



# Parks and Recreation Master Plan

November 2023



Page intentionally left blank.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Master Plan Purpose .....	2
1.2 Benefits of Parks and Recreation .....	2
1.3 Planning Process.....	3
<b>SECTION 2. LOCAL CONTEXT AND TRENDS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 About the Township .....	5
2.2 Population, Growth and Demographic Profile .....	6
2.3 Municipal Policies and Studies .....	10
2.4 Parks and Recreation Trends.....	16
<b>SECTION 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1 Kick-off Survey.....	22
3.2 Community Survey .....	24
3.3 Online Input and Polling.....	38
3.4 Seniors' Workshop .....	40
3.5 Stakeholder Input.....	43
3.6 Summary of Key Input.....	45
<b>SECTION 4. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>47</b>
4.1 Vision Statement .....	48
4.2 Guiding Principles.....	48
<b>SECTION 5. SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>49</b>
5.1 Roles and Responsibilities .....	50
5.2 Programming and Events .....	51
5.3 Community Partnerships.....	55
5.4 Volunteers .....	57
5.5 Staffing.....	58
5.6 Policies and Procedures.....	59
5.7 Awareness and Branding.....	61
5.8 Fiscal Responsibility.....	62
<b>SECTION 6. RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>65</b>
6.1 Recreation Facility Inventory Summary .....	66
6.2 Existing Community Recreation Facilities .....	68
6.3 Future Multi-use Recreation Facility .....	72
6.4 Other Facility Types.....	77
<b>SECTION 7. PARK FACILITY ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>78</b>
7.1 Park Facility Inventory Summary.....	79
7.2 Trails .....	81
7.3 Soccer Fields .....	82
7.4 Ball Diamonds.....	84
7.5 Playgrounds & Outdoor Fitness.....	85

7.6	Splash Pads .....	87
7.7	Skateboard and BMX Parks .....	88
7.8	Outdoor Courts (Tennis, Pickleball, Basketball, Beach Volleyball).....	88
7.9	Outdoor Ice Rinks .....	91
7.10	Off-Leash Dog Parks .....	92
7.11	Community Gardens.....	92
7.12	Toboggan Hills .....	93
<b>SECTION 8.</b>	<b>PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>94</b>
8.1	Parkland Classification and Inventory .....	95
8.2	Parkland Acquisition Policies and Requirements .....	101
8.3	Park Design and Redevelopment Considerations .....	103
<b>SECTION 9.</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>108</b>
9.1	Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan .....	109
9.2	Summary of Recommendations – Timing and Prioritization .....	110
<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	<b>RECORD OF PUBLIC INPUT .....</b>	<b>A-1</b>



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been created with the assistance of hundreds of individuals whose diverse range of interests and viewpoints have helped to shape this important document. We wish to thank all members of the community that have contributed their time and input through the consultation process, as well as members of the Township's Council and Staff that provided critical oversight during the process. Your collective efforts are appreciated and we hope that the Master Plan results in meaningful change through continued enhancement of the facilities serving the parks and recreational needs of Guelph/Eramosa residents for years to come.

### Township of Guelph/Eramosa Council (2022-26)

Mayor Chris White  
Ward 1 Councillor Bruce Dickieson  
Ward 2 Councillors Corey Woods  
Ward 3 Councillor Steven A. Liebig  
Ward 4 Councillor Mark Bouwmeester

### Master Plan Steering Committee

Ian Roger, Chief Administrative Officer  
Melissa Biffis, Community Programs Coordinator  
Jeff Myer, Parks & Recreation Supervisor

### Project Consultant

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd.

Page intentionally left blank.

**SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION**



## 1.1 Master Plan Purpose

Parks and recreation services are vital features of the Township’s quality of life, enabling residents of all ages and abilities to reach their full potential. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to chart a course that builds a strong and resilient future for parks and recreation in Guelph/Eramosa.

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a strategic policy document intended to guide the Township of Guelph/Eramosa’s planning and development of facilities, programs, and services for the next 10 years. This report is an update to the Township’s 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which helped to lay the foundation for the many service, park, and facility improvements that have been advanced in recent years.

To ensure that the Plan is responsive to resident needs, it is grounded in community input and research into emerging activities, demographic factors, leading operational practices, and trends within the parks and recreation sector. Full implementation of the Plan will require ongoing community engagement and flexibility in approach. Furthermore, as the Township is largely built-out and only expected to grow by 800 persons to the year 2051, a focus on cost-sharing partnerships and funding from non-growth related sources in order to enhance service levels and fund new infrastructure will be required.

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

## 1.2 Benefits of Parks and Recreation

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

Specifically, parks and recreation opportunities:

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

---

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



The Township is commended for recognizing these benefits and supporting this update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### 1.3 Planning Process

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan project began in January 2023. A team led by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. was retained to direct the development of this study with assistance and oversight from a project team led by Township staff. The planning process consisted of two phases designed to develop a plan that captures the community’s highest priorities, guided by a terms of reference prepared by the Township.

Figure 1: Master Plan Process



**Phase 1** of the Master Plan consisted of a review of relevant research and supporting materials, park and facility observations, and the completion of a comprehensive public and stakeholder consultation program. Key findings were summarized within a Phase 1 Report.

**Phase 2** built upon the initial phase by preparing a needs assessment and developing a strategy for plan implementation, with recommendations developed around key priorities. The draft Master Plan was released for public review and comment prior to finalization.





# SECTION 2. LOCAL CONTEXT AND TRENDS





Planning for parks and recreation services is influenced by several factors, such as local geographic, demographics and population trends, municipal directions and policy frameworks, and a wide range of participation trends. This section examines key research intended to inform the Master Plan’s development.



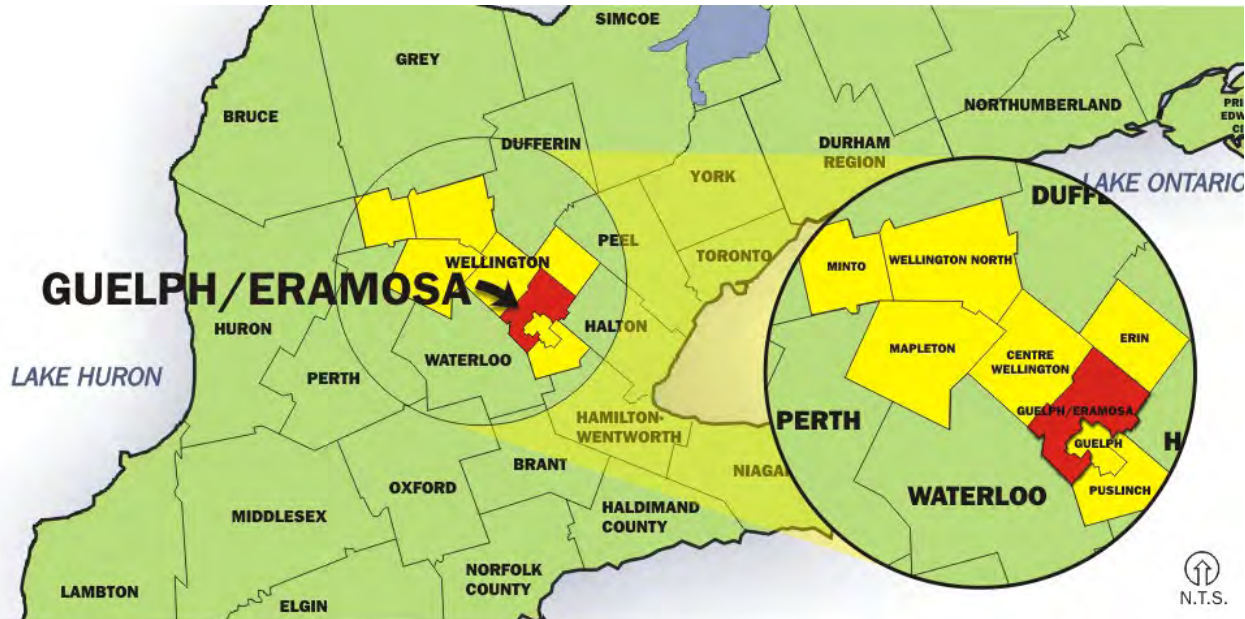
## 2.1 About the Township

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa was formed in 1999 through the amalgamation of the former Guelph and Eramosa Townships and part of Pilkington and Nichol Townships. Guelph/Eramosa is one of seven municipalities in Wellington County. It is adjacent to the City of Guelph, the Town of Erin, and the Townships of Centre Wellington and Puslinch.

Located along Highway 7 is Rockwood, the main community in the Township. The Eramosa River runs through the centre of the village as well as the popular Rockwood Conservation Area. The Township also includes the smaller communities of Ariss, Everton, Eden Mills, and Marden. The area is part of the Guelph Census Metropolitan Area, but also offers convenient access to the Greater Toronto Area through area highways and GO Train service in nearby Halton Hills. Guelph/Eramosa’s rural charm and small-town atmosphere is mixed with stunning landscapes and natural wonders that help to retain and attract residents seeking an ideal community to live, work, and play.



Figure 2: Regional Location Map



The Township is defined by its adjacencies to nearby municipalities. Those living in the western portion (e.g., Ariss, Marden, etc.) are generally well served by facilities and services in the City of Guelph, while residents of Rockwood have further to travel to access higher-level services offered by larger communities. Many adults commute outside of Rockwood for employment, school, and other daily requirements, making it more of a ‘bedroom community’.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Guelph/Eramosa is a progressive municipality that offers high quality facilities, parks, and services. Notable examples include the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre in Marden, the Rockmosa Older Adult Centre, and a recently expanded Rockmosa Park. Several of these projects were made possible through advanced planning and senior government grants.

## 2.2 Population, Growth and Demographic Profile

### Current and Projected Population

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa has a 2021 census population of 13,904 and a land area of approximately 293 km<sup>2</sup>. Statistics Canada reported that 39.5% (5,488 residents) of the Township’s population live within the urban area of Rockwood. The balance of the Township is represented by smaller communities (e.g., Marden, Ariss, Everton, and Eden Mills) and rural areas.

The Township grew significantly by 8.2% between the 2016 and 2021, greater than Ontario’s population change of 5.8% but equal to that of Wellington County. The Township’s growth rate was also similar to most of its adjacent municipalities, including Guelph (8.8%), Puslinch (8.3%), Centre Wellington (10.3%), and Erin (4.7%).

Going back twenty years, the Township grew by 24% (2,730 persons) between 2001 and 2021. In search of more affordable housing and a smaller community atmosphere, many of these new residents have come from larger municipalities and some have higher expectations for service as a result.



Population projections for the Township were developed as part of Wellington County’s Municipal Comprehensive Review. These figures project that the Township’s population will grow by 5% between 2021 and 2051 to a population of 14,700 residents (growth of approximately 796 persons). This limited growth will impact the Township’s ability to grow the tax assessment base and fund new infrastructure.

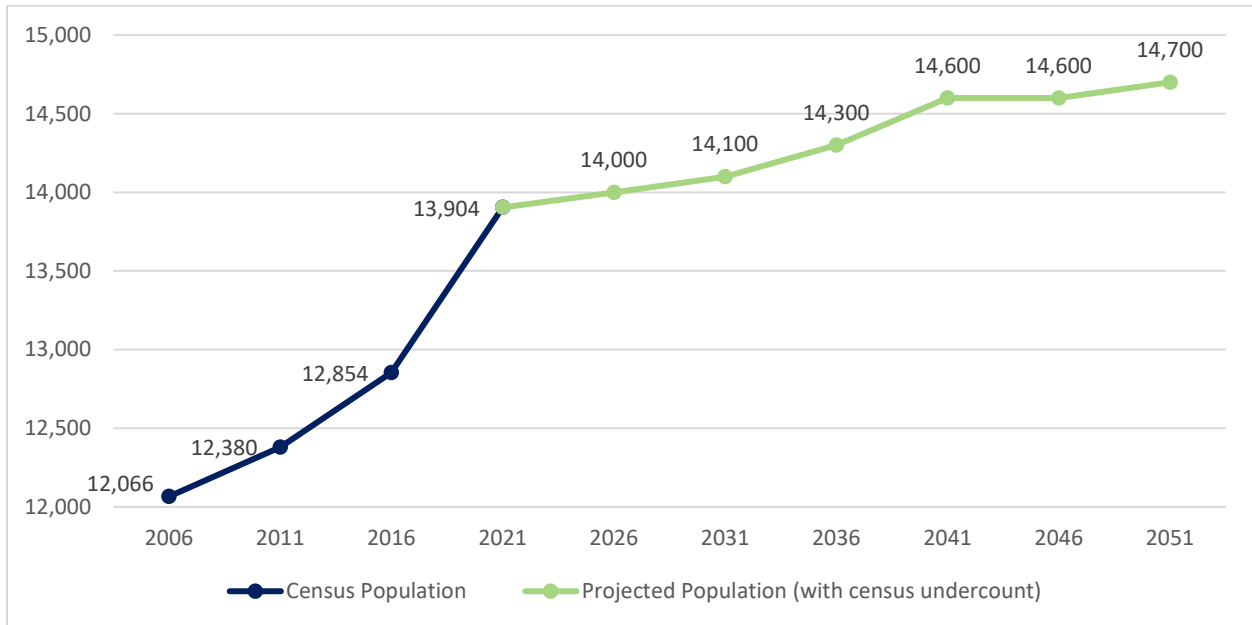
**Table 1: Township of Guelph/Eramosa Population Growth**

Year	Population	5-Year Growth Rate
2001 (Census)	11,174	9.8%
2006 (Census)	12,066	8.0%
2011 (Census)	12,380	2.6%
2016 (Census)	12,854	3.8%
2021 (Census)	13,904	8.2%
2026 (Projected)	14,000	0.7%
2031 (Projected)	14,100	0.7%
2036 (Projected)	14,300	1.4%
2041 (Projected)	14,600	2.1%
2046 (Projected)	14,600	0.0%
2051 (Projected)	14,700	0.7%

Sources: Statistics Canada (2001-2021); County of Wellington Phase 1 MCR Report: Urban Structure and Growth Allocations (2022).



