON
Legion Park	Neighbourhood	0.3 ha	Terra Lou Estates Subdivision Eleventh, Notre Dame Streets & Royal Cr Belle River, ON
Terra Lou Park	Neighbourhood	0.2 ha	Terra Lou Drive (just north of County Road 22) Belle River, ON
Woodslee Memorial Park	Neighbourhood	1.9 ha	1711 King Street near County Road 27 - just west of
Centennial Park	Community	3.7 ha	1031 County Road 22 Puce, ON
Comber Fairgrounds Park	Community	6.3 ha	6400 Community Centre Street Comber, ON
Geralyn Tellier-Predu Memorial Park	Community	2.9 ha	1250 County Road #31 St. Joachim, ON (just east of County Road 31)
Ladouceur / Lion Park	Community	2.7 ha	St. Peter Boulevard Belle River, ON
Leffler Peace Park	Community	4.6 ha	405-557 Old Tecumseh Road, County Road 2 Puce, ON
Lighthouse Cove Lions Park	Community	1.7 ha	999 Guenneville Lighthouse Cove, ON
Maidstone Park	Community	4.2 ha	1562 Oakwood Avenue Belle River, ON
Millen Community Centre Park	Community	4 ha	88 South Middle Road
Optimist Park	Community	4.9 ha	County Road #22 Notre Dame Street, west of West River Street, Belle River, ON
Pleasant Park	Community	2 ha	1538-1546 6/7 Sideroad, just north of County Road 46

Table 4-4

Township of Lakeshore Park Classification Model			
NAME	CLASSIFICATION	AREA	ADDRESS
Staples Community Park	Community	1 ha	11850 Rochester Townline Staples, ON
St. Clair Shores Park	Community	2.1 ha	Branton Crescent Amycroft, ON, bound by Amy Croft Drive, Branton Cr & County Road 22
Tilbury North Municipal Park		9.3 ha	6/7 Sideroad E/S Stoney Point, ON
Big O Conservation Area	Specialized	4.5 ha	Hwy 27 & Elizabeth Street, south of Comber
Lakeshore Soccer Park	Specialized	31 ha	304-306 Rourke Line Patillo / Advance
Lakeview Park	Specialized	2 ha	Lakeview Drive Belle River, ON
Lighthouse Conservation Area	Specialized	1 ha	Lighthouse Cove, ON, at mouth of Thames River
Maidstone Conservation Area	Specialized	20 ha	County Road 46 & Puce Road (Ct Rd 25) south of Hwy 401; on Puce River
Rowsom's Tilbury West Conservation Area	Specialized	25 ha	7th Concession west of County Road 37
Ruscom Shore Conservation Area	Specialized	49 ha	Rochester Place/Deerbrook, ON
Tremblay Beach Conservation Area	Specialized	1/2 km of shoreline	East of Stoney Point bound by rail line and Little Creek

4.2.7 PARKLAND PROVISION STANDARDS

Park provision standards have gone through several iterations in the 20th century to keep pace with recreational trends, values and demographics. The convention of 4 ha/1000 population along with the classification of neighbourhood, community and regional parks was well developed by the end of the 1970's. Typically, the larger park categories would encompass more than just municipal parkland, including campgrounds, conservation areas, large natural areas, beaches / waterfront, Provincial and National Parks.

The use of the park area per thousand population standard provides an easy and simple analysis of parkland provision. The Master Plan proposes parkland provision standards in the Park Hierarchy. However caution should be exercised in using such standards exclusively and absolutely. They should be considered as a guideline that can be used as one of several tools to determine parkland improvement and development. Provision standards do have their place in establishing policy and providing direction and priority to park improvement and development. If it is recognized that they service as the foundation for establishing a general parkland, subject to the ongoing needs of and direction from the community, then they serve as a valuable tool to meet recreation needs.

The provision standards proposed for the Municipality are as follows:

- ▶ Neighbourhood / Local Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- ▶ Community Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- ▶ Specialized Parks 3.0 ha/1000 persons
- ▶ TOTAL Town Parkland 5.0 ha/1000 persons

The Town is currently providing approximately 2.6 ha of municipal park per 1000 residents, which is just over half the overall recommended provisioning level for parkland. Another 95 hectares exists via the two Conservation Authorities for a total of 5.5 hectares of combined parkland per 1000 residents. This rate exceeds the recommended provisioning level and identified opportunity for passive natural heritage venues.

Recommendation: Parkland Provision Standards

That the Town of Lakeshore adopt the following Parkland Provision Standards:

- **Neighbourhood / Local Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons**
- **Community Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons**
- **Specialized Parks 3.0 ha/1000 persons**
- **The Town should continue to acquire neighbourhood and community parks through the planning approval process at appropriate locations to achieve the recommended standards.**

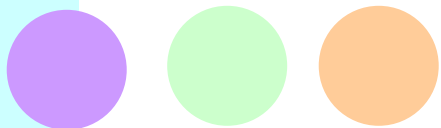
4.2.8 ENCROACHMENT POLICY

Encroachments involve the private utilization of public lands, which may or may not interfere with public use and enjoyment of a public park, open space or waterfront allowance. The Town should consider the development of a policy that provides authorization to remove existing and future encroachments on Town owned parks, open space, trails, environmental lands, waterfront properties / accesses and natural areas.



Recommendation – Encroachment Policy

That the Town develop a detailed inventory of encroachments on public lands and develop a policy to restore the lands to public use based on the property laws of Ontario, a consultation process and a final policy being adopted by Council.



5.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

5.1 Waterfront Development Strategy

5.1.1 OVERVIEW

The Waterfront Development Strategy is prepared in response to the Terms of Reference and the significant public and agency input into the background for this Plan. The waterfront consists of three components being Lakeview Park, the Belle River Municipal Marina, and road right of ways to the Lake. Each of these components will be addressed in the following discussion and recommendations. The Waterfront Development Strategy is a key component of the Community Services Master Plan for the following reasons:

- ▶ The waterfront identifies the Town of Lakeshore
- ▶ The waterfront is the key physical feature that provides a unifying identity to the municipality;
- ▶ It provides visual amenity, recreation and tourism potential to residents and visitors alike;
- ▶ The waterfront provides environmental features and enhancement opportunities for marsh and wetland areas providing birding opportunities;
- ▶ There are strong historical connections to the waterfront for access to the community;
- ▶ The waterfront is a signature tourist and destination venue for the community;
- ▶ The waterfront constitutes a blue (waterway) trail and a potential land based trail along the shoreline.

There are approximately 35 kilometers of waterfront in the Town. The vast majority of the waterfront is characterized by private ownership and development for single detached dwellings with a view to the Lake. This ownership is punctuated by narrow land and water access points, via creeks and streams, and municipal right of ways extending to the Lake.

There are two main Essex Region Conservation Area Parks along the Lake St. Clair shoreline. They include Ruscom Shore Conservation Area totalling 49 ha and Trembly Beach Conservation Area comprising a half-kilometre of shoreline and marsh area east of Stoney Point. These two locations provide opportunity for birding, walking and waterfront destinations.

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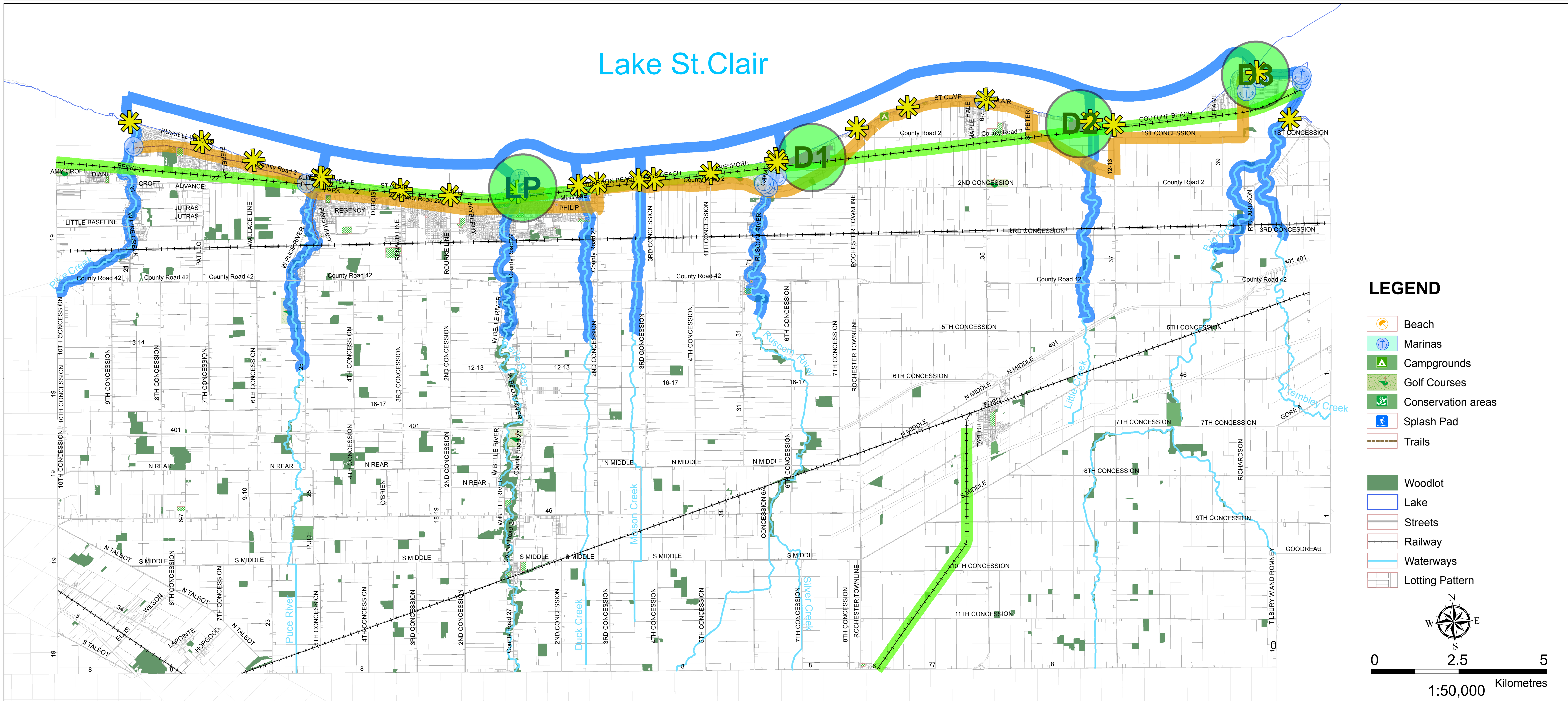
There is one prime municipal landholding, Lakeview Park, located at the mouth of the Belle River. The landform is relatively flat with natural hazard risk associated with the Lake St. Clair Floodprone Areas and the Hazard Land Designation of the Official Plan. Where development is proposed consideration will be given to measures necessary to protect the risk to public activities. Generally, these activities are discretionary and the risk to these forms of recreation, leisure or sporting events is minimal because organizers and participant alike would cease the event and cancel or reschedule the activity. Furthermore the shoreline is also identified in many parts by the VIA railway line that runs generally parallel to the lakeshore creating a physical barrier to the remainder of the Municipality.