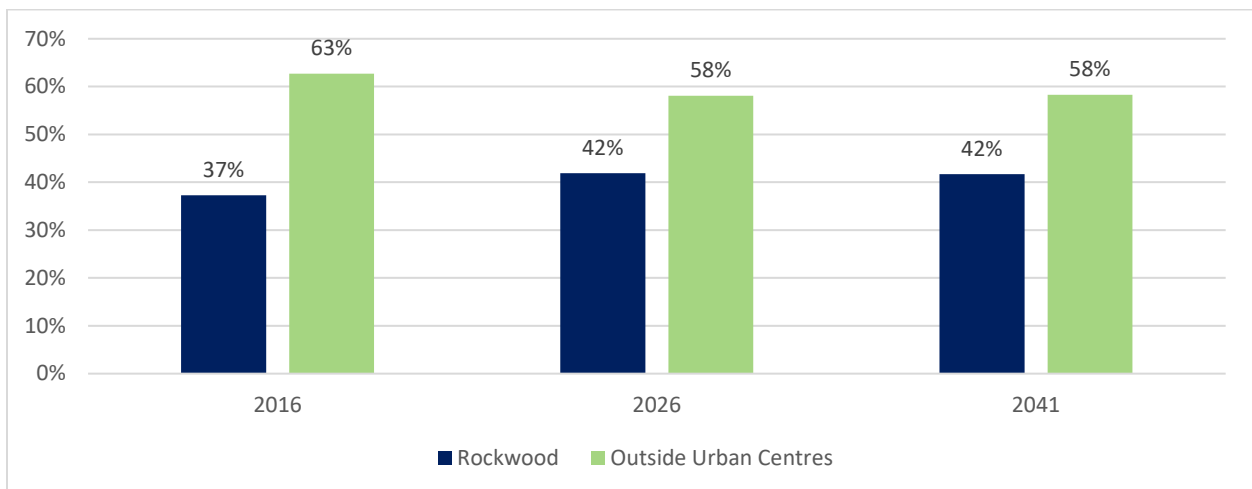
Figure 3: Township of Guelph/Eramosa Census and Projected Population



Sources: Statistics Canada (2001-2021);  
County of Wellington Phase 1 MCR Report: Urban Structure and Growth Allocations (2022)

Rockwood accounts for approximately two-fifths of the Township’s population; its listed 2021 Census population was 5,488 persons. Going forward, Rockwood is expected to accommodate the majority of the Township’s growth; however, despite many smaller communities across Ontario experiencing notable population growth at this time, municipal servicing limitations are expected to slow population growth in Rockwood and across the Township.

Figure 4: Township of Guelph/Eramosa Population Distribution



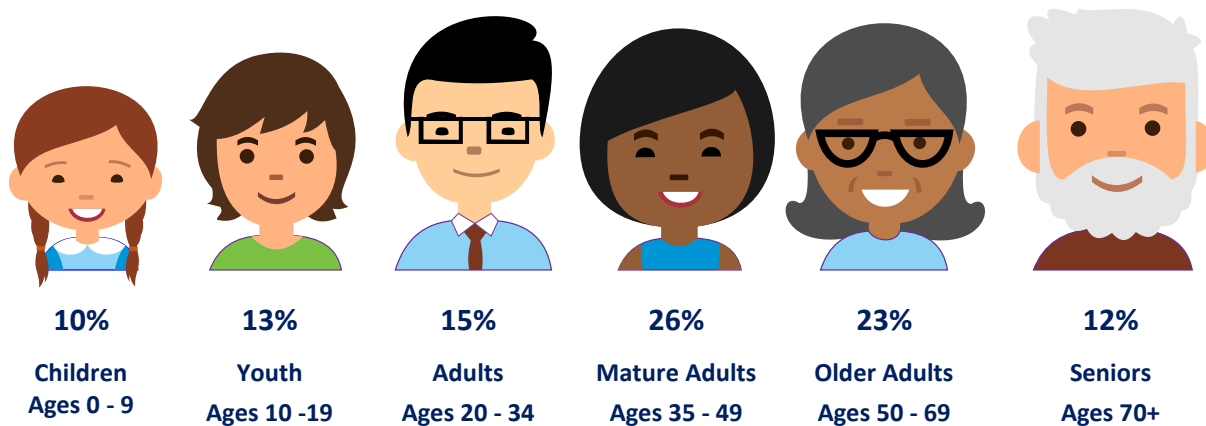
Source: County of Wellington – Official Plan (2022)

## Age Profile

The Township has an aging population with a median age of 45.2 years, increasing from the 2011 census’ median age of 43.2 years. In comparison, Wellington County had a median age of 40.0 years and Ontario had a median age of 41.6 years in 2021. The Township’s age profile is heavily represented by adults (26%) and older adults (23%).

There is, however, anecdotal evidence that this is changing, particularly in Rockwood. Newer single family homes have been built near Rockmosa Park and –combined with the lack of seniors’ housing in the area – this suggests that the community will remain an attractive destination for younger families.

Figure 5: Township of Guelph/Eramosa Age Profile (2021)



Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

## Other Notable Demographic Characteristics

Statistics Canada reported that Guelph/Eramosa’s median household income of \$129,000 is above the median for the Guelph Census Metropolitan Area (\$97,000), suggesting that some Township residents have a greater ability to pay for leisure activities. Affordable activities may also be in demand as 4.2% of the Township’s households are considered low-income (2020, LIM-AT measure), while many more have lower levels of discretionary income.

Between 2011 and 2021, the local immigrant population increased by 235 persons, a near doubling. As of 2021, 14% of the Township’s population were born outside of Canada, although only 12% of these have immigrated to Canada since 2011. As the large majority of residents are Canadian-born, ethnicity less likely to have a strong influence on the parks and recreation participation at this time, but is a potential factor to consider in the long-term with the province continually becoming diverse.

Guelph/Eramosa also shares many characteristics of a bedroom community, with 82% of the employed labour force commuting to a different municipality in 2021.

## 2.3 Municipal Policies and Studies

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa’s parks and recreation facilities and services have been guided by several key municipal policies and studies over recent years.

### Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2013)

The 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan provided the Township of Guelph/Eramosa with a creative, realistic, and clear action plan to lead the development of infrastructure and services through 2022.

The 2013 Plan contained 65 recommendations identifying continuous best practices and project-specific actions. Since the completion of the study, 85% of these recommendations have been completed, are in progress, or are an ongoing best practice. A small number (15%) of the recommendations have not been acted upon for various reasons, such as lack of funding, other priorities, or a change in direction.

**Table 2: Report Card – 2013 Master Plan Implementation to Date**

Action (to date)	# of Recommendations	Percent
Complete	23	35%
In Progress	4	6%
Ongoing Best Practice	28	43%
Incomplete	10	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Some **key accomplishments** advanced (directly or indirectly) through the 2013 Master Plan include:

- Completion of the 2015 Rockmosa Park Master Plan, which led to the expansion of the park (partially funded through grants) to include additional soccer fields, a skate park, leash free dog park, paved walking trail, community gardens, toboggan hill, and shelters. The park’s tennis courts were also resurfaced.
- Created new trails in growing areas, including neighbourhood connections and a lit asphalt 3-m wide walking trail within Rockmosa Park.
- Addition of unlit soccer field to Marden Park.
- Establishment of the Rockmosa Older Adult Centre (led by two new full-time staff positions, one of which is fully supported by provincial funding), offering a wide range of social, recreational and educational activities and programs geared towards the 55+ community.
- Significant expansion of community programming (e.g., fitness, older adult activities, etc.).
- New annual community events, including Party in the Park (Rockmosa Park).
- Strengthening of existing and establishment of new partnerships, such as those with community volunteers, the Rockwood Farmers Market, Order of the Bear, and more.





**Table 3: Status of Rockmosa Master Plan Identified Projects**

Project #	Rockmosa Master Plan Identified Project	Status
1	Grading, Servicing and Stormwater Management	Completed 2018
2	Resurfacing of Christie Street and Rockmosa Park Entrance	Completed 2017
3	Construction of Skate Park	Completed 2016
4	Construction of Main Trail	Completed 2018
5	Construction of Parking Lots (dependent on construction of a Community Facility)	65% Complete (2019)
6	Construction of Dog Park	Completed 2019
7	Covered Community Facility	Unfunded
8	Destination Playground	Unfunded – proposed for 2023/24
9	Exercise Stations	Unfunded
10	Tot Lot	Unfunded
11	Sports Field Lighting	Unfunded
12	Toboggan Hill and Park Lighting	Completed 2016/2019

**Rockmosa Multi-Generational Recreation Complex Operation and Business Plan (2019)**

The Rockmosa Multi-Generation Recreation Complex is a proposed 47,300 square foot facility in Rockwood focused on supporting local residents and benefiting from revenue brought in by regional users. The overall intent of the Master Plan is to develop a holistic approach to park design in order to guide future park capital works as funds become available.

Supported by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Rockmosa Master Plan, facility concepts of the Rockmosa Multi-Generation Recreation Complex consist of the following amenities:

- Older Adult Centre
- Youth Centre
- Multi-purpose gymnasium (94’ x 50’) to accommodate one basketball or four pickleball courts
- 90-metre indoor walking track
- Programming space
- Social interactive spaces
- Indoor Ice Surface (200’ x 85’)
- Supporting amenities (washrooms, change rooms, storage)

**Marden Park Master Plan (2010)**

A conceptual master plan was prepared for Marden Park to guide the future development of the site. The plan shows a conceptual trail network, potential future sports fields, and other site amenities.



**County of Wellington Official Plan (2022)**

The County of Wellington Official Plan serves as the official plan for the Township of Guelph/Eramosa. The Official Plan is currently under review and subject to a series of amendments. Most recently, the County Official Plan was amended through OPA 120 to update the population, household, and employment forecasts to the year 2051.

The Official Plan contains a variety of policies relating to parks and recreation, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands and open space areas;
- Urban Centres shall provide adequate parks and open space areas to serve their population and may provide recreational opportunities for a larger regional population;
- Parks and open space areas may be located in or adjacent to Greenland areas depending on impacts and opportunities; and

- A minimum 20 percent of the residential site shall be used for open space purposes to accommodate both passive and active opportunities such as parks, trails, and bowling greens.

Furthermore, the Official Plan provides criteria for Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plans, indicating that master plans will generally:

- Outline all open space areas, recreational facilities, cultural programs and recreational programs operated by various service providers in the community;
- Identify community needs with respect to the above program and facilities;
- Assess the need for additional recreational lands, facilities and programs;
- Outline an implementation plan for the planning and development of recreation and cultural facilities or programs, including the investigation and prioritization of sources of funding for such facilities and programs;
- Be used as a policy document to assist in determining parks, culture and recreation requirements; and
- Have its adopted policies included by amendment to the Official Plan.

### **Guelph/Eramosa Township Strategic Priorities (2019-2022)**

*Note: The Township's strategic planning document priorities are being refreshed for the current term of council.*

The Township's Strategic Priorities (2019-2022) provides a mission statement and vision supporting the community's growth through the delivery of excellent essential services. The mission statement supporting the community's growth recognizes "as stewards of our community, we advance the quality of life in Guelph/Eramosa, foster civic engagement, and use taxes wisely to effectively deliver essential services." The vision statement addresses "to deliver excellent services in support of prosperous, healthy and growing community, with expanded economic viability and protection of our rural heritage."

**Strategic priorities** consist of:

- 1. establishing a strategic, proactive fiscal/business planning framework**
  - develop strategies to grow additional non-property tax revenue
  - set priorities for new capital expenditures across departments (budget process)
  - develop and implement a strong staff retention & succession management plan
- 2. updating, enhancing and manage a comprehensive asset management plan**
  - develop a long-term vision and strategy to sustain municipal infrastructure
  - review and clearly define municipal service levels
- 3. developing and implementing an economic readiness and development plan**
  - develop a more formal economic attraction, retention and expansion strategy
  - work closely with key government and community partners to foster growth
- 4. continuing to enhance communication, engagement and customer service**
  - build on current and new practices to enhance interactions with public
  - continue to pursue opportunities to make processes easier and more efficient



### Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015)

While not a municipal document, the Framework for Recreation in Canada is a watershed guideline designed to support coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related sectors across Canada. Its aim is to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and natural environments by outlining a new vision for recreation in Canada supported by clear goals and underlying values and principles.

The goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada include:

- Active Living: Foster active living through physical recreation.
- Inclusion and Access: Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.
- Connecting People and Nature: Help people connect to nature through recreation.
- Supportive Environments: Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.
- Recreation Capacity: Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.



In 2023, CPRA released a draft supplement to the Framework for Recreation in Canada, the purpose of which is to lend focus to short-term actions that can be achieved over the next two years or until a new Framework is released. The Supplement considers many of the significant changes and issues that have emerged in recent years, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change considerations, focus on DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), economic challenges, and more. The goals and related actions of the Framework should be considered by the Township through this Master Plan.



## 2.4 Parks and Recreation Trends

This section identifies several trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of parks and recreation facilities services in Canadian municipalities. Some of these trends have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, while others have been affecting service provision for several years. These trends should be balanced against other study inputs (such as public consultation and local usage levels) through the Master Plan’s upcoming development stages.

### Health & Wellness

- There is a growing emphasis placed on community health and wellness as research continues to suggest a correlation between living longer and healthier lives, and improved mental and physical health from interactions with nature, especially through activities such as walking and hiking, as well as general outdoor enjoyment.
- The importance of connecting with nature has been further heightened following the COVID-19 pandemic as many municipalities observed an increased use of public parks and trails.
- The Healthy Communities movement recognizes that recreation and leisure opportunities are vital contributors to social and personal health, thereby improving overall quality of life and enhancing the attractiveness of communities to live in.
- Through the preparation of this Master Plan, Guelph/Eramosa demonstrates their commitment to improving activity levels, health, and wellbeing of their residents.

### Physical Inactivity

- The national 2021 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity graded overall physical activity levels a “D” for children and youth and “F” for adults, reflecting a decline from prior years as activity levels dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Physical inactivity has been predominantly driven by factors such as the lack of free time, rise in sedentary activities, and reliance on the automobile. It has been found to be a contributor to Canada’s growing obesity problem.
- Guelph/Eramosa provides a range of unstructured indoor and outdoor recreation activities as well as parks for casual enjoyment. Municipal parks and recreation services provide critical supports to maintain personal health and physical literacy by addressing inactivity levels, social isolation, stress and anxiety.

### Multi-Season Parks and Facilities

- Municipalities are experiencing a greater desire to engage in year-round physical activity, promoting many communities to explore strategies to activate its parks during the winter season and accommodate outdoor sports and activities within indoor spaces.
- This may include clearing trails and pathways for walking, while grooming other pathways for snowshoeing. Plowing parking lots and sport courts and winterizing washrooms are also being implemented, although there is an operational consideration which can be a challenge to overcome, particularly in municipalities with lean staffing.
- Relying on volunteers can often offset operational requirements to provide facilities such as outdoor skating rinks (a longstanding initiative in Guelph/Eramosa), which are often neighbourhood-driven amenities.

## Affordability

- Affordability is a concern for many households given the current challenging economic climate and rising cost of participation in organized sports (equipment, travel, rental fees, etc.). The 2023 Canadian Jumpstart study found that 44% of Canadian parents indicate that they cannot afford to register their children for organized sports.
- Furthermore, most (62%) sports organizations say the current economic situation has led to reduced sign-up rates for their programming.
- Municipalities should continue to focus on community programs that address inequities, promote healthy participation, and encourage lifelong play. For households experiencing financial barriers, the provision of subsidy programs and low-to-no-cost programming options can also help reduce the financial burden of participation.



## Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities

- Participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured, and self-directed participation options.
- With increasingly busy lifestyles, competing interests, and inability for people to commit to structured activities, unstructured activities can help to fill the void as many do not require advanced registration and can be self-scheduled.
- There is also a growing desire for innovative programming and space for unstructured activities. Municipalities that have typically just been “facility providers” are evolving into “activity enablers”, often through partnerships with other service providers.

## Emerging Activities

- The variety of activities and sports available today is much broader than in the past. Some emerging trends regarding the use of parks and recreation spaces include:
  - Residents are choosing more informal and individual recreation activities that are more convenient and affordable;



- Activities and spaces such as pickleball, cricket, off-leash dog parks, splash pads, sport courts, disc golf, skateboarding and BMX biking, outdoor skating, outdoor fitness, challenge courses and adventure play, and trails are increasing in demand;
- Casual group spaces for diverse exercise and recreation experiences are in high demand (e.g., tai chi, BBQ pits, picnic spaces, etc.);
- Greater frequency of requests by private groups to schedule community events, permitting the public to be involved in programming;
- Demand for digital infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi in parks and facilities; and
- Passive spaces that support casual and informal activities are equally important to active programming (e.g., community gardens, outdoor classrooms, unstructured spaces, etc.).
- In terms of sport, national registration figures indicate many traditional teams sports such as ice hockey, soccer, and baseball are on the decline in many communities. More recently, a national study found that interest in children’s activities was beginning to shift away from these sports towards other less formal extracurricular activities, such as music lessons, dance lessons, language classes, and drama classes.



### Aging Infrastructure

- Many municipalities in Ontario are faced with aging recreation infrastructure (e.g., arenas, sport courts, etc.) and are pursuing renewal and reinvestment projects, often using non-traditional funding approaches.
- These projects provide opportunities to incorporate new technologies to address growing sustainability concerns, rethink provision, and consider facility conversion or adaptive re-use options that accommodate emerging activities.
- Due to the current economic situation and resultant cost escalations, many communities will require increased financial commitments from all levels of government to facilitate the redesign, development and retrofitting of parks and recreation facilities.

### Partnerships

- Collaborating with community partners including (but not limited to) schools, service clubs, private organizations, and service providers are critical pillars to the Township’s parks and



recreation facility system as working together contributes to the quality of life in Guelph/Eramosa.

- Partnerships have the potential to provide benefits in making efficient use of resources, gaining a competitive advantage in having programs and services provided by specialized groups, and sharing vital data and information such as emerging challenges and opportunities.

### Volunteerism

- Small communities such as Guelph/Eramosa have finite resources and there is a heavy reliance on volunteers and partners to provide parks and recreation services.
- Research suggests, however, that the pool of volunteers is shrinking as older adult and seniors primarily make up this core group (who will eventually move on) and interest among young adults and youth is generally low.
- Engaging younger generations in volunteering will need to be a key strategy to ensuring lifelong community involvement, which should be complemented with strong volunteer and partnership opportunities to continue providing quality parks and recreation opportunities.



### Inclusion

- Inclusion and access are key goals for municipal recreation departments.
- To ensure access for all, the following barriers to participation should be considered: economic (e.g., costs associated with participation); information (e.g., knowledge and information sharing about available opportunities); geographic (e.g., equitable distribution of facilities and services), and inclusivity (e.g., ensuring all participants feel welcomed and supported).

### Sustainability

- Principles of environmental sustainability and green facility designs are being ingrained in the sector. Although these enhancements often come with a higher initial capital cost, they must be balanced against improved sustainability, resiliency, and potentially longer-term operational savings.

- Parks are being increasingly recognized for their role in improving air quality, mitigating flooding from extreme weather, and reducing the urban heat island effect.
- Common standards for environmental sustainability help to guide investment and ensure that new infrastructure includes design features such as low-impact development practices, solar panels, geothermal heating, recirculation systems, etc.

### Pandemic Impact

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had wide-ranging impacts on the parks and recreation sector, including (but not limited to):
  - Emphasis on health equity and access to parks and trails;
  - Growing interest in unstructured, individual, and small group activities (e.g., pickleball);
  - Desire for outdoor recreation (including four seasons use), placing pressure on trails, parks, washrooms, etc.;
  - Continued population growth in less urbanized areas;
  - Changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.);
  - Impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
  - Rethinking of some third-party partnerships;
  - Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.); and
  - Escalating cost factors and staffing shortages



**SECTION 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



Several community engagement tactics were used to gather meaningful input from Township residents on the topics within this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Each tactic was designed to maximize input and participation from residents to identify the most accurate strengths, barriers, priorities, satisfaction levels, etc., that can be used toward improving local parks and recreation services.

Key opportunities for public and stakeholder input included:

- 1) **Kick-off Survey:** 152 responses
- 2) **Community Survey:** 372 responses
- 3) **Online Input and Polling:** 79 participants and 253 interactions to date
- 4) **Seniors' Workshop:** 50+ participants
- 5) **Stakeholder Input:** 10 organizations representing thousands of participants
- 6) **Public Open House:** 20 people provided feedback on the draft Master Plan

**Nearly 800 individuals, households, and organizations provided input into this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**

### 3.1 Kick-off Survey

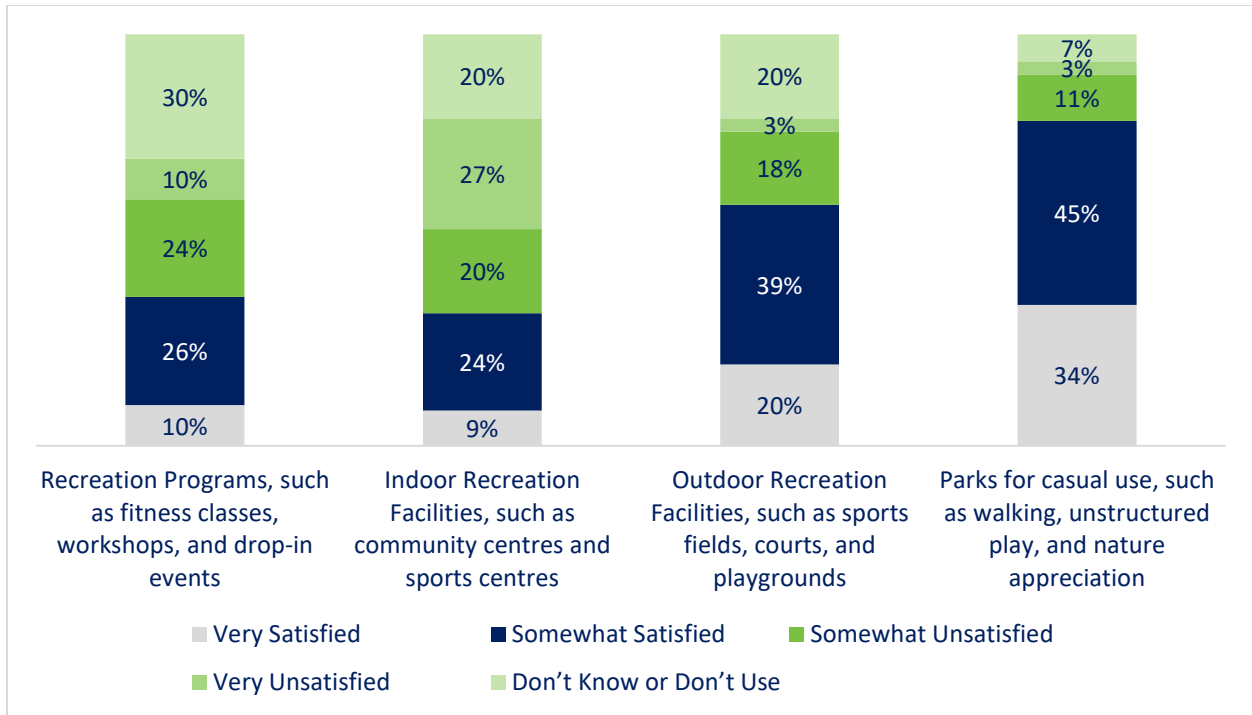
A Kick-off Survey was prepared to build anticipation for the Master Plan, collect email addresses for future promotion, and learn more about how best to engage with the community. This short survey was available for four (4) weeks, beginning in late January 2023 and extending through to the end of February 2023. The survey was made available to community members online and promoted by the Township (tax bill inserts, social and traditional media, within municipal facilities, etc.). A total of **152 unique responses** were received.

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with selected services in Guelph/Eramosa:

- Satisfaction levels were **highest** for parks for casual use, such as walking, unstructured play, and nature appreciation (79%) and outdoor recreation facilities, such as sports fields, courts and playgrounds (59%).
- Satisfaction levels were **mixed** for recreation programs, such as fitness, classes, workshops, and drop-in events (36% satisfied, 34% unsatisfied), with 30% not using this service and unable to comment.
- Satisfaction levels were **lowest** for indoor recreation facilities, such as community centres and sports centres (33%), with 47% indicating that they were unsatisfied.

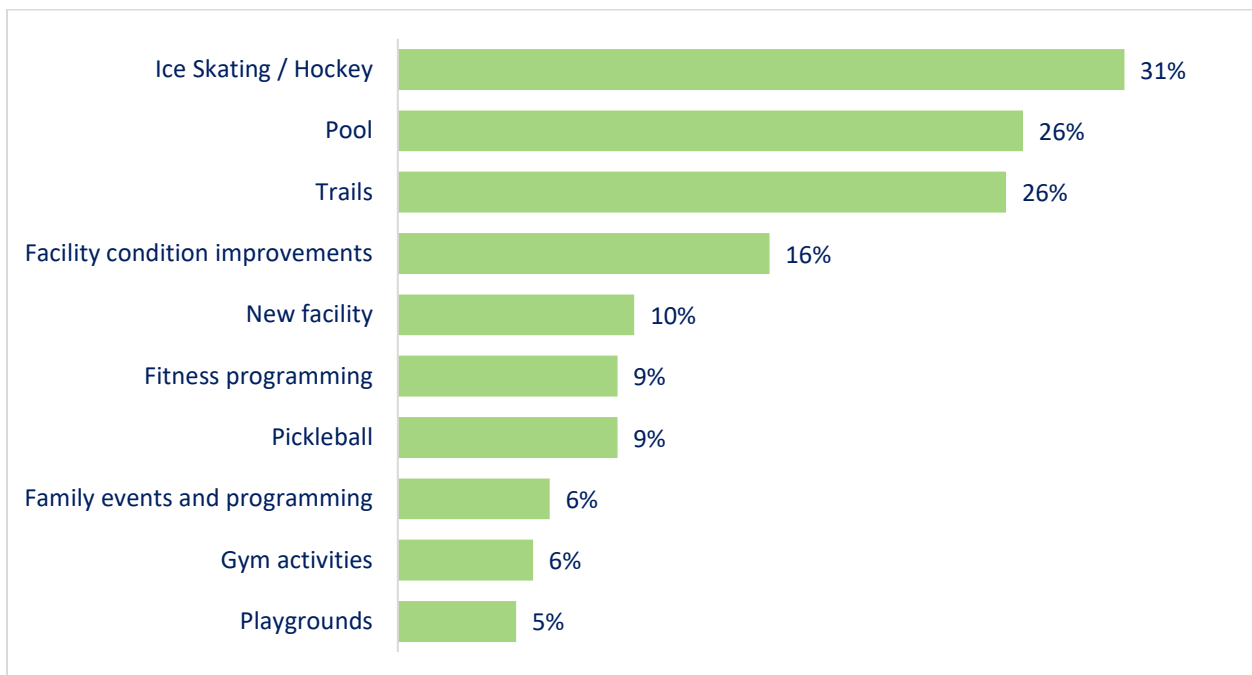


Figure 7: How satisfied are you with the following services in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa? (n = 152)



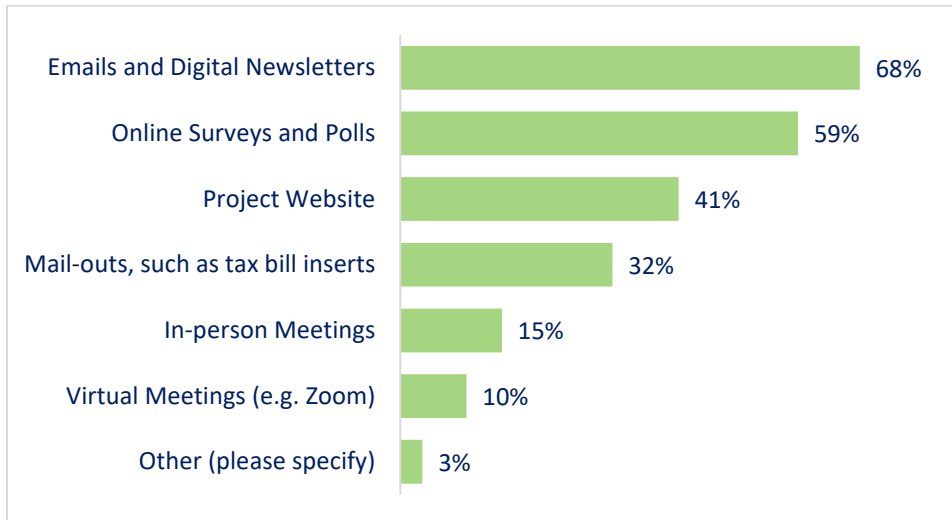
Respondents identified parks and recreation activities they would like to see more of in the Township. The top ten responses are identified below, with ice skating / hockey, swimming / pool, and trail activities leading the way.

Figure 8: What parks and recreation activities do you want more of in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa, if any? (n = 140)



The survey also asked about the best way to keep residents informed about the Master Plan as the process progresses. Preferred options included emails and digital newsletters (68%), online surveys and polls (59%), and the project website (41%). For public information sessions, there was a slight preference for in-person meetings (15%) over virtual meetings (10%).

**Figure 9: What are your preferred methods of providing input and receiving information? (select up to three responses) (n = 152)**



### 3.2 Community Survey

A community survey was prepared to support the Master Plan’s development. It was available for six (6) weeks beginning in March 2023 and concluding in May 2023. The survey was extensively promoted by the Township (social and traditional media, email networks, website, within municipal facilities, etc.). Community members could complete the survey online through the project webpage or through hard copies available at Township facilities.

A total of **372 unique responses** were received. Responses rates varied by questions as a reflection of the self-directed and voluntary nature of the survey.

The purpose of the community survey was to better understand residents needs and preferences relating to parks and recreation services. Questions were designed to gather information regarding:

- participation rates in organized and unorganized activities;
- barriers to activity;
- priorities;
- level of agreement and support with various statements;
- recommended improvements; and
- support for investment.

Furthermore, the survey helped to establish a profile of community participants by collecting relevant demographic information. Tabulated survey response data has been provided in **Appendix A**. Key findings are summarized below.

## Participation

The following figure summarizes the five (5) most popular parks and recreation activities respondents have participated in Guelph/Eramosa or elsewhere since 2019 (the period both before and since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic). Interestingly, these suggest that casual, self-directed activities are among the most accessible for Township residents.