The challenge for the municipality is to allow for continued private ownership and development of most of the waterfront while maintaining, enhancing and enlarging the existing points of public access. The acquisition of waterfront lands, abutting existing public road access is strongly recommended when these lands are available. The waterfront is integral to the leisure, recreation and tourist principles of the Community Services Master Plan. In terms of leisure activities the waterfront provides for unstructured access for walking, viewing the Lake, viewing wildlife, having ice cream, picnics, family gatherings or a drink down by the water. It is accessible to all people in the community. Lakeview Park has the potential to create a promenade for people to meet or gather with friends in an informal setting. The waterfront also provides venues for active recreation pursuits including water sports, boating, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, swimming, personal watercraft, and fishing. Finally, the waterfront can create a tourist venue for entertainment, culture, arts and heritage. Special events could be held in Lakeview Park that represent and reflect the defining cultures in Lakeshore. The location is easy to find in the Town with direct access from the 401 Highway. There are opportunities for a signature venue at this location.

The waterfront strategy is based on the following principles:

- ▶ Create Lakeview Park as the signature waterfront destination
- ▶ Develop Plans for Tremblay Beach Park, Ruscom Shores Park and Lighthouse Park as secondary waterfront destinations;
- ▶ Identify all municipally owned waterfront roadway access points to the lake for leisure and recreation activities.
- ▶ Develop and identify trails connecting these three tiers of waterfront destinations using existing roads, the Lake as a blue trail and the potential bike/walking multi use trail along the potentially surplus railway;

Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan



MAP 1 Waterfront Development Strategy

Venues:

- LP Signature Venue- Lakeview Park
- D Destinations – D1: Ruscom, D2:Tremblay, and D3: Lighthouse Cove Conservation Areas
- ✦ Access Point – Public Roads and Rivers/ Streams

Trails:

- On Road Trails
- Blue Waterway Trails
- Potential Rail Trail

Revised September 14, 2007
July 20, 2007



- ▶ Encourage the creation of a shoreline trail where the municipality seeks to obtain rights of way along the shoreline for public use and access.
- ▶ Connect the destinations dotted along the Lake and trails running parallel to the lake using municipal roads and creeks, which cross over the three potential trail systems.
- ▶ Continue to expand the walking / bike trail bridge program across creeks, streams, rivers and other barriers in support of developing a continuous link from Puce River to Lighthouse Cove.

This waterfront strategy concept using the spine of trails connecting waterfront venues is shown on the map Town of Lakeshore Waterfront Development Strategy: Waterfront Destinations and Trails. This combination of connected destinations and trails creates significant opportunity for leisure and recreation activities to all parts of the Town. Appropriate design consideration will make the multi-use trails accessible to a full range of participants. Fundraising events related to runs, walks in the park, canoeing, paddling or competitive events will have a linear venue and destination points for rest or food stops along the way. Finally the development of a linked trail system along the waterfront will provide opportunity for active transportation within the municipality for day to day trips to school, work or recreation.

Recommendation: Waterfront Strategy Framework

That the Town of Lakeshore identify Lakeview Park, Lakeshore Conservation Area parks and shoreline road and blue trail access points, combined with the system of linked trails as the primary passive leisure and recreation feature of the Town.

5.1.2 LAKEVIEW PARK

Lakeview Park is the primary recreation venue in the Town of Lakeshore. It is located in the urban area of Belle River and has good access to the urban areas to the west and south along County Road 42. It is accessed via First Street as an extension of County Road 42 across the railway. The land area includes parcels both north and south of Lakeview Drive. The formal park area is approximately 2 hectares including washrooms, a concession, splash pad, playground equipment, beach and beach volleyball court. Throughout the main area and along an area south of Lakeview Drive there is a trail system extending some 750 metres. This park combination of marina, pavilion area, splash pad, washrooms, concession, trails, playground creates a destination for residents and tourists alike. The goal is to position the park as the signature venue for the Town.

Lakeview Park is identified by residents, staff, and council as the most significant recreation site in the municipality. Through the Town of Lakeshore Strategic Plan, access to the waterfront was

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identified as a key recommended objective. Through the Community Survey 85% of the respondents were aware and rated the Park as very important to the community.

A broad range of leisure, tourist, culture, arts and heritage events could occur in the Lakeview Park and are listed as follows:

- ▶ A venue for children's summer programming at a centralized location and sufficient space and amenities for camps;
- ▶ A cultural event venue based on a stage or amphitheatre for music, dance, or theatrical outdoor performances;
- ▶ An artistic venue for exhibition and sale of art works, artist workshops and outdoor art lessons;
- ▶ The development of a promenade along the beach, marina and Belle River with opportunities for vendors and food/ drink concessions;
- ▶ The provision of seating and benches to watch boats, people and activities on the lake;
- ▶ A venue for heritage festivals, cultural events or related community events;
- ▶ A start/end venue for service club and charity fund raising events related to walks, runs or wheeled activities on linked trails.

In order to accommodate an expanding range of uses and to remove potential conflict with abutting residential development, the park needs to be expanded easterly from the current limit up to the water treatment plant. This would add approximately 2 ha of additional land to expand and provide for new facilities, parking and celebration areas. The plant creates a logical end point to the Park setting and an excellent transitional use between park activities and residential activities to the east. Property acquisition should be made through market availability as opposed to expropriation.

Due to lack of circulation there are problems with the collection of debris, algae, flotsam including the by-product of the backwashing operation of the water treatment plant. The creation of a fish habitat area is one source of the problem along with insufficient water circulation. This problem was raised at the focus group of shoreline residents. They have invested over \$20,000 and their own labour in efforts to address the problem. Residents indicated concern for health aesthetics and utility constraints and the resulting in loss of property enjoyment. There was positive indication from the residents for the Town to purchase their properties over time. Based on the above analysis and

direction to create a primary venue along the waterfront at Lakeview Park the following recommendations are submitted:

Recommendations: Lakeview Park

The Town of Lakeshore undertake the following initiatives for Lakeview Park:

- ▶ **Undertake a Lakeview Park Master Plan to identify the facilities, establish budgets and a framework for improvements;**
- ▶ **Create a series of festival, events around French heritage and other groups in the community including the Sunsplash festival throughout the year but primarily during the summer;**
- ▶ **Develop summer children and adult programming around facilities built at the park;**
- ▶ **Continue to enhance the trails system with a dedicated walk along the marina and the pier along the Belle River;**
- ▶ **Create a volunteer community steering committee dedicated to development and promotion of festivals and events at the Park;**
- ▶ **Acquire the nine properties between the existing park and the water treatment;**
- ▶ **Acquire the federal government lands including the Marina and lands west of Belle River;**
- ▶ **Create a signature municipal venue for residents and tourist for all major cultural and municipal activities;**
- ▶ **Improve the circulation of water and the problems related to wave action and discharge from the water plant;**

- ▶ **The waterfront properties from the park to the water treatment plan should be identified in the Official Plan as future parkland and identified for acquisition by the Town;**
- ▶ **Enhanced landscaping and tree planting to create shade and amenity in the park;**
- ▶ **Engage community organizations in the sponsorship and adoption of key infrastructure improvements for the Park;**
- ▶ **Identify the park as a signature venue in the Official Plan;**
- ▶ **Provide an irrigation system using lake water.**

5.1.3 BELLE RIVER MUNICIPAL MARINA

The Marina is a key component in Lakeview Park providing boating slips for seasonal, transient and a boat launch for day use. It is centrally located in urban area of Belle River The Marina has a range of amenities including a restaurant, gas service and washroom facilities. The restaurant is located on the second floor and is contracted to a private operator. The lands are owned by the Federal Government and leased to the municipality annually.