**Figure 10: Most Popular Parks and Recreation Activities in Guelph/Eramosa**



In addition to the top five activities, the following pursuits were mentioned by at least one in four respondent households:

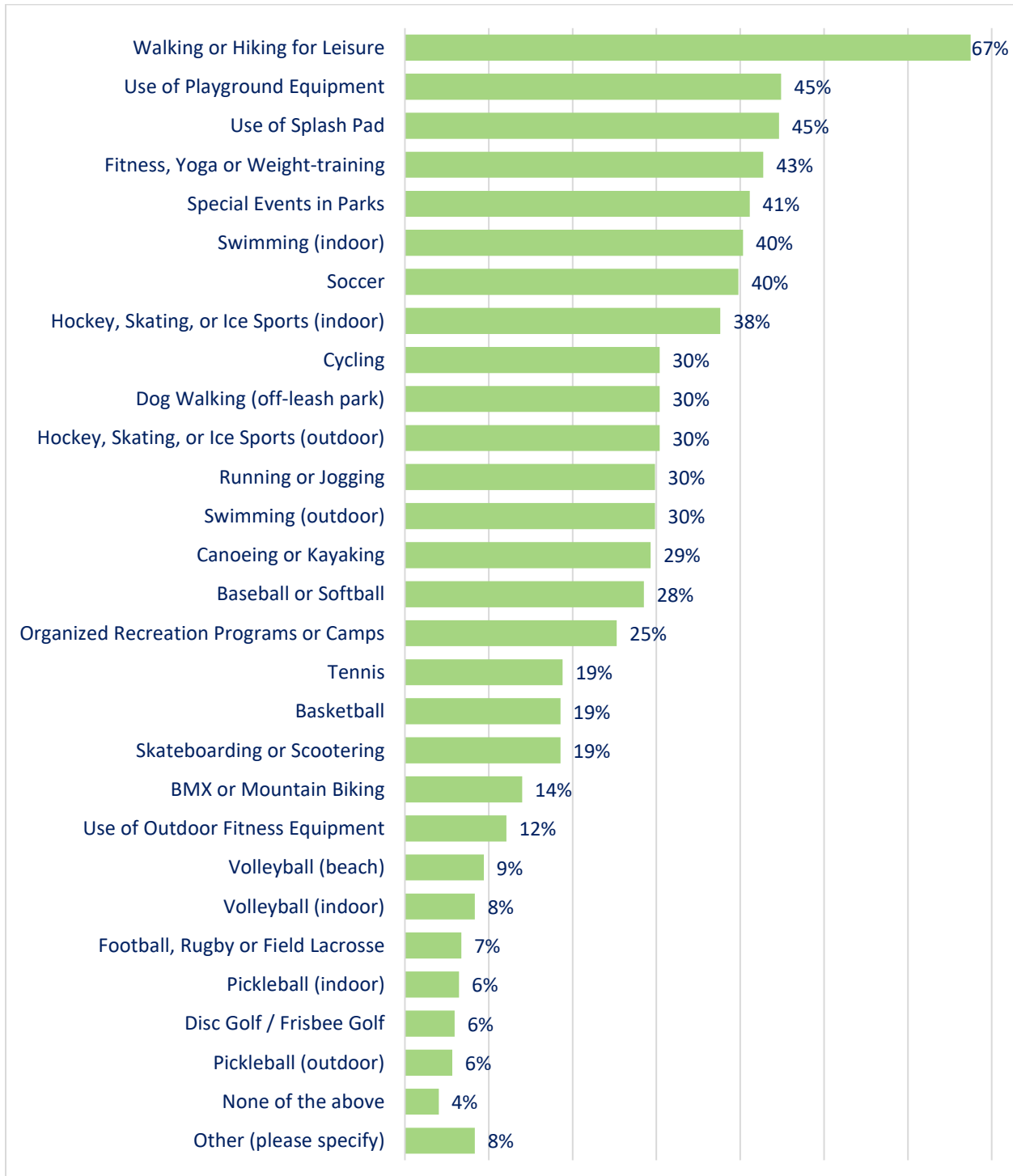
- soccer (40%)
- swimming (indoor) (40%)
- hockey, skating or ice sports (indoor) (38%)
- cycling (30%)
- dog walking (off-leash park) (30%)
- hockey, skating or ice sports (outdoor) (30%)
- running or jogging (30%)
- swimming (outdoor) (30%)
- canoeing or kayaking (29%)
- baseball or softball (28%)
- organized recreation programs or camps (25%)

This suggests a demand for a mix indoor and outdoor organized/structured recreation, in addition to unstructured outdoor activities. This may be a reflection of various age groups in the community. For example, children and youth are likely to be involved in organized recreation programs, camps or sports, while the unstructured outdoor activities of cycling, dog walking (off-leash), and running or jogging are likely to have greater representation from adult and older adult age groups.

The following figure displays the full list of activities along with household participation data.

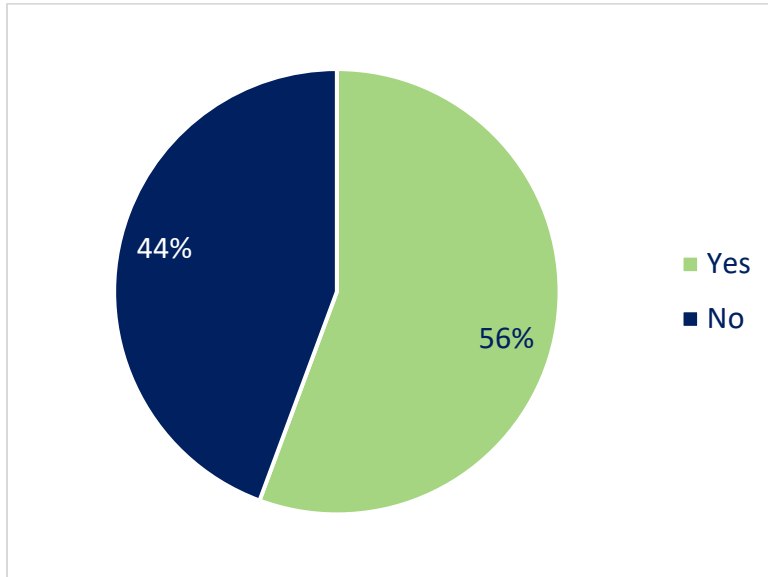


**Figure 11: Since 2019 (the year prior to the pandemic), in which of the following activities did you or anyone in your household participate, in Guelph/Eramosa or elsewhere? Participation refers to situations where you or a member of your household actively take part (not as a spectator), either at home or in public. (select all that apply) (n=372)**



Respondents were asked if they are able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as they would like. Over half (56%) indicated that they are able to participate as often as they would like, while 44% indicated that they are not.

**Figure 12: Are you and members of your household able to participate in Parks and Recreation activities as often as you would like? (n=372)**

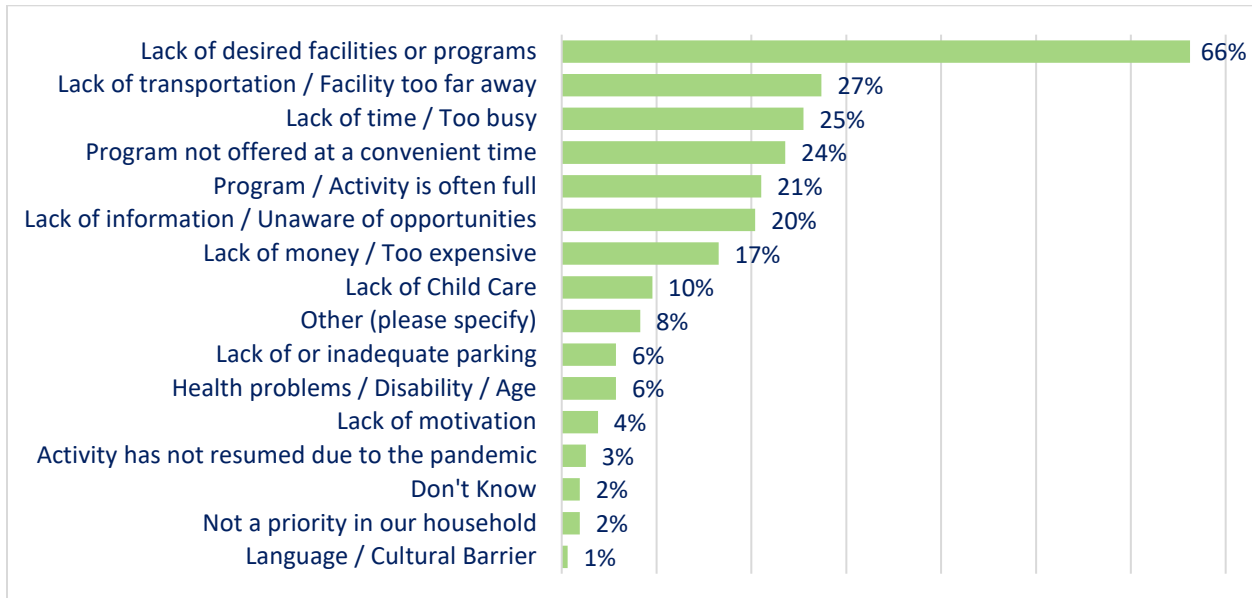


Amongst those that are unable to participate as often as they would like, the top six (6) barriers to participation were identified by at least one out of five respondents:

- lack of desired facilities or programs (66%)
- lack of transportation / facility too far away (27%)
- lack of time / too busy (25%)
- program not offered at a convenient time (24%)
- program / activity is often full (21%)
- lack of information / unaware of opportunities (20%)



**Figure 13: Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like? (select up to 3 responses) (n=157)**

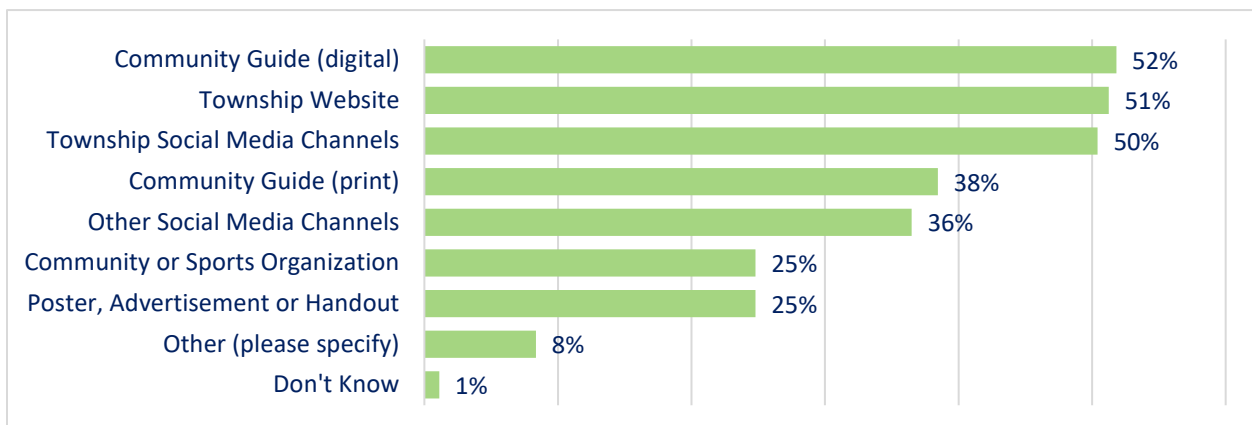


Additionally, the overall results from the survey indicated that that respondents who reported that they cannot participate as often as they would like were found to be more likely to participate in hockey, skating and ice sports, as well as indoor swimming. This suggests that the lack of these higher-order recreation facilities (e.g., arenas and pools) in the Township are a notable barrier to participation.

## Communication

Respondents were asked about the best ways to be informed about parks and recreation activities and events in Guelph/Eramosa. At least one out of every two respondents identified a digital Community Guide, Township Website, and Township Social Media Channels, suggesting that the majority of respondents prefer to be informed through digital platforms. Additionally, over one-third of respondents identified a printed Community Guide as one of the best ways to be informed about parks and recreation activities in the Township.

**Figure 14: What are the best ways to inform you about parks and recreation activities and events in Guelph/Eramosa? (select all that apply) (n=359)**





## Programming

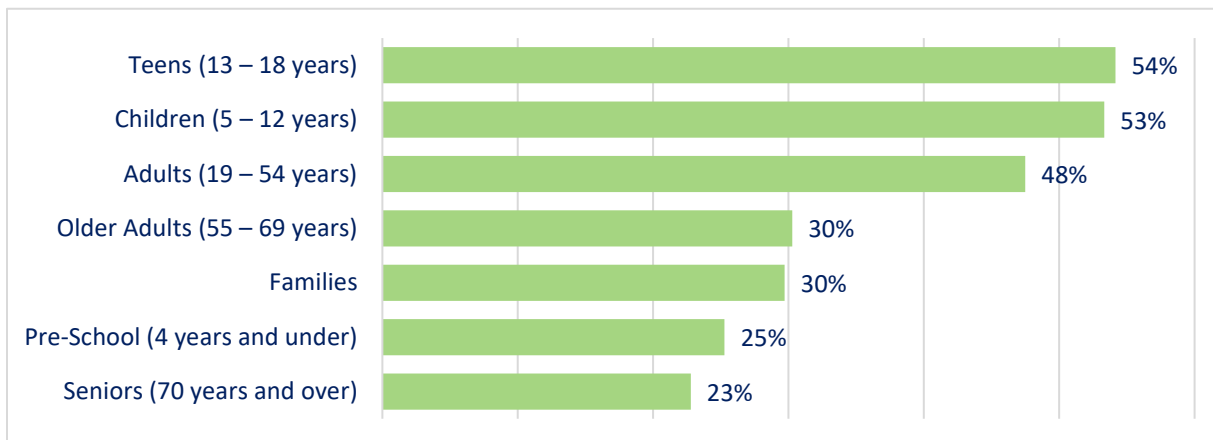
Priorities with respect to parks and recreation programming are illustrated through the figures below.

Over one-half of respondents identified teens (13-18 years) (54%) and children (5-12 years) (53%) as age groups that should be the highest priority for additional recreation programs or activities provided by the Township. Nearly one-half (48%) also noted a desire for more programs for adults (19 to 54 years). Interestingly, demand for additional older adult and seniors’ programming was lower at 30% and 23%, respectively.

Respondents that have lived in the Township for ten years or less are more likely to indicate that adult programming should be a priority, and less likely to indicate that older adult programming should be a priority.



**Figure 15: If the Township were to provide additional programs or activities, which age groups should be a priority? (select all that apply) (n=360)**



Two-thirds of respondents (66%) indicated that there are specific activities that are not currently available (or they were not aware are available) that they would like to see offered in the Township. Respondents living in Rockwood and those with children or youth living at home are more likely to want more parks and recreation activities offered in the Township.

Open-ended responses suggest that swimming is the most common request, followed by the arena-based activities of a skating and hockey.

Figure 16: Are there any Parks and Recreation activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa that are not currently available? (n = 361)

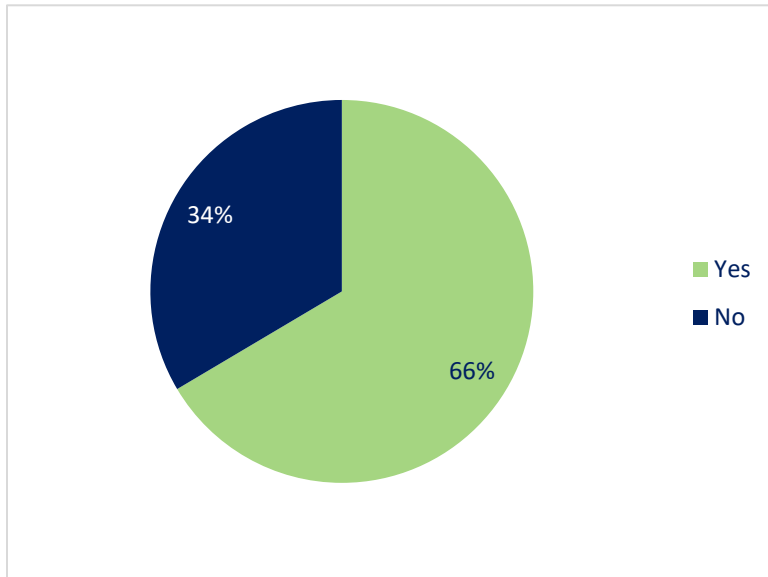
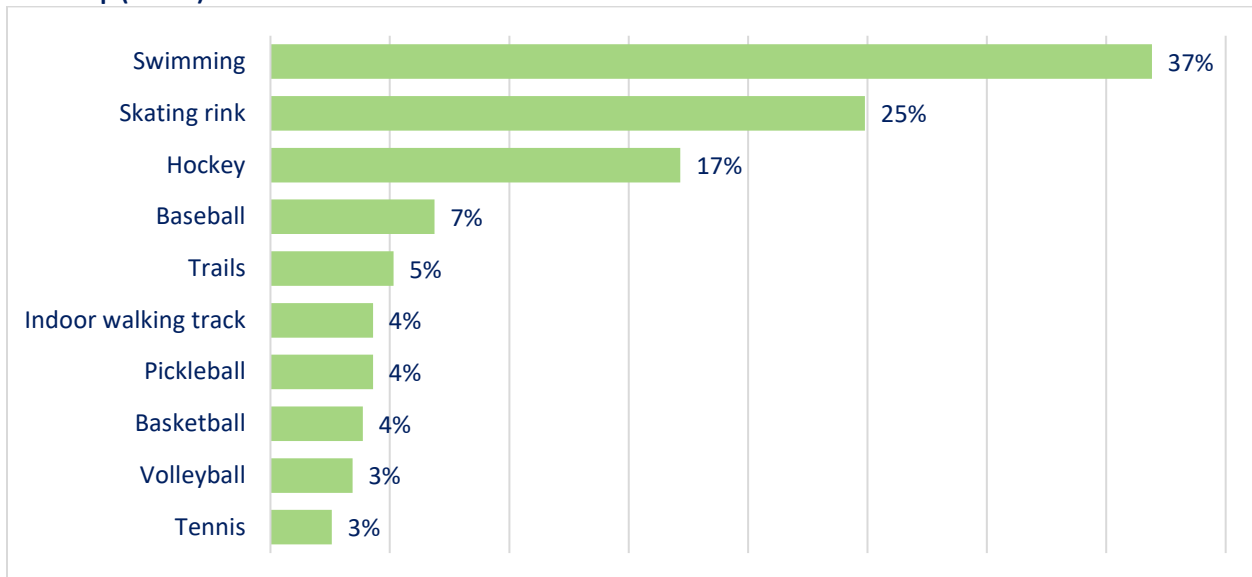


Figure 17: Please identify up to two parks and recreation activities that you would like to see offered in the Township (n=233)



The survey also queried about level of agreement to a series of statements:

- 82% agree that “The Township should offer more recreation programming at its community centres.” 7% disagree.
- 74% agree that “The Township’s parks and recreation services are affordable (74%).” 10% disagree.
- 71% agree that “The Township’s community and recreation facilities are conveniently located.” 26% disagree.
- 58% agree that “You feel well informed about the Township’s parks, facilities, programs and events.” 39% disagree.

Figure 18: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



"Don't know" responses are not shown.

### Multi-use Recreation Facility

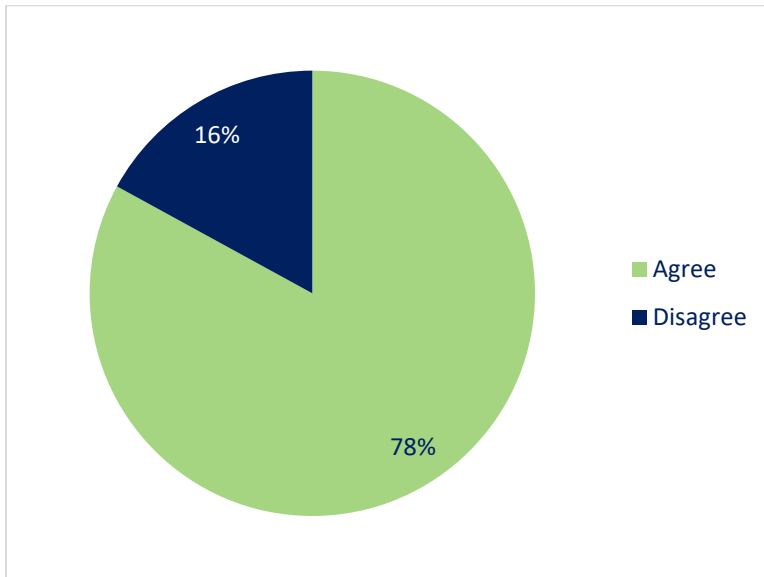
Priorities with respect to a possible multi-use recreation facility in the Township are illustrated through the two figures below. The survey introduced the topic by indicating that:

*"The Township is considering the future development of an indoor multi-use recreation facility in the Rockwood area, our largest population centre. The services and spaces within the facility have not been decided upon, but would focus on community wellness. To move forward, funding may be required from other levels of government. Such a project may result in a property tax increase, the amount of which would require further study."*

With this understanding, survey results suggest that over three out of four respondents (78%) agree that the development of an indoor multi-use recreation facility should be a high priority for the Township.



Figure 19: Do you agree that the development of an indoor multi-use recreation facility should be a high priority for the Township? (n=344)



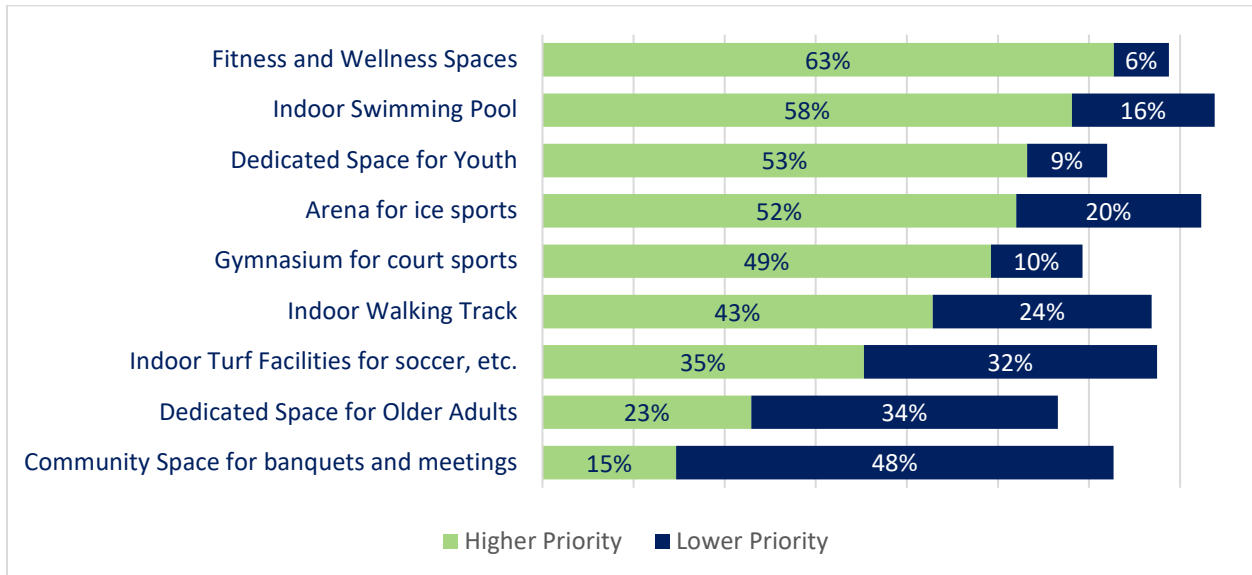
"Undecided" responses are not shown.

Respondents also identified the amenities they feel should be priorities in a multi-use recreation facility. Amenities with higher priority rates consisted of:

- Fitness and Wellness Spaces (63%)
- Indoor Swimming Pool (58%)
- Dedicated Space for Youth (53%)
- Arena for Ice Sports (52%)
- Gymnasium for court sports (49%)
- Indoor Walking Track (43%)



Figure 20: If the Township continues to consider an indoor multi-use recreation facility, which of the following amenities do you feel should be priorities? (n=325 to 332)



“Don’t Know / Don’t Use” responses are not shown.

Amongst the other high priorities specified by respondents (n=46), the most common categories consisted of:

- Tennis courts (11%)
- Pickleball courts (9%)
- Workout space (9%)
- Squash courts (7%)
- Bike trails (4%)
- Field Lighting (4%)



Respondents living in Rockwood and those with children or youth living at home are more likely to support the development of a multi-use recreation facility, including the provision of an arena and indoor swimming pool. Respondents that have lived in the Township for more than ten years are more likely to support the provision of dedicated space for older adults.

## Park Amenities

To guide municipal capital spending decisions, the survey asked about priorities for improving or developing a variety of amenities within parks. The highest priorities were those that can be used by all ages, that can be used on a self-scheduled basis, and/or that appeal to children. Over three out of four respondents identified the following as high priorities:

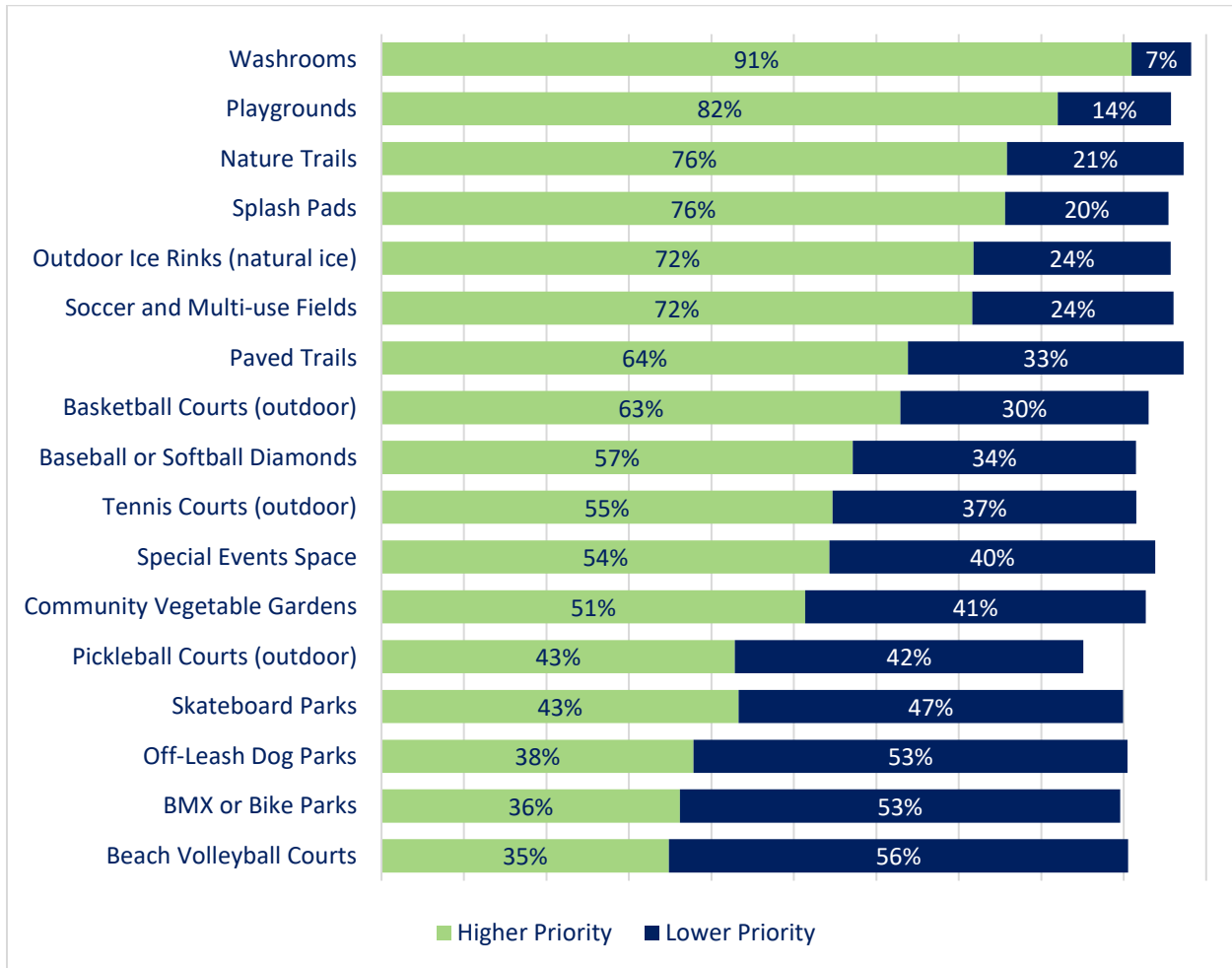
- Washrooms (91%)
- Playgrounds (82%)
- Nature Trails (76%)
- Splash Pads (76%)



Sports fields (soccer, baseball, etc.) rated relatively high in comparison to other municipalities where the consultant has done similar surveying, indicating that residents are placing a local priority on these amenities. Amenities that appeal to a narrower portion of the population (e.g., beach volleyball courts, bike parks, etc.) rated lower.



Figure 21: To assist the Township in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following amenities within parks? (n=325 to 331)



“Don’t know” responses are not shown.

Open-ended predominantly included requests for a swimming pool, hockey arena and field lighting. Respondents that have lived in the Township for more than ten years are more likely to support the provision of ball diamonds and pickleball courts, but less likely to support the provision of basketball courts. Respondents that have children or youth living at home are more likely to support the provision of splash pads. Respondents that do not have children or youth living at home are more likely to support the provision of community vegetable gardens and pickleball courts.