Part time and seasonal staff who are employed by the Town operate the marina. It has been operating at a deficit in 2005, 2006 and 2007. This trend has the potential to continue in light of trends in gasoline prices, cross border challenges and related factors.

Through the community survey Lakeview Park and the Marina are second only to the arena in public awareness and public importance to the community. These sites were used by 73% of the residents in the past year and 59% of Lakeshore residents in the last three years.

The Town has seven private marinas spread along the lakeshore offering both seasonal and transient boating slips creating significant competition for a market of boaters. The fishing market is tightly controlled through fishing regulations in Ontario, increasing gas prices and difficulties in boarder crossings. In the near term Lakeview Park will not be a signature destination that could attract transient boaters for weekend events at the park. Consideration should be given to leasing out the maintenance and operation of the marina to allow private operators to manage the site. The marina is neither a core business activity nor an immediate priority for the Community Services Division. A short term lease could reduce the losses for the municipality and provide new investment for advertising, innovative ideas to market and add value to the marina. If structured

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properly, the lease may be attractive for one of the existing marina operators, to manage the municipal marina in the short term. This is consistent with the private leasing of the restaurant at the marina and it provides the marina with more flexibility and make it more competitive.

Ownership of the marina by the Town would eliminate fees paid to the Harbours Canada and provide more flexibility in improvements and a broader range of activities provided at the marina.

While there are challenges to tournament fishing related to rising fuel costs and the strengthening Canadian dollar, tournament fishing continues to attract participants from the domestic market. Consideration should be given to a multi-use event building suitable for the headquarters of events associated with fishing, running, walking and related fundraising events starting or ending at the Marina or Lakeview Park. This building would provide the following amenities for the organizers, volunteers and judges related to a variety of leisure and recreation events. This event building could include but not limited to the following features:

- ▶ Offices for registration, administration, judging, scorekeeping, weighing of fish and related activities;
- ▶ A public address (PA) system to marshal competitors, make announcements, identify safety measures or rules;
- ▶ An announcement board for upcoming events, instructions to competitors or volunteers, results of the competitions;
- ▶ Advertising space for suppliers, restaurants, accommodations, prize donations; sponsors of events and activities;
- ▶ Washroom and change room space; showers; first aid room; telephone; communications centre;
- ▶ Electrical and water supply for community groups or organizing committees for suppers or barbeque associated with the events
- ▶ Picnic tables and a covered pavilion maintained at the existing location for various events.

Recommendations: Belle River Municipal Marina

- ▶ **That the Town negotiate the purchase of the municipal marina from Harbours Canada**

- ▶ **That the Town lease the marina to a private operator for a three to five year lease to provide competitive and innovative means for seasonal and transient boat slips and reduce the deficit for the municipal role.**

- ▶ **That as part of the Lakeview Park Master Plan, the Municipality will identify, construct and service an event office in support of sport fishing, water and trail related events occurring at the marina, Lakeview Park or along the trails.**

5.1.4 ROAD RIGHT OF WAY ACCESS AND NATURAL AREAS

Traditional road accesses are the result of surveys, which extend the Town road system into the Lake. These access points provide important public access to the water front for non structured activities such as swimming, launch points for watercraft or fishing access. Generally they are not developed and in some cases are encroached upon. An encroachment policy is identified earlier in this section. These rights of way are normally 20 m (66 feet) wide.

Opportunities to use these access points are important as possible access to the “blue trail” extending along the entire waterfront with possible accesses to the identified creeks. At the same time these access points create the third level of destination locations. The “blue trail” of navigable streams and rivers also provide access routes to the waterfront.

There are four secondary destination natural areas along the lakeshore. They include Tremblay Beach, Ruscom Shores, Couture Beach and Lighthouse conservation areas. These are secondary destination points in the waterfront development strategy. These locations are suitable for passive recreation or sporting/ fundraising venues along the lakeshore. Improvements in partnership with the Conservation Authority will create opportunity for the following activities:

- ▶ Walking

- ▶ Birding

- ▶ Watercraft access

- ▶ Picnic and gathering locations

- ▶ Summer day camp venues

- ▶ Swimming
- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Other natural heritage related activities

Recommendations: Right of Way Areas and Natural Areas

That the Town of Lakeshore undertakes the following initiatives:

- ▶ **Identify the public right of way access points through improvements through signage and clearly marked parking areas;**
- ▶ **Identify and remove any encroachments;**
- ▶ **Through zoning by-laws, zone these lands as municipal open space and beach access points;**
- ▶ **Show the access points on the parks and recreation mapping;**
- ▶ **Establish a reserve fund for the acquisition of abutting private lots where they become available;**
- ▶ **Where new development occurs along the waterfront obtain public access along the waterfront for future public trail along the waterfront;**
- ▶ **In partnership with the Conservation Authorities develop master plans for all conservation areas and promote public access to the waterfront where possible;**
- ▶ **Retain Couture Beach as an access point to be assembled with the railways should it become surplus.**



5.2 Trails Development Strategy

5.2.1 OVERVIEW

Lakeshore has significant opportunity for the development of additional trails throughout the municipality. The existing trails are located in parks, natural heritage areas and along existing road. Trail development has traditionally occurred based on requests from the public for park improvements. This Trails Development Strategy will provide an advance position to ensure that trails are integrated into subdivisions creating opportunity for Active Transportation (AT) systems for both recreation and transportation.

The existing physical character of Lakeshore with a flat topography makes the use of trails by all skill levels and ability accessible. The location and design should build on existing networks and connect various public venues such as schools, parks, libraries and the core commercial areas. The railway, should they be declared surplus are ideal for conversion to a walking or biking trail connecting at both ends of the Municipality with opportunity to connect to surrounding municipalities and the region. Trails should include both on traveled road ways and off road, through parks, natural areas and along the lakeshore where possible. Expansion of Lakeview Park should include improvements to the existing trails system, possibly in the form of a boardwalk linking the beach to the marina and to Belle River.

Access to Lake St. Clair and the interior of Lakeshore can be provided through a system of eight (8) blue trails. These include all of the natural watercourses leading south from the Lake inland and may include the various canals and navigable waterways that branch out from the creeks and rivers. While they may not be accessible all year round due to low water flow, access by human powered craft is possible for a significant distance. Access and trail entry points will become part of the Trails Master Plan.

Trails are an important component of the current trends towards healthy lifestyle. Walking and cycling are widely accessible to all age groups, family types and physical abilities. These activities are relatively low cost and available all year round in most weather conditions. The trails are open all the time and there is no daily user fee. In the appropriate location, they can complement bird watching activities a fast growing leisure activity. During the winter the trails may be used for cross-country skiing and related winter activities. There are no specific cultural barriers to these types of activities. People may also use the trails for travel to and from local destinations including school, parks and home creating school walking and bike routes.



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Through the Community Survey, overall 48% of respondents were aware of the walking and cycling trails and rated these facilities as very important to the community. This was the third highest rating. In the past year one third of the population used cycling/walking trails and 39% used these facilities in the past 3 years. 85% of respondents who used trails rated them as excellent or good. When asked about potential projects, more cycling and walking trails received the strongest support with 7 in 10 strongly in favour or 9 in 10 strongly or somewhat in favour. When asked to select from a number of investment choices, cycling and walking trails were the second top choice behind an indoor pool.

The Comber Chamber of Commerce, Belle River Business Improvement Area and Comber Agricultural Society identified trails and trail improvements as important through the focus group meetings. The Essex Region Conservation Authority identified trails they currently operate, their intent to create a regional trails network and a blue trail network of existing creeks and rivers leading to the abutting lakes in the County. Staff has identified opportunities at the closed Maidstone Landfill Site and along railways as possible new trail locations. Staff sees the creation of Trails Master Plan as an important initiative. In parallel to this Community Services Master Plan the Town has drafted a Trails Master Plan. IBI Group has provided input into the development of policies and standards. In addition, the Town received a walking and cycling policy paper as part of the Transportation Master Plan currently underway.

In March 2007 the Town of Lakeshore Strategic Plan was adopted. Objective 6 – On the Move identified improvements to trails and pathways as significant initiatives. Trails to access the waterfront, conversion of railways to trails and linking of the lakefront with trails were seen as important. The Draft Official Plan policies for the Town have identified bicycling and walking trails as an important contribution to a healthy lifestyle for transportation and recreation purposes. The policies also identify the conversion and use of abandoned railways for use as trails systems. Through the subdivision design and approval process pedestrian pathways have been identified as requirements for approval.

Based on the research conducted in preparing this plan, the physical characteristics of Lakeshore and the trends towards active living, active transportation and healthy lifestyles, the following recommendations are made in support of a master plan for trails development in the Town as an integral part of the overall Community Services Master Plan.