### Willingness to Pay

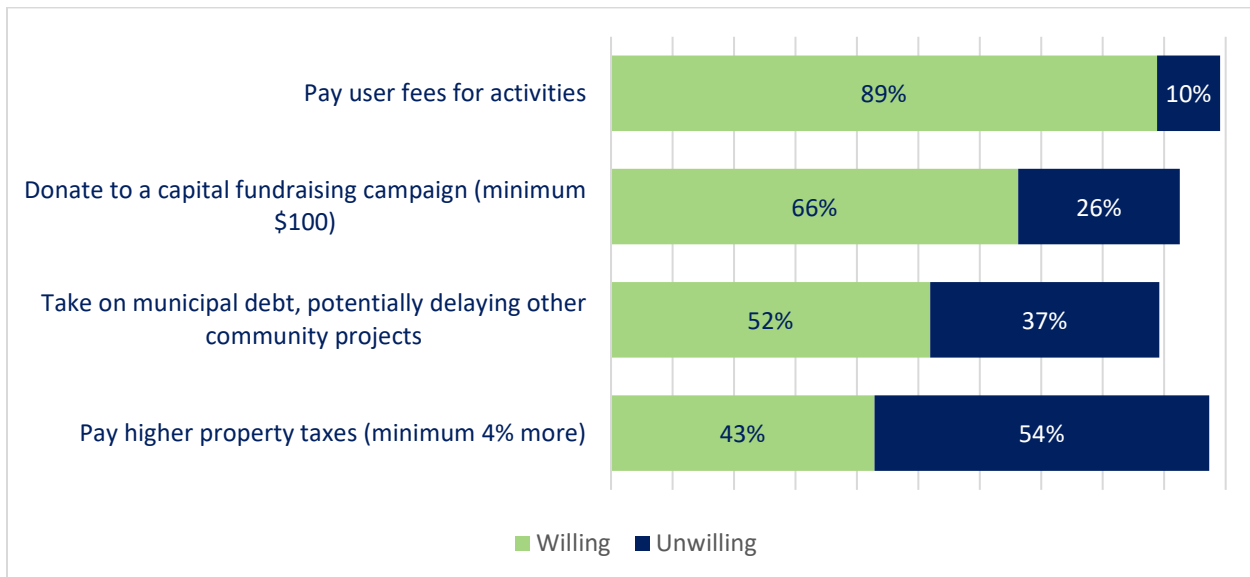
Guelph/Eramosa’s taxbase is limited and levels of service and facility provision must be commensurate with the Township’s ability to sustain them. To gain a better understanding of residents’ willingness to pay for new facilities, the survey posed different options for paying for an indoor multi-use recreation facility.

Two out of five respondents identified that their household would be willing to consider a variety of options to help financially support the development and operation of an indoor multi-use recreation facility in Rockwood. Most notably, this included:

- Paying user fees for activities (89%)
- Donating to a capital fundraising campaign (minimum \$100) (66%)
- Taking on municipal debt, potentially delaying other community projects (52%)
- Paying higher property taxes (minimum 4% more) (43%)

Opinion was largely split on taking on municipal debt (52% agree, 37% disagree) and paying higher property taxes (43% agree and 54% disagree). Respondents living in Rockwood, those with children or youth living at home, and newer residents are more likely to support paying higher property taxes and taking on municipal debt.

**Figure 22: How willing would your household be to consider the following options to help financially support the development and operation of an indoor multi-use recreation facility in Rockwood? (n=333 to 240)**



"Don't know" responses are not shown.

**Additional Comments**

The survey collected additional open-ended comments, with 147 responses received. Responses that were indicative of the most common themes included:

- "An indoor walking track, indoor turf soccer field, and indoor ice rink are huge priorities! As is an improved playground and swings at Rockmosa."
- "Lights at the soccer fields. We have beautiful fields and can't use them past 8pm starting mid-August."
- "We need facilities to keep our kids (particularly teens) engaged."
- "We would love to have our own swimming pool in Rockwood so as not to compete with all the other towns for community swimming lessons."
- "I would love to have more hiking trails within nature areas and an indoor swimming pool."

## Composition of Survey Respondents

The following demographic data was reported by those completing the community survey:

- The average household size was 3.4 persons. This is higher than the Township’s average of 2.9 persons per private household (2021 Census), indicating that families were slightly over-represented in the survey.
- It is estimated that the survey (372 responses) represents the opinions of approximately 9% of the Township’s population. The response rate is satisfactory and – when combined with other consultation tactics and inputs – provides a strong basis for future planning.
- Households of survey respondents included a greater number of children (0-9 years), teens (10 to 19 years), and adults (35 to 54 years) compared to the Township’s overall population. Residents aged 55-69 years were under-represented in the survey, which is common in these types of surveys.
- More than one-half (54%) of respondents have lived in the Township for more than ten years.
- Four-fifths (82%) of survey respondents from the Township live closest to the community of Rockwood. Respondents from Rockwood were more likely to have children and youth living within their households and were more likely to have lived in the Township for ten years or less

**Figure 23: Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories. (n = 279)**

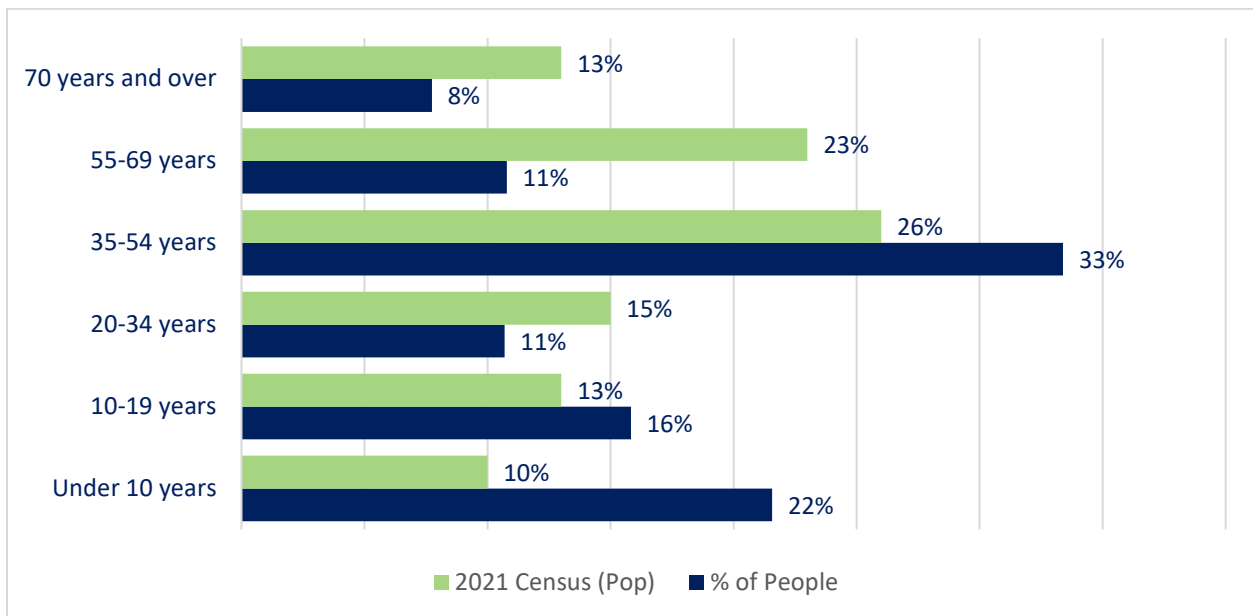




Figure 24: How long have you lived in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa? (n=340)

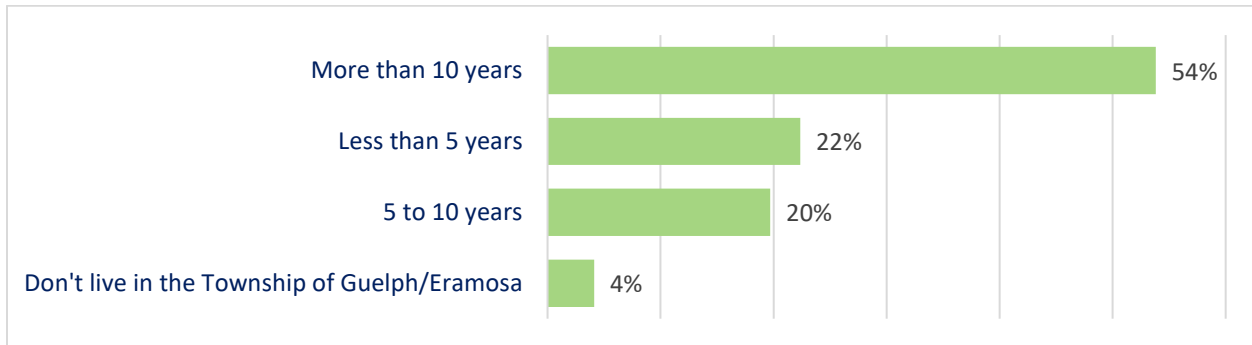
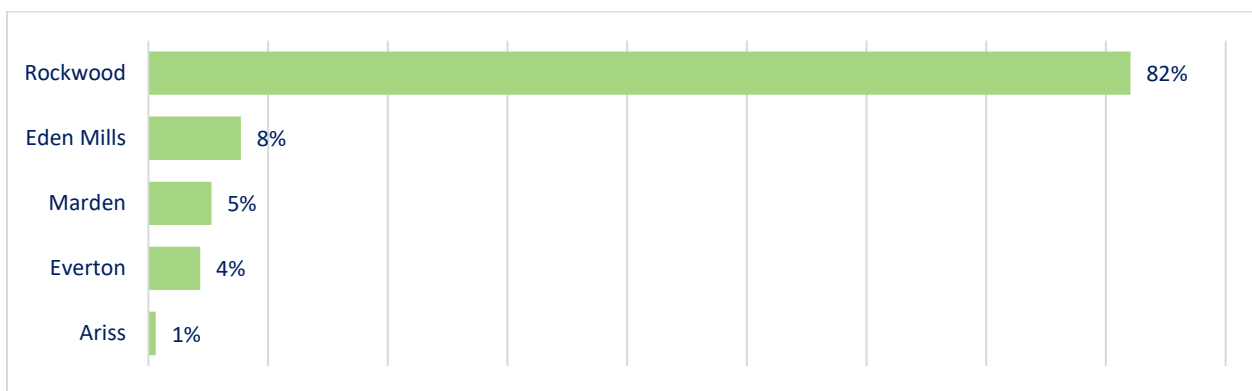


Figure 25: Guelph/Eramosa Residents Only: Which community do you live closest to? (n=323)



### 3.3 Online Input and Polling

A public discussion forum was set up through Mindmixer – an online message board and public engagement website – to provide information about the study, collect input, and facilitate discussion on several topics. As of July 1, 2023, the forum saw **79 participants and 253 interactions** (including 49 ideas) submitted on the questions and topics summarized below. Participants were able to post their own ideas and share their support for ideas submitted by other participants.

A complete listing of all ideas is contained in **Appendix A**. A summary of key themes is identified below.

#### 1) How can we improve the Township’s Recreation Facilities?

The crowdsourced idea receiving the greatest support was the addition of an indoor sports facility in Rockwood, possibly including an ice pad, swimming pool, walking track, gymnasium, and/or community rooms. Some of the reasoning expressed by respondents included:

- the Township does not have local indoor sport activities;
- traveling to other municipalities during winter months can be difficult;
- there is often limited space in other non-Township facilities, such as swim programming in Acton and Guelph;
- the Township lacks a place for the community to come together; and
- the Township lacks a hub to support teenagers and youth where they can hangout, develop skills, and work.

Adding soccer field lights (to support evening games and practices at Rockmosa Park) and improving park washrooms (for greater accessibility at Rockmosa Park, and for supporting tournaments and events) were also top suggestions.

## 2) How can we improve the Township's Parks?

Resident-submitted ideas receiving the greatest support included:

- Rockmosa Park needs its playground equipment to be upgraded and expanded with additional swings and a playground structure for the overflow of kids;
- suggest creating a direct route to the enabling garden in Rockmosa Park from the car parking lot for when the Older Adult Centre is closed;
- reinstating neighbourhood access to the Rockwood Conservation Area (GRCA), which was closed during the pandemic, affecting the many residents who already have passes and acted as trail stewards;
- adding a disc golf course, which is a relatively low cost and low maintenance feature serving a sport that is rapidly growing amongst all ages; and
- upgrading playground equipment at Lloyd Dyer Park (currently only a swing set and two teeter-totters).

## 3) How can the Rockmosa and Marden Community Centres better meet your needs? What types of programs are you interested in?

Only a few ideas were submitted on this topic. Suggestions included:

- PA and PD programming for kids;
- weeknight evening programs such as scouts, brownies, STEM classes, etc.;
- Senior's leagues with outdoor ice hockey, indoor ball hockey, flag football, badminton, baseball, volleyball, etc.; and
- keeping older adult programs running in the summer months, both indoors and outdoors.

## 4) What types of indoor spaces should the Township consider in a new multi-use Recreation Facility in Rockwood?

To identify features, activities, locations, and more, 51 respondents the spaces/activities that should be the highest priority. This question was also asked on the community survey and the top responses aligned across all consultation mediums. The results are as follows:

- Indoor swimming pool (36 votes – 71%)
- Gymnasium for court sports (35 votes – 69%)
- Arena for ice sports (33 votes – 65%)
- Fitness and Wellness Spaces (31 votes – 61%)
- Indoor Walking Track (31 votes – 61%)
- Dedicated Space for Youth Centre (24 votes – 47%)
- Indoor Turf Facilities for soccer, etc. (21 votes – 41%)
- Dedicated space for Older Adult Centre (16 votes – 31%)
- Community Space for banquets and meetings (13 votes – 25%)
- Other (6 votes – 12%)

### 3.4 Seniors' Workshop

An afternoon workshop with older adults from the community was held on April 27, 2023 at the Rockmosa Community Centre to introduce the Parks and Recreation Master Plan project and gather feedback. Over **50 people** attended the session, which was facilitated by the consulting team with the assistance of Township staff.

Five questions were presented and discussed to gain insight and information from this group. Both individual and group responses were recorded. The group responses were prioritized by participants, with key highlights summarized below.

#### Strengths of the Local Parks and Recreation System

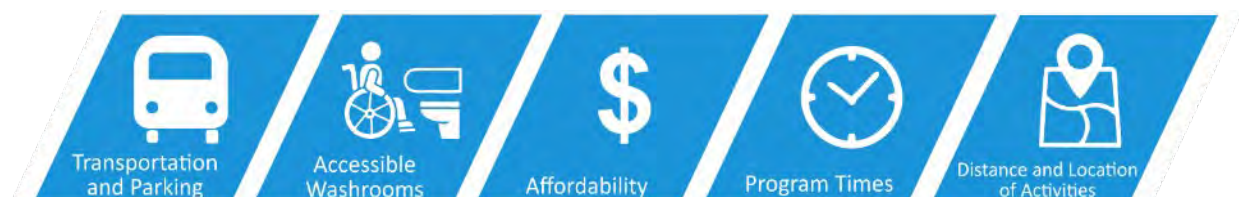
Participants identified various reasons of what they enjoy about Guelph/Eramosa's parks and recreation system.