Recommendations: Trails Development Policy

That the Town of Lakeshore undertake the following initiatives for trails development:

- ▶ **Provide for trails that are both on road and off road, multi-use and purpose designed to provide the greatest opportunity for the widest range of skill sets**
- ▶ **Create a trails master plan for the Town of Lakeshore**
- ▶ **Assign responsibility for the development and implementation of a trails system to the Community and Development Services Department of the Town**
- ▶ **Create a municipal trails committee of volunteers lead by staff to oversee the development and maintenance of trails with focus on sponsorship from existing service organizations in the community**
- ▶ **Identify an annual budget item for the development and maintenance of trails, including lifecycle costs**
- ▶ **Liaise with the County of Essex and City of Windsor to promote and create an integrated trail network throughout the region**
- ▶ **Identify trails in the Official Plan for the Town of Lakeshore as an important recreational and transportation opportunity**
- ▶ **Provide for the creation of trail and walkway accesses in all new subdivisions**
- ▶ **Acquire all railway rights of way that may be declared surplus by railways for the purpose of trails and utility corridors**
- ▶ **Develop a blue trails system along existing watercourses with access to Lake St. Clair.**
- ▶ **Link and build on the rail trail from Comber to Leamington**
- ▶ **Publish a trails of Lakeshore map identifying the biking, walking and multi-use trails.**

5.3 Environmental Land Conservation Policy

5.3.1 OVERVIEW

Historically within the Town of Lakeshore, farmers removed woodlots and wetlands, and built canals and drainage systems to create prime agricultural lands. Today, Lakeshore has less than 5% of the land area in natural heritage features such as woodlots, wetlands or watercourses. Lakeshore's location in the Carolinian Forest Zone of Canada makes natural heritage areas significant to the region and Canada in terms of hosting a greater number of floral and faunal species than any other ecosystem in Canada. This situation makes the remaining natural heritage features more important for protection.

Through the focus group meetings three groups identified environment in their mandates. The Canada South Land Trust and Friends of Pike Creek had a mandate to protect existing natural areas and improve the environmental quality of Pike Creek. These activities include the negotiation of conservation easements and acquisition of lands, creek clean up and tree/ shrub plantings along the river banks to reduce erosion and sedimentation of the stream. The primary government agencies are the Essex Region and Lower Thames River Valley Conservation Authorities with the mandate to own and manage significant natural features. Together they own and manage 118.5 hectares of land in the Town.

Due to reduced budgets, Conservation Authorities have difficulty in independently acquiring new natural heritage areas. Increasingly, local community advocates are creating public awareness and gaining political support for municipal action. These roles may include the stewardship, protection, conservation and day-to-day management of various natural heritage features. The creation of an annual budget item for environmental protection, management and development should be made to support this initiative.

Through the Community Survey the Conservation Areas were identified as very important by 39% of the total population and ranked fourth on the overall list. They were more highly valued in the Northeast by 59% of the respondents likely, reflecting greater accessibility and limited choices in other park resources.

In January 2007 a natural Heritage Feature Inventory was completed for 21 natural heritage sites in the northwest portion of the Town where development pressures are the greatest. The study evaluated the significance of these sites and implemented their status through the Official Plan policies and mapping. As part of the Town of Lakeshore Strategic Plan, one of the objectives is "Lakeshore will ensure that our Town is naturally inviting and environmentally aware (environment):" Through this objective Lakeshore sees continued support for community based "friends of

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conservation area” groups; grants for planting trees; incorporating by-laws for natural heritage protection; and the re-establishment of vegetative buffers along all river and stream corridors.

The environmental strategy will create opportunity for passive walking and hiking activities in the Town. This is consistent with trends towards healthy lifestyles, bridging opportunities and ongoing aging population that participates less in organized activities.

Combined the general awareness and trends for environmental protection, input from focus groups and the community survey and the recent inventory by the Conservation Authority support the following recommendations for the Community Services Master Plan.

Recommendations: Environmental Land Conservation Policy

That the Town of Lakeshore undertake the following initiatives for an environmental strategy:

- ▶ **Protect existing significant woodlots, wetlands and watercourses through Official Plan policies, zoning regulations and land acquisition;**
- ▶ **Facilitate the donation of land or the creation of conservation easements in accordance with recent Planning Act legislation and the tax credits derived from land;**
- ▶ **Evaluation of a Land Conservancy Foundation to facilitate the protection of additional lands;**
- ▶ **In partnership with the Essex Region Conservation Authority prepare and implement master plans for the conservation and development of the Ruscom Shores and Tremblay Beach Conservation Areas with an emphasis on habitat restoration and birding along the shoreline plus, where feasible, improve access to the shorelines;**
- ▶ **In partnership with the Essex Region Conservation Authority, Canada South Land Trust, Friends of Pike Creek, Friends of Belle River, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Belle River Horticultural Society and related environmental groups continue the acquisition and management of significant natural features in the Town;**
- ▶ **Dedicate a portion of each years Community Fund grants to environmental community groups;**

- ▶ **Encourage the naturalization of portions of existing park areas, with the planting of native trees and plant species;**
- ▶ **Require the extensive planting of trees, creation of wetlands, and watercourses in the development of new parks and stormwater management areas to complement the active play space in the area.**

5.4 Former Landfill Development Strategy

5.4.1 OVERVIEW

The former Maidstone Landfill site is located on the east side of Puce Road near the John Freeman Walls Historical Site and Underground Railroad Museum on Lots 14 and 15 in the IV Concession of the former Township of Maidstone. The site has approximately 106 hectares of land area of which a part along Puce Road was used for landfill. There is an existing woodlot on the east side of the site abutting the Fourth Concession Road. As part of the Community Services Master Plan consideration was given to a range of possible leisure activities for the site.

The Landfill offers significant elevation changes and can be seen from some distance in the municipality. Challenges related to development or redevelopment of the site includes the following:

- ▶ Environmental risks related to methane and leachate (water runoff from the landfill) that is contaminated through the garbage decomposition process;
- ▶ The rehabilitation and monitoring of a landfill is a long term commitment to prevent air or water contamination and risk to public health
- ▶ There is an environmental services cost to the ongoing control of the site.
- ▶ Changes to the landfill surface may affect the protective cap placed on top of and along side of the landfill and may create risk to the users;
- ▶ The topography changes in response to the decomposition of the materials in the landfill;
- ▶ The site is located some distance from the urbanizing areas requiring bus or vehicular access to the site.

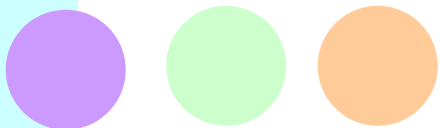
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These location and physical limitations of the site make it difficult to identify high intensity investments by the municipality or other user groups to the site. Potential uses of former landfill sites may include:

- ▶ Golf courses
- ▶ Toboggan hills
- ▶ Biking, walking trails
- ▶ Birding
- ▶ Naturalization areas
- ▶ Pilot projects for natural rehabilitation
- ▶ Outdoor education centre
- ▶ Children's safety village
- ▶ A site and area for battle re-enactment associated with the John Freeman Walls historic site; French/English battles, 1812 re-enactment, etc.
- ▶ Motocross venue

When the list of uses is compared to the site limitations, a number of items must be removed. Due to limitations on bussing of school children and the high investments required for a children's safety village or an outdoor environmental education activity these forms of activity, will be difficult to attract and sustain.

In reviewing the public consultation and the community survey, the redevelopment of the former landfill was not identified. There are significant other higher priority recreation interests and opportunities in the Municipality. None of the focus groups identified an interest in the Landfill site for activities. Municipal staff identified the site as a large land resource available in the community. Through the Community Strategic Plan there is reference to school based environmental clubs and activities and to encourage tree planting and expansion of groups such as "Friends of Conservation Areas." There would be an opportunity for the "Friends of Pike Creek" or an emerging volunteer group to adopt and develop this location for passive walking trails, the development of an arboretum and plantings to create a significant range of birding opportunities.



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The only user group that identified potential use for the site could be the dirt bike and ATV enthusiasts who submitted a petition in the spring of this year. Generally municipalities do not participate in the development or promotion of motor sport activities. These activities often create noise, fumes and large crowds out of keeping with the scope of municipal recreation activities. Motor sport venues require significant investment in facilities that are used on an infrequent basis when compared to other municipal venues. Motor sports are expensive to participate in with the purchase of equipment, trailers, specialized clothing, maintenance and travel. This makes participation by a wide range of age groups, incomes, and interests difficult. Furthermore, a motor cross or ATV venue would attract a regional market as reflected in the signatures on the petition ranging from Windsor to Chatham and all locations in between. The changes to the topography of the landfill to accommodate jumps and an exciting motor cross venue would create potential impacts on the security and effectiveness of the clay caps containing the garbage. Furthermore, the nature of motor sports being high risk may create liability concerns for the Town.

Based on the physical characteristics of the site, ongoing management of the former landfill, and its location removed from the urban areas, the preferred redevelopment should focus on passive uses, with low risk and low investment in municipal capital or operational spending.