- Many older adults spoke highly of the variety of programs and activities offered. They are noted as being affordable, inclusive, and accessible by many residents.
- Great communication was also discussed frequently through examples such as friendly and helpful staff, emails, phone calls, and newsletters.
- The walking trails were also mentioned by multiple people, with specific reference to the trails at Rockmosa Park.
- Participants also shared that they liked meeting new people, learning new things, and the Party in the Park events.

#### Barriers for Older Adults

While they enjoy the parks and recreation activities available, participants also offered insights into barriers that keep older adults from participating to their fullest extent.



- Transportation was the largest physical barrier noted, with many older adults unable to or uncomfortable with the idea of driving themselves. Shuttle buses, taxis, and carpooling services were recommended to increase accessibility for these residents. Others identified a greater need for parking in areas such as the Rockmosa Older Adult Centre.



- Participants also highlighted the limited number of both regular and accessible washrooms as a barrier. Accessible washrooms are noted to close early, and some wish they were kept open until dark to increase their use.
- Affordability is also stated as a barrier, with residents being selective of which programs they decide to participate in due to their costs. Proposed solutions include subsidizing program costs or creating free drop-in sessions.
- The availability of many indoor and outdoor programs for afternoon and evening times was raised as another barrier for older adults. They recommend using additional spaces such as churches or schools to increase availability and time slots.
- Distance was also discussed, noting that Rockwood is too far for some, with suggestions to hold events in Marden and other areas of the Township.
- Another important discussion surrounded a lack of computer skills which limits access to information and registration. Participants spoke of technology workshops where volunteers could teach older adults how to use the internet to access information.

### Improving Recreation Programs and Activities

Participants offered several suggestions to create new or additional programs and activities in Guelph/Eramosa.



- Many people discussed adding more sport facilities, with pickleball courts having the most group interest. Pickleball is an increasingly popular sport among various communities and age groups in Ontario. Other notable comments included swimming, an indoor cushioned walking track, bocce ball, lawn bowling, and multi-use courts for activities such as tennis and badminton.
- Attendees also expressed an interest in musical and artistic activities. General comments discussed the need for more entertainment year-round, in the form of trips to the theatre, more music in the park, dancing, and a music band shell. Movies in the park was also expressed by various individuals who enjoy watching films with others.

### Enhancing Existing Facilities and Space Needs

A broad range of ideas were expressed towards how we can use the existing facilities within Guelph/Eramosa.



- There was broad consensus that an additional community facility is desired by the community, which can provide multi-purpose spaces and more room for residents to enjoy. Many voices expressed the idea to keep Rockmosa as a space for meetings and receptions, orienting new sport facilities for a new community centre.
- Additional benches and picnic tables were suggested to improve outdoors spaces, with specific reference to Rockmosa Park. Swimming pools were also commented on frequently, with ideas to add therapy pools or more accessibility functionality in existing pools.
- Washrooms were again discussed as needing renovations or additions. A specific comment asked for more outdoor washrooms in Marden Park. A need for a greater quantity of washrooms is vocalized, alongside requiring longer hours of accessibility to these facilities.

### Working Together to Improve Recreation Services

Participants identified several ideas about how the community, Township and others can work better together to improve parks and recreation services in Guelph/Eramosa.



- Using various methods of communication will allow information to reach a greater number of residents. As not all older adults use the internet and may be less technologically savvy accessing online information, promoting recreational activities through flyers, phone calls, and the Wellington Advertiser on a frequent basis is the best way to communicate with these members of the community.
- Many also commented on getting the entire community involved in events, including families, children, organizations, and volunteers. This will allow more people to work together to provide the necessary services within the community. Additionally, collaboration between these groups allows for opportunities for fundraising events which can help subsidize costs of programs for those who are unable to afford them.

### 3.5 Stakeholder Input

Consultation was undertaken with parks and recreation stakeholders in Guelph/Eramosa, including sports associations, service clubs, community and cultural organizations, and more. Wide-ranging input was contributed by the 12 attendees representing **10 organizations** to inform the Master Plan.

**Table 4: Listing of Community Organizations Invited to Provide Input**

Community Organization	Provided Input
Rockwood FC	Yes
Rockwood Farmers Market / Community Garden	Yes
Rockwood Red Blacks	No
Order of the Bear	Yes
Guelph Slo-Pitch	No
Rockwood Lions	Yes
Rockwood Tennis Club	Yes
Pickleball	No
Guelph Township Horticultural Society	Yes
Perpetual Motion	Yes
Game On	No
Rockwood Men's Slo-Pitch	No
Rockwood Women's Slo-Pitch	No
REMBA (Minor Baseball)	Yes
Outdoor Rink Team Leads (6)	Yes (2)

#### Key Strengths

- Rockmosa Park is a great space for field and trail activities, as well as the farmers market.
- Marden Park is a large space with a lot of options to expand recreation facilities and trails.
- The Royal Distributing Athletic Centre is a tremendous asset.
- Township staff are personable and responsive to facility and service requests from groups.
- Growing interest in activities such as pickleball, soccer, youth baseball, seniors activities, community events and farmers market.

#### Trends and Barriers to Participation

- Many residents travel to other communities to access activities. There is a desire to see more programs offered to retain activities such as hockey in the community, whether by a covered refrigerated rink or an enclosed arena.



- The community's current supply of facilities in some instances can limit the number of registrants groups can offer (i.e., outdoor soccer fields, pickleball, etc.).
- Trails are well used and can benefit from volunteers assisting with maintenance to keep up with demand. There is an opportunity to better connect the Township's trails.

### Park Facility and Service Needs

- Suggestions for **Rockmosa Park** include:
  - Reconstructing the park washrooms, including barrier-free washrooms.
  - Adding a higher fence or netting to the ball diamond to prevent balls interfering with the adjacent parking lot, shuffle board court and public library.
  - Adding lights to the 11v11 soccer field; this was part of the original plan.
  - Installing LED lighting at the tennis courts and undertaking accessibility improvements to the clubhouse.
  - A lack of parking (with lights) was raised as an issue when multiple events are taking place at Rockmosa Park and the Community Centre.
  - Improving barrier-free accessibility to the lower level of the Rockwood Community Centre.
  - Adding a sign at the park to promote the Farmers Market and directional signage for the soccer fields.
- Suggestions for **Marden Park** include:
  - Expanding the trails system and adding more bridges.
  - Consideration of adding another ball diamond. It was noted that the ball diamond at Marden Park is under-sized for many adult teams.
  - The park could benefit from having its own washroom open during summer months (in addition to the one attached to the Library), and from having regular contact with community groups to draw more users to this location.
- There is interest in a **multi-use recreation facility** to serve local residents, including spaces for fitness and youth (space to hangout, participate, do homework, etc.).
- **Challenges** regarding the design and supports for outdoor rink sites were identified, such as a need for more level ground, lighting, water service, and more volunteers. There was a suggestion for adding a multi-use pad with lights at Valentino Park.
- **Strategies** to support local parks and recreation user groups include:
  - Holding regular forums to discuss issues, coordinate initiatives, and cross-promote activities and events in the community.
  - Encouraging more organizations (with contact information) to be included in the community guide was suggested as a way to promote groups within the community and attract more participants in local parks and recreation services.
  - Consideration of a non-resident rental fee to offset rising costs.
  - Using volunteers for trail maintenance.

### 3.6 Open House on Draft Master Plan

The Draft Master Plan was posted on the Township and project websites for public review in October 2023. Public feedback was collected through discussion questions posted on the project webpage, emails to the Township, and an in-person open house event at the Municipal Offices on November 8, 2023. Approximately 20 persons provided input through this phase of the project. A summary of feedback is shown below with more details contained in **Appendix A**.

**Table 5: Summary of Input on Draft Master Plan**

What do you like about the draft Master Plan?	What else should be considered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed MURF and walking track (2)</li> <li>• A larger seniors centre</li> <li>• Community input has been very well represented</li> <li>• Covered outdoor rink</li> <li>• Upgrades to playgrounds</li> <li>• Washrooms at ball diamonds and soccer fields</li> <li>• Dedicated pickleball court facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility improvements at tennis courts (3)</li> <li>• More dedicated pickleball court facilities (2)</li> <li>• Artificial turf soccer fields (2)</li> <li>• Solutions to current parking issues at Rockmosa Park (2)</li> <li>• Squash courts in new MURF (2)</li> <li>• Youth space, additional programming for children, arts and cultural activities (2)</li> <li>• 55+ activity room and extended programming (2)</li> <li>• Retaining the toboggan hill at John Joliffe Park (2)</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Summary of Key Input

Key input of the initial public engagement and research phase is summarized below. These themes are assessed further in subsequent sections – along with the demographic information, usage data, and trends – to inform the Master Plan’s recommendations.

1. **Parks and recreation are very important to residents of Guelph/Eramosa.** A broad range of residents participated in the community engagement process, expressing a high degree of interest in parks and recreation services and providing suggestions for future improvements. Residents indicated that parks and recreation services are critical to their health and wellbeing and that they contribute a wide array of benefits to community pride and social participation.
2. **Unstructured parks and recreation activities have a vital role in keeping the Township active.** Throughout the community engagement process, residents indicated a high level of interest and satisfaction with activities that are accessible and affordable for all, such as walking, unstructured play, and nature appreciation. Continued support was expressed for amenities that support self-directed recreation, such as community gardens, playgrounds, and walking trails. Because these activities can support participants of all ages, abilities, incomes, and schedules, they are appealing to the most amount of people and have an important role in keeping the Township active.

- 3. Special events are highly valued by the community.** Community survey respondents identified special events in parks as a top activity in the Township. Notable examples include Party in the Park and the weekly farmer’s market. Interest was expressed for more events, such as music in the park, dancing, artistic activities, etc. Community events and affordable activities help to keep the community engaged and are important sources of fundraising for local groups.
- 4. Responsive staff and personal touches are notable strengths.** Workshop participants identified communication with Township staff to be a strength of the local parks and recreation system. Participants found staff to be friendly, helpful, personable, and willing to assist them with services.
- 5. Transportation is the greatest barrier for many residents, including youth and older adults.** The Township’s geographic expanse is a challenge for those without ready access to personal vehicles as many higher order services and facilities are provided outside the Township in places like Guelph, Fergus, Acton, etc. Participants in the seniors’ workshop also indicated that many older adults are uncomfortable driving at night or in the winter and suggested options such as carpooling or shuttle bus services to help connect residents with services. This issue extends well beyond the realm of parks and recreation services and is a common challenge for rural communities everywhere.
- 6. Greater promotion was suggested in order to engage more residents in local parks and recreation activities.** Four-fifths (39%) of residents do not feel well informed about local parks and recreation activities. Ideas included a blend of online and traditional marketing materials to enhance awareness of local activities and community organizations.
- 7. There is demand for more indoor recreation programming and year-round activities for all ages. Many residents feel that an indoor multi-use recreation facility (MURF) in Rockwood should be a high priority for the Township.** Indoor recreation options ranked lowest in surveying and 82% want to see more indoor programs at community centres – programming for teens was a noted gap. Nearly four out of five (78%) respondents to community survey indicated support for a MURF and 43% were willing to pay higher property taxes to support it. The Township initiated preliminary plans for a MURF several years ago and is seeking additional input from the public through this Master Plan. The greatest amount of interest was expressed for fitness and wellness spaces (63%) and an indoor swimming pool (58%), although support was also expressed for youth space, ice arena, community rooms, and gymnasium space. Additional study will be required to establish a long-term vision and locally-appropriate strategy given the Township’s limited future growth potential.
- 8. Several capital improvements were suggested for the local parks system, mostly focused on Rockmosa Park and Marden Park.** Notable requests included new/improved park washrooms, soccer field lighting, updated playgrounds, ball diamond upgrades, and support for outdoor ice rinks.



# SECTION 4. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK





## 4.1 Vision Statement

A vision statement is meant to inspire and describe an ideal future state. The vision statement for this Master Plan strives to articulate and define the parks and recreation system desired by the entirety of Guelph/Eramosa. The proposed vision statement is representative of the community input and background information gathered from this Master Plan process. It recognizes that most residents view parks and recreation as essential services, offering significant individual and community benefits. The Township, community organizations, and residents should work together to ensure that all decisions related to parks and recreation directly support and/or advance this vision statement.

***We support active lifestyles, community engagement, and recreation opportunities for all ages through the coordinated delivery of locally appropriate services, spaces, and parks.***

## 4.2 Guiding Principles

The Master Plan's guiding principles are intended to be complementary statements that support the vision statement while reflecting the context and intended direction of the Township's parks and recreation services. These guiding principles should be used to inform and direct the Plan's recommendations as well as future decision-making.

### 1. Active Lifestyles

We will encourage and facilitate activities that promote health and wellbeing by activating our parks and facilities, enhancing connections with nature, and collaborating with others.

### 2. Community Engagement

We value locally-driven initiatives and will work to strengthen awareness, participation, and connections within Guelph/Eramosa and beyond.

### 3. Programming for All Ages

We will increase the number and range of activity choices within our parks and recreation spaces – including organized programs and self-directed activities – in line with changing community needs.

### 4. Locally Appropriate Spaces and Parks

We will optimize our current parks and recreation facilities and strategically invest in multi-use programmable spaces that align with local demand and resources.

### 5. Coordinated Service Delivery

We will promote good governance through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, pursuit of external funding, and shared delivery with others (such as volunteers, community groups, etc., where appropriate).

**SECTION 5. SERVICE DELIVERY AND  
PROGRAMMING ASSESSMENT**



This section examines the Township's service delivery model, such as a review of program offerings and services intended to strengthen organizational capacity in Guelph/Eramosa.

## 5.1 Recommended Roles and Responsibilities

There are numerous providers involved in the delivery of community services in Guelph/Eramosa, led by the Township's Parks and Recreation Department. The core role of this Department is to facilitate community participation in recreation through the administration of programs and events and operation and maintenance of facilities, parks, and trails.

The Township works to address gaps as they emerge, with the goal of maximizing participation in parks and recreation. In doing so, two key approaches are undertaken: (1) the **direct provision** of programs and services by the Township; and (2) the provision of a range of **community development supports** to local organizations and service providers. Consideration must continue to be given to ensuring that all residents are included, regardless of age, gender, income, background, etc.

As initially established in the 2013 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, an updated list of recommended service delivery responsibilities for the Department include:

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



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

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

### Recommendations

1. Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the **vision and guiding principles** of this Master Plan.
2. Continue to solidify the **Parks and Recreation Department’s role** as a park/facility provider, program provider and facilitator, and event coordinator through consistent messaging in all communications, budgeting, policies, and procedures.



## 5.2 Programming and Events

Recreation programming and events are made available to the community by the Township and community providers, often in partnership. These activities engage residents, support skill development and active lifestyles, and build important relationships within the community. Maximizing participation is an important goal of this Master Plan and everything the Department does should support resident access to a range of leisure pursuits, encouraging individuals to try new activities while enjoying the added benefits of participation.