Recommendations: Landfill Development Policy

- ▶ **That the Town in partnership with local volunteer conservation groups consider the development of passive trails system and natural vegetation plantings on and around the land fill site to create an interior forest habitat on and around the former landfill site.**
- ▶ **That the Town investigate opportunities and partnerships with community groups to create a tree nursery for future plantings elsewhere in Lakeshore.**

5.5 Community Centre Strategy

5.5.1 OVERVIEW

There are two community centres operating for public events, three former facilities leased to private service providers and a recently acquired former elementary school. The Town of Lakeshore community centres include the following:

- ▶ **Comber and District Community Centre located on the fairgrounds land in Comber in east Lakeshore**

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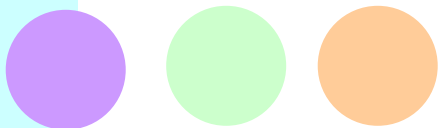
- ▶ Millen Community Centre and Library located in Woodslee on South Middle Road;
- ▶ Former school building in Staples on the Rochester Town Line, leased to a private school;
- ▶ Former municipal offices in Stoney Point on Tecumseh Road East, with a library in one half and the remainder vacant;
- ▶ Former municipal offices in St. Joachim located on County Road 42, leased for karate instruction; and.
- ▶ Former Puce Public Elementary School, potential community centre use, vacant.

The Comber and District Community Centre has capacity for 300 people. In 2005 it had 75 rentals plus user group occupancy four evenings per week from January to June. In 2006 it had 88 rentals for weddings, family gatherings school functions and the annual Comber Fair. The location on the Comber Fairgrounds provides excellent opportunity for a variety of community events. Three community groups, Comber Golden Age Group, the Comber Agricultural Society and Comber Chapter of IODE identified the use of the Community Centre as important to their ongoing activities.

The Millen Community Centre and Library has seating for 80 people. In 2005 it had seven rentals including family reunions, Canada Day celebrations and a ball tournament. In 2006 it had four rentals including tutoring classes for four months, Tai Chi classes, senior's club meetings, and monthly meetings for Friends of Woodslee. The library located in the same building provides 18 hours of service per week.

Historically, these community centres evolved from the needs and interests of the former municipalities. The Town of Lakeshore assumed these former municipal offices and community buildings through amalgamation. The current occupancy and use of the buildings reflects their transition to the Town. Where the facilities are of higher quality, serving a significant public interest and need, they are well used by the community. Two of the four venues, Comber and Millen were identified in the Situational Analysis as providing important community meeting space and are meeting their role in the community. Investments in maintenance and operation of these sites should continue to be an important part of the Community Services Department.

In the Community Survey, Community Centre use had the fourth largest participation rate with 11% for adults and 7% for youth, behind soccer, arenas and baseball fields,. At the same time the survey did not identified the need for new community centre uses.



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There are several trends which will impact the future needs for community centre use:

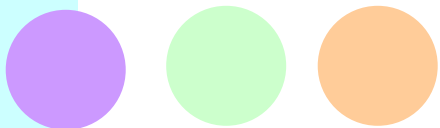
- ▶ Declining interest in joining clubs and membership based activities;
- ▶ Seniors populations that are looking for more physical fitness and activity programming instead of traditional socialization oriented leisure programming;
- ▶ The aging population and busier lifestyles are reducing the pools of volunteers for service clubs that manage and use community centre facilities; and
- ▶ Ethno cultural diversification in the region will create interest for new cultural services but their needs may not be provided through existing municipal facilities unless they are informed of these opportunities.

The recommendations to create a Recreation Complex include a suite of meeting rooms suitable for a wide range of social gathering and meeting spaces. The location of the Comber and District Community Centre will continue to provide services to the easterly portion of the Town and should be retained. The Millen Community Centre activity will continue to evolve with the consolidation of its library branch into one full service library in the Town. While this centre provides community service in the immediate future, reconsideration of its function is required when the library use is relocated.

The two centres in St. Joachim and Staples do not provide a clear community benefit, have not been identified as significant through the Situational Analysis and may have significant capital requirements in the future. These sites and buildings should be disposed for private use and operation, with the proceeds earmarked for capital investment in a new Recreation centre. The Staples site should have a relatively small amount of land sold with the building to provide flexibility for the future use of the retained parkland. The St. Joachim's site should be sold with the existing lands as there is an existing municipal park of 2.9 ha, Geralyn Tellier Perdue Memorial, to the south of this location.

The former municipal offices in Stoney Point are currently used as a library and formerly used as parish offices for the local church which is now closed. This building has the potential to provide public space for community activities or local volunteer groups in Stoney Point.

Evaluation of its future role should be determined based on local support in parallel with the library consolidations.



*Recommendations: Community Centre Strategy***That the Town of Lakeshore undertake the following actions:**

- ▶ **Continue to operate and manage the Comber and District Community Centre;**
- ▶ **Maintain the Millen Community Centre and review its role and function after the consolidation of the library.**
- ▶ **Retain the former municipal building in Stoney Point and review its role and function after the consolidation of the library.**
- ▶ **Proceed to dispose of the community facilities in St. Joachim and Staples with the revenue placed in a reserve account for the development of a new recreation centre.**
- ▶ **The former Puce School be considered on an interim basis for community centre uses subject to appropriate financing.**

5.6 Aquatic Services Strategy

5.6.1 INDOOR AQUATIC SERVICES

The household survey, the research undertaken for the Community Strategic Plan and a series of other inputs have identified strong resident interest in the Lakeshore community for the possible future development of an indoor aquatic centre. Also, the household survey, had selected questions dedicated to generating resident perspectives on the need for and value of such a facility.

The results of the research indicated that an indoor aquatic facility had the strongest level of preference amongst residents compared to any other recreation and leisure services initiative. Based on this input and analysis, an indoor aquatic centre has been addressed in terms of the research, needs analysis, capital and operating costs and related considerations as part of the Multi-Use Recreation Complex Feasibility Study which is fully developed in Section 4.0 of the overall Community Services Master Plan. The primary recommendation contained in this section of the Master Plan is for the Town to investigate, as part of a multi-use recreation complex to be developed by 2015, the development of an indoor aquatic centre, either as a municipally operated facility or possibly undertaken through a partnership with a community-based, not-for-profit organization, other neighbouring municipalities or other strategies that would maximize the

utilization, reach and benefit of such a facility and minimize the annual operating cost support that are often required for such facilities.

5.6.2 OUTDOOR AQUATIC SERVICES

The Town of Lakeshore has developed a splash pad in Lakeview Park in the Belle River area of the community. This is a popular early years and youth-oriented facility in one of the primary population centres of Lakeshore.

Splash pads, over the last ten years, have become an important seasonal recreation facility offering in support of children and youth activities. They are often developed on a distributed basis across large geographic communities in order to facilitate ease of access, bring facilities into local areas and can be situated in existing parks. They are also often undertaken as renewal initiatives in the replacement of existing wading pad or undersized outdoor pools that need significant renovation or redevelopment.

In assessing the principles developed for the Community Services Master Plan for the Town of Lakeshore, providing an array of recreation facilities opportunities, facilitating access and affordability and ensuring that there is reasonable distribution of these facility resources across the community, leads to a consideration on the possible development of splash pads in Comber and Woodslee. Both these communities have significant resident populations that will experience some nominal to modest growth in future years. They have identifiable children and youth populations for which it is challenging to travel to Belle River in order to access such a facility through the summertime, especially if their parents are working. In addition, the need to travel by bicycle or foot on many of the area roads creates safety considerations.

The popularity of splash pads is focused on several key features:

- ▶ Do not require staffing or water filtration, as there is no standing water, resulting in significantly lower operating costs.
- ▶ Relatively easy to maintain.
- ▶ Appeals to young and older children in regards to the variety of activities, points of imagination and family-based group activities that can occur.
- ▶ Can become a significant identifier to the community and support local special events.

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Further, the Master Plan needs to provide some additional opportunities to enhance the level of service and the recreation and leisure opportunities in other areas of the community in order to ensure fairness and to facilitate improved resident access to services. Therefore, the following recommendation is made in support of developing future splash pads in the Town of Lakeshore.

Recommendation: Splash Pad Developments

- ▶ **That the Town undertake the development of a splash pad in Comber, in the existing park complex, with completion by 2010, working in conjunction with local residents on the design, development and fundraising considerations to be associated with this initiative.**
- ▶ **That the Town undertake the development of a splash pad in Woodslee Memorial Park by 2012, working in conjunction with local residents and groups in support of the design, development and fundraising considerations to be associated with this project.**



6.0 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

6.1 Municipal Organizational Development

6.1.1 MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

How the Town of Lakeshore organizes itself in regards to the ongoing planning, delivery and evaluation of parks, recreation and culture services in the community, and the roles that it undertakes is a key organizational development question. The consultation program for the Situational Analysis Report identified a strong value base for volunteer leadership and services delivery. Also identified, was important concerns about volunteer leader succession capacity, marketing and related supports.

Another delivery consideration within the operating environment is the increasing intensity and scope of government regulations, both federal and provincial, in terms of health and safety, building code, accountability, reporting and related impacts. Many of these items require specialized skills and significant administrative work, often not within the technical capacities or interests of volunteers.

One needs to assume, that the Town's role in the development, delivery and evaluation of parks, recreation and culture services will grow. It will grow because of the increased complexity of the operating environment, as well as the increased growth associated with the population of the community, aging facilities and increased revenues. In fact, from the household survey, there was support for increased recreation programming within the community, with less dependence on traveling to Windsor, Essex and other areas in order to access leisure programs. Also, Town staff identified concerns relative to accountability items around tendering, health and safety, risk management and related areas.

Currently, the Town's role is fragmented in terms of what occurs in the northwest versus east and south areas of the community, which tends to operate within the context established by the former municipalities. What is needed at this time, as the community continues to grow, is a more integrated approach. An approach that positions the Town to undertake key roles associated with health and safety, risk management, accountabilities and reporting and consistency of access and affordability of services. Also, the Town needs to consider a stronger role in community and volunteer development that supports the delivery of leisure programs and services, as well as in

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facility development, maintenance and scheduling. These tasks involve supporting volunteer development and recognition and related undertakings that strengthen community groups as the primary deliverer of leisure services.

To this end, the Town should consider reformulating the Community Services Department's mandate, relative to undertaking the intensification of four key roles:

- ▶ Community development in support of volunteer groups, special events and related activities involving community-based leisure services providers.
- ▶ Direct delivery of leisure programs when other groups / organizations are not in a position to pursue and / or to encourage organizations and other service providers to come into the community to deliver services.
- ▶ The maintenance, capital upgrading and grants applications, as well as scheduling, coordinating and other actions in support of existing and new municipally-owned leisure and culture facilities and venues.
- ▶ Increased marketing, promotion, advertising, grants preparation, trends analysis, user demographics, policy development and other roles that support both the Town's investment decisions and those of the community organizations in moving forward.

A general perspective has evolved, that the Town has tended to be more passive than active in the development and delivery of these services. The future perspective is that an evolving operating model needs to be considered in light of the increased risks, capital investments, volunteer succession challenges, population growth and the need for more harmony and consistency of service delivery across the community.

The following recommendation provides a series of tasks and investments the Town should consider in the development, delivery and evaluation of parks, recreation and culture services in Lakeshore.



Recommendation – Town Organization and Leisure Services Development

That the Town of Lakeshore consider the following actions and investments in terms of supporting the ongoing development and enhancement of leisure services delivery within the community:

- ▶ **Position the Community Services Department to undertake a stronger leadership role in the following key areas:**
 - **Marketing and advertising;**
 - **Coordination and facilitation of community leisure services delivery;**
 - **Maintenance of municipally-owned facilities and venues, including managing capital projects;**
 - **Coordination of scheduling and the cross-selling of facility space, sportsfields, ice and related activities across the Town to maximize utilization and revenues;**
 - **Active community development initiatives in support of all community organizations and volunteer groups to maximize their potential, including trails, the arts and culture, recreation, etc.;**
 - **The development and delivery, either directly or through bringing in new service providers to the community of leisure services identified as needed by community members on an ongoing basis.**
- ▶ **Develop a staff team within the Community Services Department that would include a:**
 - **Manager of Parks and Recreation**
 - **Parks and Facilities Supervisor**
 - **Community Development and Leisure Services Coordinator**
 - **Community Development and Cultural Services Coordinator**
- ▶ **Host an annual forum of community service providing organizations to facilitate and support:**
 - **Program development and coordination across Lakeshore;**
 - **Presentation of market trends, needs assessment, new project initiatives, grant opportunities, etc.;**

- **Support volunteer recruitment, training, development and recognition;**
- **Seek input from community groups on how best the Town can support them in the pursuit of their programs and services to community members.**

The overall assessment of the input and the directions being undertaken by the Town, indicate that organizational capacity has to be increased. The following are the key roles that need to be addressed by the proposed recalibrating of the Community Services Department in Lakeshore:

- ▶ **Manager** – Responsible for municipal parks, recreation, cultural and special events, arena and marina policy recommendations, budgeting, capital projects, new project initiatives, ongoing services evaluation and coordination, marketing and promotion activities, and community development and relationships, including working with service providers from outside the community.
- ▶ **Parks and Facilities Supervisor** – This position involves the recalibration of the current position. It is designed to respond to the increased responsibility of the Town for the operational and capital maintenance of parks, open space, trails, marina and facilities, the additional venue and facility capacities that are proposed in the Master Plan and to support a broader responsibility by the Town in the scheduling of these venues. This position would also be responsible for developing longer term capital repair and maintenance plans for each of the municipally-owned assets. The recalibration of this position could lead to other front line staffing changes in the future, depending on how the various recommendations within the Master Plan proceed, such as the multi-use recreation complex, marina, Lakeview Park, etc.
- ▶ **Community Development and Recreation / Cultural Services Coordinators** – Responsible to undertake the development and delivery of current and new municipal leisure programs that meet community needs; to work with specific community organizations within the Department's community development function; to complete market research and trends analyses; to support volunteer development, training and related initiatives through direct activities; to prepare grant applications; to participate in and support assigned community special events and celebrations; and to undertake other assigned activities. One position to focus on recreation/leisure services reporting to the Manager of Parks and Recreation and one position to focus on culture and special event services reporting to the Director of Community Services, with the two positions being integrated and supporting of each other.

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The intent of the new organizational capacities is to respond to the following key shifts and growths in responsibility:

- ▶ Community development to support the ongoing health, vibrancy and sustainability of community groups.
- ▶ Increase the array of leisure programs available in the community directly, through community organizations or sourced from outside of the community.
- ▶ Bring more consistency, coordination and integration to parks and leisure services delivery across the Town.
- ▶ Increase the availability of technical capacities and skills to local boards, committees and service providing organizations in order to allow them to focus on their primary areas of responsibility, interest and capability.
- ▶ Provide an integrated marketing and promotional program, as well as scheduling capacity that allows for the integration of all facilities and venues in order to facilitate opportunities for cross-selling and increased rentals as feasible.
- ▶ Better manager and schedule the Town's assets.

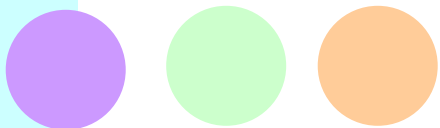
6.1.2 OPERATIONAL STAFFING STRATEGY

6.1.2.1 Introduction

The Master Plan, along with the Community Trails Plan and other Town initiatives, results in a need to provide some perspective on the future operating staff requirements the Department will need to build capacity in order to effectively deliver the range of recreation and leisure facility and program services necessary to meet community growth and evolving resident needs. The following section provides some oversight and direction in regards to both facility and parks / open space / community trail operational requirements.

6.1.2.2 Recreation Facilities

Currently, the Department has full-time staff who operate the arena, along with part-time staff who are used in the arena in the winter and in selected park venues in the summertime. Future facility staffing requirements will be dependent on what facilities are developed, principally the multi-use recreation complex, and how that complex is developed in terms of phasing, partnerships, etc.



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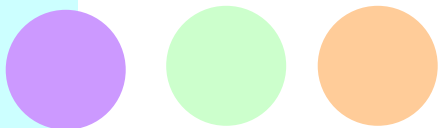
If the multi-use complex is developed in a partnership, such as with the YMCA, relative to the community centre, fitness centre and aquatics components, the possibility exists that the municipality will not be required to take on any operating staff, as these could be undertaken through a contract with the partner. However, if the municipality was to self-operate the centre, then a minimum requirement would be a full-time facility operator, a full-time custodian and four to six part-time people. This range of staffing is required in order to ensure that the pool health and safety regulations are fully undertaken, staffing is available for the setup and tear down of the community centre and to undertake the custodial activity for a facility that will operate seven days a week, likely between the hours of 6:00 a.m. until between 10:00 p.m. and midnight depending on final scheduling decisions.

In addition, a twin pad arena would be attached to this facility. Most of the staff from the existing arena would be transferred to operate this facility. It may be possible through staffing alignment changes, that some of these positions could also be supportive to custodial and maintenance activities within the larger recreation complex. However, additional staffing requirements would be needed beyond what exists in the current arena complex.

Also, with the proposal to develop two splash pads over the next five years, along with a possible increase in departmental responsibilities for the maintenance and repair of facilities in the various local areas, additional staffing capacity from a facility perspective may be required. However, much of this staffing would be integrated with the parks and open space staff requirements that are discussed in the subsequent section.

In the end, the operational staff requirements for the multi-use recreation complex are fully dependent on how the facility is phased in and whether an operational partnership is used or the Town operates the facility directly.

In the end, in order to develop a model for determining staff levels, the facility side of the Department's operations would focus on individual facility requirements rather than square footage or any other ratio to determine operating staff requirements. Since facilities are specialized, have year-round and extended hours of operation and have certain public health and other requirements, they need to be treated, in terms of determining operational staffing levels, on a case by case basis.



Recommendation: Facility Operational Staffing

That the Town's approach to determining operational facility staffing requirements be based on the following considerations:

- ▶ **That the specialized needs and hours of operation associated with each individual facility within the business planning model approved for the facility to be the basis of the staffing strategy.**
- ▶ **That operational staffing be undertaken on an as integrated basis amongst facilities in close proximity or attached to one another as much as possible in order to maximize economies of scale.**
- ▶ **That the Town continue to utilize arena staff for summer seasonal operational staff requirements in the parks, open space, trails and local small facility venues as viable.**
- ▶ **That operational facility staffing levels be reflective of any partnerships, joint ventures or related agreements that are established for each individual recreation and leisure facility.**

6.1.3 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY TRAILS

Currently, the Town of Lakeshore has two part-time employees during the summer season who work approximately twenty to twenty-four hours per week on parks and open space maintenance. These two individuals then work part-time in the arena in the winter season.

The Town's primary means for parks and open space maintenance is via the use of contractors or through community groups. The following material provides a profile of how the operations of these resources are undertaken:

- ▶ Belle River Optimists maintain Optimist Park in Belle River.
- ▶ The Lions Club in Lighthouse Cove maintains the Lion's Park in that area.
- ▶ Woodslee Oriole Park is privately operated and maintained by a local group.

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- ▶ Town staff are responsible for maintaining the grass and the ball diamonds, starting in 2007, at the Belle River Arena Park.
- ▶ Baseball groups undertake their own infield maintenance.
- ▶ A part-time contract person is retained by the Town to maintain Comber Park.
- ▶ A contractor is hired to maintain the twenty-four other park venues operated by the municipality providing grass cutting and garbage collection services.
- ▶ The Town uses contractors to repair backstops, playgrounds and other maintenance items required within parks and open space areas.
- ▶ No specific activity has been initiated in regards to the maintenance of community trails, whether dry land or blue trails.

The maintenance of parks, particularly in regards to sports fields, is a complicated consideration. It involves the following considerations:

- ▶ Turf maintenance and management program in order to ensure healthy, sustainable and usable turf.
- ▶ The grooming of baseball infields and the lining of soccer and baseball fields.
- ▶ The picking up of litter and the retrieving of garbage, which can peak during key seasons or tournament times.
- ▶ Ongoing inspection and safety assessments of playground, backstop, dugout, goal post, benches, walkway and other features within parks and open space.
- ▶ Spring cleanups and venue commissioning.
- ▶ Tournament and special event supports.

Looking forward in time, the Town will be expanding its operational capacity requirements in a number of key areas related to parks, open space and trails:

- ▶ With the Community Trails Master Plan, there is clear intent to significantly expand over the next years, the kilometres of trails, both local and as regional travel routes. This includes both land and blue trails that will need increased maintenance to ensure safe, accessible and protected utility of these corridors.

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- ▶ Increased park-based facilities in terms of playgrounds, splash pads and related developments, including some of the facilities in small communities that are to be sustained and brought within the responsibility profile of the Town for maintenance and capital repair.
- ▶ An expanded Lakeview Park with additional features and land area to be maintained, particularly to a higher level of maintenance reflecting the quality of a regional tourism destination centre.
- ▶ The potential long-term expansion of the Lakeshore Soccer Complex with additional fields.
- ▶ The possible consolidation of museum sites that will require infrastructure support.
- ▶ An increased emphasis on sustaining the quality, safety and effective asset management approaches for parks, open space and trail areas.

Based on the plans going forward, particular with regards to the Community Trail Master Plan, Lakeview Park and the possible transitioning of municipal responsibilities around smaller facilities, along with an ever increasing regulatory environment for playground and sports field safety, additional operational staffing capacity needs to be considered by the Town to adequately fulfill these roles, to reduce liability and to ensure a reasonable level of customer service and positive user experiences.

The Town needs to give consideration to developing a permanent capacity to fulfill its key roles in operating park, open space and trail venues and the associated facilities in order to:

- ▶ To reduce litigation and liability through enhanced user safety.
- ▶ To increase The Town's asset management focus in order to protect the long-term sustainability and quality of these resources.
- ▶ To increase the overall quality of turf maintenance and venue management.
- ▶ To enhance supports to events and sport tourism, as well as overall waterfront management requirements.
- ▶ To effectively maintain the series of proposed facilities, trails and venue developments over the next ten plus years associated with the Town of Lakeshore Community Services Master Plan.

The following operational staffing strategy is recommended.

Recommendation: Operating Staffing Strategy

- ▶ **That starting in 2009, the Town establish a parks and open space maintenance team involving one full-time person and one six-month seasonal person to undertake the following:**
 - **To monthly inspect trail segments and the maintaining of the trails related to the cutting back of brush, picking up debris / litter, levelling surfaces, removing deadfall, repairing signs and other tasks associated with this service delivery function.**
 - **To undertake start of season inspections of playgrounds, backstops, goal posts, service buildings, splash pads and other features, plus monthly inspections during the summer season to both protect these assets, as well as to enhance safety and reduce liability.**
 - **To maintain key venues that require specialized and targeted service for tournaments or other uses, such as the Lakeshore Soccer Complex, Belle River Arena Park and other sites.**
 - **To undertake repairs to and maintenance on park and open space facilities on an ongoing basis, including maintenance of picnic tables, garbage cans, signs, fencing and other initiatives.**
 - **To undertake the setups and teardowns and to move around equipment for special events, tourism initiatives, tournaments and other activities requiring additional supports.**
 - **To undertake special projects as they evolve on an annual or as required basis.**
 - **To create capacity to undertake preventative maintenance strategies necessary to protect the Town's assets on a longer term basis.**
 - **To support the venue management programs for natural areas, including the increased use activities that will be occurring at several locations on the Town's waterfront based on the Waterfront Strategy.**
 - **To undertake tree planting initiatives as part of environmental and park and natural area development strategies.**

- ▶ **That between 2012 and 2015, a second full-time parks and open space operating position be created, possibly building on the seasonal part-time position, depending on the level of development that occurs within the waterfront strategy, the Community Trails Plan and the implementation of the various recommendations of the Community Master Plan.**
- ▶ **That if for any reason, the Town is required to assume responsibility for grass cutting, garbage collection and / or sports field maintenance that is currently undertaken by community organizations or a contractor, that additional staff be retained who have the capacity to fulfill these requirements, which would be over and above the positions cited in the previous components of this recommendation.**

6.2 Leisure Marketing, Education and Communications

6.2.1 MARKETING AND EDUCATION

Leisure education, marketing and promotion and the development of community volunteers are three sometimes invisible but increasingly important components of an integrated, comprehensive and successful leisure services delivery model. If one or more of these elements breaks down or diminishes, it will impact the value of the investments being made by the Town and community organizations could reduce participation levels and increase costs substantively.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made in regards to the communications, marketing and the volunteer dimensions of the leisure services network in Lakeshore:

- ▶ **That the Town develop an annual marketing plan for parks, recreation, culture and special event services that focuses on the following:**
 - **Increased targeted communications and marketing strategies / approaches while continuing the same or reduced broadcast-based approaches;**
 - **Development of a twelve-month, cyclical marketing program for all dimensions of parks, recreation, culture and special event services;**

- **A two-tiered marketing strategy that focuses on:**
 - **Core messages via key media on the benefits of physical activity, leisure activity participation and special events and the value of these components to the quality of community life;**
 - **Core messages in regards to parks and leisure programs, facilities and services availability, timeframes, fees and other logistical / access considerations;**
- **Increased revenue generation from parks, recreation and culture facilities and services focusing on additional use levels, competitive fees, etc.;**
- **Undertake a review of the best strategy to deliver marketing services in order to increase participation levels, sport tourism success and revenue generation.**
- ▶ **That the Town develop a monitoring program for voluntary, community-based organizations that:**
 - **Identifies on a timely basis, trends, decisions or actions that could undermine the sustainability of the organization and / or create an increased impact on the Town of Lakeshore's roles and responsibilities;**
 - **Undertakes an evaluation of organizations in terms of governance, volunteers, program quality, financial management and resources, etc., as a report card and organizational support tool on minimum three to five year cycles;**
 - **The collection of strategic-based trends, operations and other data that could influence participation patterns, demand profiles, etc., and to share this annually with the service providers.**

These recommendations are designed to enhance the comprehensiveness, quality and focus on some of the key drivers in the future success of the parks, recreation, culture and special events services delivery system. Communications, marketing, benefits identification, volunteer development and recognition and enhanced monitoring and performance measures all represent key strategies to maximize the outcomes of the investments being made by the Town and to better ensure the stability and sustainability of key components of the services delivery model.

6.2.2 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS PLANS

Overview

A Community Services Communications Plan will provide Lakeshore with an opportunity to increase participation in community services and programs through various communication media. The purpose of a Communications Plan is to provide information on the value of the activities to potential participants, increase participation levels, promote community awareness and encourage healthier lifestyles. A Communications Plan can help to bridge communications between targeted groups, including seniors, teens, youth, early-years children, people with special needs, new immigrants and others.

Lakeshore, through various printed promotional material, public service announcements, community groups and other media, can have a positive impact on participation for all service provider groups. There are opportunities to enhance the existing communication tools and develop new methods in order to enhance participation, awareness and volunteerism. An annual plan allows staff and service providers to develop participation promotional themes or priorities for the upcoming year. The following recommendation is intended to build on existing communication tools and create greater participation and volunteer rates particularly amongst targeted groups.

Recommendation – Annual Community Services Communication Plan

- ▶ **That the Town of Lakeshore prepare and implement an annual Communications Plan for the purpose of creating broader public awareness of community services and facilities opportunities; to promote healthier lifestyles; to encourage increased participation from targeted groups and the population at large, to increase facility utilization and revenues; and to promote and support volunteerism, utilizing the following tools:**
 - **Formation of a Service Provider Communications Task Force and using input from the Community Services Advisory Committee;**
 - **Season / program start-up announcements via posters, broadcast media and targeted mailings / distributions;**
 - **Multi-faceted and promoted website access, using links to individual community groups and service providers;**
 - **Twice a year broadcast-based programming brochures, supported by advertising with distribution throughout the community;**
 - **Announcement boards at all relevant facilities and venues;**

- **A specialized website and brochure section promoting volunteerism, volunteer opportunities and volunteer recognition.**
- **Other communication tools as appropriate, such as water billings / notices, seasonal flyers, etc.;**

6.3 Leisure Facilities Renewal

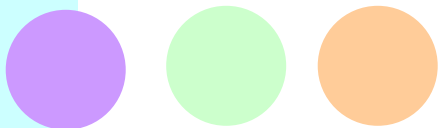
6.3.1 OVERVIEW

One of the more significant trends that municipalities are experiencing is that there was a significant growth in the development of parks and leisure facilities starting in 1960 and then further augmented by the Wintario Grants era up until the end of the 1980s. Today, many of these facilities are twenty to fifty years of age. Some have been maintained at significant levels, while others have not. The ability to generate reserves and to make investments in facility rehabilitation and renewal has been challenging. Also, fundraising has not been as successful in regards to facility renewal as it is for new facility development.

There is a tendency in some communities to focus on new facilities to the detriment of existing facilities. Every new facility tends to move the yardsticks, and sometimes depreciates the perceived value users and residents have for existing facilities. The ongoing renewal of existing facilities becomes increasingly important to sustain capacity but also to ensure that their renewal creates a market connectiveness that enhances and does not diminish their value.

One of the key strategies in achieving adequate funding for facility rehabilitation and renewal is to initiate a program of substantial reserves. It is generally considered that a reserve strategy that focuses on an annual charge to operations of 2.0% to 2.5% of the annual replacement value of a facility, based on annual insurance coverage values, creates a foundation to ensure the necessary flow of funds to keep park and leisure facilities at a current standard, to provide resources for renewal when market conditions and trends change and to support a five to ten year capital forecasting program in order to achieve a methodical and effective capital investment program for the Town's park, recreation and cultural assets.

Park and natural resource assets are an important part of the overall community services system within Lakeshore. As with leisure facilities, a need exists to enter into and plan on an ongoing basis the renewal and rehabilitation of park and open space facilities in order to support long-term maintenance plans and capital budgeting forecasts.



Recommendations: Facilities Renewal Strategy

That the following facility improvement and resource financing considerations be implemented within the Community Services Master Plan for the Town of Lakeshore:

- ▶ **That the Town of Lakeshore enhance the existing lifecycle process built into the annual budget, by considering the replacement cost and remaining useful life of its parks, recreation and cultural facilities, in order to generate continuous and adequate rehabilitation resources, as well as partial funds for replacement.**
- ▶ **That staff undertake the development of park and open space renewal plans to support the long-term rehabilitation, maintenance and capital budgeting forecasts for these resources, including Building and Venue Condition Studies once every ten years for each asset.**

6.4 Implementation Framework

6.4.1 IMPLEMENTATION CHARTS

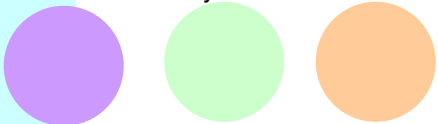
Table 6-1, Implementation Framework, profiles the park and recreation facility specific recommendations from Section 5.0 of the Master Plan related to their implementation. This table provides specific identification, the year or range of years for their development, rationales, strategy alternatives and preliminary capital cost estimates.

6.4.2 CAPITAL AND OPERATING FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.4.2.1 Capital Costs and Funding Sources

The implementation charts for the specific resource-based recommendations of the Master Plan identify preliminary estimated costs. These are 2007 cost projections developed at a master planning level. The final capital costs will be contingent on a series of further considerations:

- ▶ Actual locations that are selected and the cost of the land that will exist at the time of acquisition.
- ▶ The inflation value of the capital costs based on the timing of the development in future years.



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- ▶ The final design and scope of the projects based on business plans and consultation with users and the community.
- ▶ Opportunities and decisions associated with any partnership-related development strategies that could increase and / or decrease unit costs to develop these facilities.

In terms of capital sources, the following sources need to be developed based on the Master Plan's support:

- ▶ The next generation of the Town's Development Charges By-law should recognize major leisure facilities relative to the proportion of these facilities that are growth-related.
- ▶ Capital grants should be sourced from senior levels of government related to infrastructure, Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF), Rural Infrastructure Investment Initiative (RIII), and other programs that may have eligibility related to these facilities.
- ▶ Community association and community fundraising initiatives, particularly for facilities that have targeted audiences, such as soccer, ice users, etc. who receive an enhanced benefit from the availability of such a facility. The actual level of community fundraising and user support will need to be negotiated through the business planning process.
- ▶ Partnerships with service clubs, community groups, service providers and others who may be able to contribute capital funds and / or source grants for specialized populations such as seniors, those with physical and intellectual disabilities, new immigrants, early years and related potential user audiences. Also, consideration could be given to working with groups such as the Windsor-Essex YMCA and other groups that have a history of moving services out into local communities within partnership frameworks.
- ▶ Direct municipal support through capital grant, debenture servicing or other strategies.
- ▶ The use of mortgages or other capital generating funds that have the capacity to be adequately serviced from the operating income generated by the facility.

Every facility initiative within the Master Plan will require a different mix and match of possible capital funding sources. Projects such as the ongoing capital development of trails is likely best supported by municipal budgetary inclusion on an annualized basis leveraged with targeted

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fundraising by partnering groups such as Friends of each trail area, service clubs, etc. The multi-use centre needs to evolve within partnerships with the ice users, the soccer organization and other who take some responsibility for capital support.

Financial Operating Impact

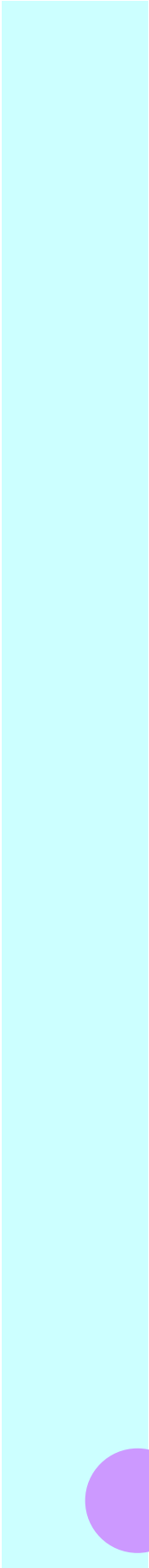
The Master Plan's recommendations will have a range of future financial operating impacts involving both reductions and increases depending on the type and scale of facility proposed. For new capital investments, these impacts will not be known until a Business Plan is completed. In some cases the operation expenses could be partially offset by the closure of other facilities and / or the opening of new, more efficient and effective facilities. Operating costs will also be influenced by the range of partnerships, funding sources or joint ventures available to a specific initiative. The operating costs, including staffing, maintenance, utilities, etc., is a project evaluation factor within each Business Plan or Facility Study.

6.5 Master Plan Review

It is important to periodically review the Community Services Master Plan in relation to the continually evolving leisure services operating environment in Lakeshore. It is important to consider short, medium and long range reviews, each addressing the relevant priorities within that time horizon. These long term reviews are intended to keep the Master Plan relevant and up to date in ensuring an ongoing delivery of leisure services and facilities over the next ten to fifteen years.

Recommendation – Plan Review

- ▶ **That the Community Services Master Plan be updated in terms of Table 6-1 every year in order to maintain an active list of recommendations before Council, the community and staff on an ongoing basis and as related to the Town's multi-year capital forecasting program.**
- ▶ **That the Community Services Master Plan be part of a planning session / workshop involving Council and staff every three to four years, to undertake a review of the recommendations in relation to the changes occurring in the service delivery environment, emerging leisure services trends, municipal financing opportunities / constraints, priorities and other parameters.**

- 
- ▶ **That the Community Services Master Plan be subject to a major review at its ten-year anniversary, to evaluate whether the long-term perspectives of the Master Plan remain focused on the key trends and rationales, or whether new considerations have emerged resulting in a need to redevelop the Plan in whole or in part.**



**Table 6-1
Implementation Framework**

Initiative	Location	Description	Year Proposed	Rationale / Need	Estimated Initial Capital Costs (\$000)
Lakeview Park Long-Term Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waterfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master Plan – ▪ Land Acquisition – 2008 to 2020 ▪ Site Development – 2009 to 2020 	Master Plan 2008 to 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conserve and develop Town’s primary waterfront access, park and regional tourism opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$50+ ▪ As available for purchase
Trails Master Plan Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lakeshore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long term development of trails 	2008 to 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for non-programmed leisure activities involving walking, hiking, etc. 	\$150 to \$300 annually
Multi-Use Recreation Complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northwest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indoor pool ▪ Twin pad arena ▪ Library ▪ Community centre 	Phase 1 – 2008 Phase 2 - 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing population ▪ Demand for aquatic and fitness services ▪ Library and arena upgrades and relocation needs 	\$25
Natural Waterfront Areas Development Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northeast 		2008-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capitalize on limited public waterfront access ▪ Conserve key natural areas 	\$50 per year plus ERCA support
Maidstone Landfill Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North / southwest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Long term development of landfill 	2010 feasibility assessment and master plan	Respond to targeted community needs for integration, motocross, winter hill sports, etc.	\$50 shared with Essex County

**Table 6-1
Implementation Framework**

Comber Splash Pad	▪ Southeast	▪ A splash pad for children 3 months to 12 years	2010	▪ Responds to delivering of youth opportunities where they live and building local community service opportunities	\$150
Woodslee Splash Pad	▪ Southwest	▪ A splash pad for children 3 months to 12 years	2012	▪ Responds to delivering of youth opportunities where they live and building local community service opportunities	\$150