Residents indicated that most Township-run programs are accessible and affordable, and expressed an interest in more unstructured activities and events (e.g., music in the park, dancing, artistic activities, etc.). With increasingly busy lifestyles, participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured, and self-directed participation options. Participation in adult recreational activities is also growing while municipalities seek new ways to engage youth in meaningful activities.

Traditionally, Guelph/Eramosa’s emphasis has been on providing facilities and renting them to others to offer activities and programs. With the development of the Older Adults Centre, the Township has evolved into more of a program provider role, with a primary focus on developing Active 55+ recreation



programming (e.g., fitness, pickleball, general interest, etc.) at this location, the Rockmosa Community Centre, and Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre.

Data on drop-in and registered programs and events provided by the Township are identified in the following table, along with participation figures for 2022/23. Over 36,000 drop-in visits and registrations were recorded – an impressive figure for a community of its size. This equates to an overall fill rate of 55% and, as this was the first year following the pandemic, the Township is already seeing higher usage rates through 2023.

**Table 6: Municipal Programming and Events (2022/23)**

Program Area	Participation	Fill Rate
<b>Drop In (Pre-Registered)</b>		
Monday and Wednesday Pickleball (Outdoor)	368	53%
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday Pickleball (Indoor)	528	50%
Shuffleboard	264	50%
Games for the Brain	70	67%
Silver Screening	70	40%
Nordic Pole Walking	522	50%
Always Stitching Together	52	40%
Track Walking Program	104	40%
Garden Club	110	50%
Bingo	108	75%
Who's Got Game/ Mah Jongg	78	38%
Euchre	320	50%
Darts	148	50%
Photography Club	35	50%
Chess	108	30%
Walking Track (RDAPC)	11,000	n/a
Tot N Play (RDAPC)	8,545	n/a
Walking Soccer (RDAPC)	2,922	n/a
Remote Control Airplanes (RDAPC)	68	n/a
Golf Range (RDAPC)	63	n/a
<b>Cooking Classes</b>		
Chef Emily Richards	60	75%
Wellness with Suzie	20	67%
<b>Workshops</b>		
Art Workshops with Vita	160	80%
Ukulele Workshop	36	40%

Program Area	Participation	Fill Rate
Pole Walking – How to (RDAPC)	30	71%
General Workshops	152	53%
<b>Events</b>		
Music in the Garden	150	63%
Christmas Event	30	60%
Valentines Event	30	60%
<b>Fitness Classes</b>		
Gentle Yoga	448	53%
Yoga	448	53%
Tai Chi with Fitness	168	40%
ABS, Core & More	120	40%
Fit Hits the Fan Progressive	224	53%
Fit Hits the Fan Gentle	120	40%
Strength and Stretch	224	53%
Bands and Bells	224	53%
DDPY Rebuild	168	40%
Use it Lose it tone it up (RDAPC)	1,848	92%
DDPY (RDAPC)	3,625	70%
DDPY Level 2 (RDAPC)	88	50%
DDPY Rebuild (RDAPC)	381	69%
Music N Motion (RDAPC)	689	40%
Walking Pole Dancing (RDAPC)	142	50%
Benefits of Bonefitness (RDAPC)	354	57%
Stroller Fit (RDAPC)	306	68%
Baby Yoga (RDAPC)	42	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,770</b>	<b>55%</b>

Note: The data includes programs and events offered between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023.



Opportunities to expand programs for older adults and other age groups are limited by the availability of space, particularly in Rockwood. The Township works in partnership with others (e.g., schools, camps, Rockwood Conservation Area, etc.) to offer more extensive programming in the area that expand beyond municipal places and spaces.

Input received during this Master Plan support the need for more diverse opportunities for all ages, including children and youth. Additional consultation identified the following specific program requests:

- special events
- outdoor skating
- aquatics (different times, specialized programs)
- arts programs (music, dancing)
- fitness programs (different times, specialized programs)
- inter-generational programs
- programs for youth
- outdoor programming

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

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

Some specific opportunities to achieve this mandate through programming include:

- **Focusing on children, youth, and older adults.**  
Interest is strong for activities that engage children/youth and older adults. As we recover from the pandemic, service to these age groups will be more important than ever in order to address growing issues of social isolation, physical inactivity, and mental wellness. Furthermore, a wider range of programming has been requested for children and youth as this group has more limited transportation options to access activities in communities such as Guelph. There are opportunities to accommodate some of these needs within existing parks and facilities (if supported by partnerships and additional staff resources); however, addressing the more complete range of needs will require additional space in the Rockwood area.
- **Offering convenient, drop-in activities.**  
A lack of time is often a main barrier to participation for all ages. Activities that are convenient, accessible, affordable, and relevant – like registered drop-in activities – have proven to be popular for accommodating busy lifestyles. Across the Province and in Guelph/Eramosa, exercise and fitness classes, sports such as pickleball, and activities for pre-school children and caregivers have been on the rise. The Township has done well to expand drop-in activities at the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre and must continue to offer these opportunities to all residents.

- **Expanding low-cost outdoor programming within parks.**  
Communities are increasingly animating their park spaces through programming and new forms of community engagement. Some examples include (but are not limited to) fitness in the park, food trucks, and cultural events like music, concerts, and plays. In 2022, the Township offered pop-up programming in parks supported by grant funding. Viewing parks as “outdoor living rooms” helps to broaden their scope of use and engages a wider audience, leading to experiential learning, participation, and community mobilization. By moving “indoor activities” outdoors, this also helps to address the shortage of indoor space.

The Department implemented new registration software in 2021. This system supports online registration and will also allow for improved tracking of participation trends. Analyzing participation rates provides useful indicators and may highlight any existing gaps; the Township should establish performance metrics to set a baseline for continuous improvement and illustrating the value to residents and the local economy. Useful metrics may include level of investment, participation rates, event attendance, grants leveraged, and user satisfaction (the Township regularly conducts surveys of users to gather feedback on potential improvements).

### Recommendations

3. Continue to work with the community to maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities through **affordable recreation programming** for children, youth, and older adults. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new program offerings.
4. Seek to expand **multi-use programming space** through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.
5. Support expanded **year-round park use, outdoor education, and programming** through community development activities, special event coordination, and partnerships.
6. Identify and track key **performance indicators and targets** that illustrate the value of parks and recreation services, such as (but not limited to) participation data from programs and local sports organizations and satisfaction levels for activities offered and enabled by the Township.





### 5.3 Community Partnerships

The Township works with community partners to provide the highest level of service to the public while maximizing resources. Examples of successful partnerships include strategic alliances with local service clubs for fundraising and facility operation (e.g., Rockwood Lions, Guelph Township Horticultural Society, volunteer rink committees, Rockwood Tennis Club, etc.), rental agreements with sports and community groups (e.g., Rockwood FC, ball groups, Order of the Bear, etc.), shared service arrangements (e.g., Older Adult Centre and Wellington County Library), and various corporate sponsorships (e.g., Party in the Park, etc.). Many of these arrangements are longstanding and informal.

From time to time, the Township may consider various arrangements with the private sector, non-profit sector, or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services to achieve the desired community and municipal benefits. The goal is to maximize the community's assets and increase service levels while sharing an appropriate balance of costs and risks. Relationships with outside groups may be considered when:

- the Township does not have capacity or budget for direct program delivery or facility management;
- there is an established provider/partner already working with the Township;
- the provider fills or augments service gaps that are a priority to the Township; and/or
- the provider is the preferred/specialist for an identified gap in program delivery.

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with the Township's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships provides a net benefit to both organizations and reduces costs to the municipality. Where possible, the Township is encouraged to work with community partners and in coordination with other public entities to implement recommendations contained in this Master Plan that would benefit from shared roles, responsibilities, and resources. It is recommended that the Township develop written agreements with community partners who may share public spaces or work collectively to offer programs and services.

The Township does not employ a standard approach for developing arrangements with outside groups or for responding to unsolicited proposals, especially propositions arising from the private sector or involving non-traditional levels of service. To assist the Township in evaluating current and future partnerships, the following criteria may be considered:

- The outcome of the partnership should be aligned with municipal values, mandate, and priorities.
- There should be an articulated need for the proposed program or service in the community.
- The financial and liability risks to the Township should be shared or reduced, with a minimum fundraising requirement from the proponent.
- The partner should be equipped and qualified to co-deliver the service through identified efficiencies, with the ability to reach an identified segment of the population.
- The quality of the program or service provided through the partnership should meet municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation.
- Unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals should be dealt with transparently and through a competitive process as identified in a procurement process.
- Accountabilities and responsibilities should be clearly defined and complied with.

- Annual reporting requirements should capture participation numbers, expenditure reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with departmental objectives.

Additional detail on the requirement for a proponent-led business plan when assessing unsolicited proposals for capital outlays is included in Section 6.4 of this report.

### Recommendations

7. Continue to **seek and support community partnerships** that service, reduce reliance on tax dollars, and increase resident access to needed parks and recreation services. Evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests (including a minimum fundraising requirement) using the criteria, principles, and findings outlined in this Master Plan.
8. Ensure that third-party partnerships are guided by **written agreements** that address the responsibilities of all parties and protect the public interest.
9. Continue efforts to maximize **community access to local school facilities**.
10. Explore community service initiatives with **adjacent municipalities** that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for Guelph/Eramosa residents.

## 5.4 Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the delivery of community-based parks and recreation activities and events; however, the number of volunteers and their commitment are declining. In 2018, Canadian volunteers devoted about 1.65 billion volunteer hours, down from 1.96 billion in 2013 – a 16% decrease in only five years.<sup>2</sup> The pandemic has further accelerated this trend.

The most important factor preventing individuals from volunteering in sport is “time or busy schedule”. Across Canada, more adults volunteer in an informal capacity (especially young adults), compared to a formal capacity (which is more common amongst older adults). The role of younger volunteers is vital to the sustainability of sport and recreation, especially in light of the pandemic and its greater impact on older populations.<sup>3</sup> In cases where volunteer involvement diminishes – a concern expressed by several groups in Guelph/Eramosa – the community will look to the Township to take on many of the responsibilities, ultimately leading to increased costs and the rationalization of service.

The Township values the contributions of its volunteers and supports their efforts. In 2022, Council passed a Corporate Volunteer Management Policy to guide the process of recruiting, retaining, and acknowledging volunteers. Among its many objectives, this policy recognizes individuals and organizations that go above and beyond in their volunteering. Some additional strategies that the Township may consider for growing the volunteer base include expanding inter-generational programs (e.g., youths volunteering with seniors) and creating a leader-in-training program for youth. Engaging younger volunteers must continue to be a priority as it not only helps to build skills, but can also lead to future volunteer and employment opportunities within the sector.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. 2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

<sup>3</sup> CFLRI. Monitoring & Tracking the Field: Volunteering in Sport. 2022.

**Recommendations**

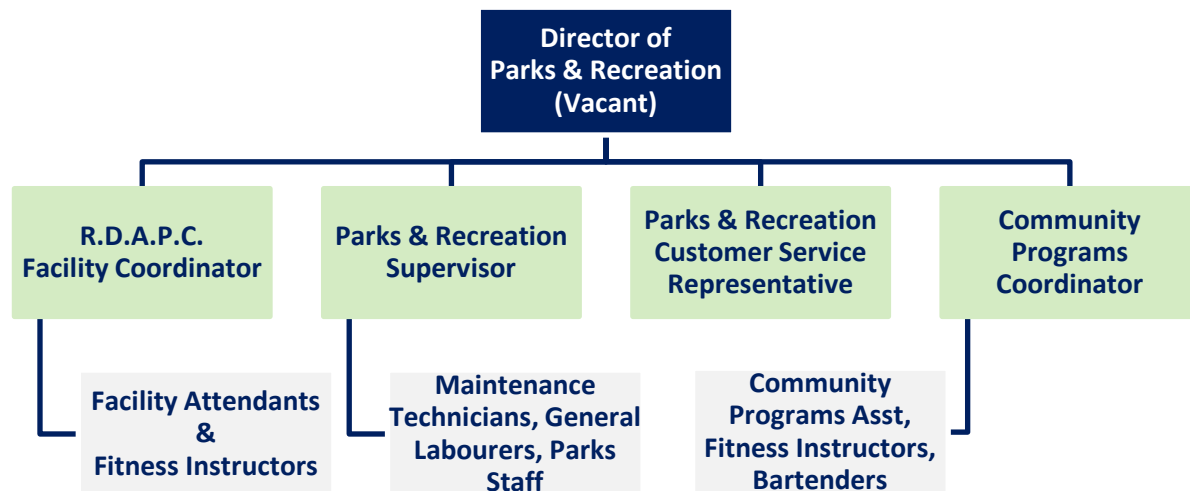
11. Continue to actively support **volunteers and volunteer-led community organizations** in the development and delivery of parks and recreation programs and services.
12. Explore options to use **volunteers for the maintenance of trails** and increased **volunteering opportunities for youth**.



**5.5 Staffing**

The Parks and Recreation Department is led by a Director and is supported by four direct reports: RDAPC Facility Coordinator; Parks & Recreation Supervisor; Parks & Recreation Customer Service Representative; and Community Programs Coordinator. Additional staff include a Community Programs Assistant (funded by an annual provincial grant), fitness instructors, facility attendants, maintenance technicians, seasonal labourers, summer parks staff, and bartenders. The Department is currently operating without a full-time Director.

Figure 26: Parks and Recreation Department Organizational Chart



Public and stakeholder input suggests strong levels of satisfaction with the Parks and Recreation Department and their efforts to support community activities. Staff routinely go beyond their typical duties and responsibilities to assist organizations and run programs. They are also responsible for the planning and delivery of the annual Party in the Park event, which is a considerable challenge for an already busy staff team. There is strong employee engagement and satisfaction levels within the team. The leadership team has worked to empower staff to readily suggest improvements for their respective disciplines and there is a sense of dedication and belief in the value of their services to strengthening the health of the community. This common vision has served to engage staff and create a strong Departmental culture.

Looking to the future, a greater emphasis on customer service, programming and events, and marketing can be anticipated due to the broadening of services and facilities, as well as the rising expectations of residents. The lack of full-time staff at the Rockmosa Community Centre has been identified as a potential gap, especially if the centre is re-imagined and programming is expanded. Aging facilities and more intensely developed parks are also leading to increased work requirements.

To inform longer-term decisions relating to staffing levels and skill alignment, the Department should continue to document maintenance standards and resultant service levels. The Department's staff development and training plan should also continue to be a priority to ensure that services are delivered by a qualified and high performing staff team.

### Recommendations

13. Review and document **Departmental maintenance and service levels** to support a sustained and strategic approach to identifying staffing requirements. Additional staff resources are likely to be required if the Township's parks, facilities, programs, and services are expanded.
14. Develop and keep current a **succession plan** to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.

## 5.6 Policies and Procedures

A range of policies, procedures, by-laws, and guidelines are necessary to ensure effective, orderly, and transparent delivery of services. As the scope of municipal services grows and new issues arise, the review and enhancement of internal and external policy tools is required. The list can be broad, from customer service to facility allocation, from fees and charges to parkland dedication, from health and safety to special events, and many more. The Township must continue to dedicate the time and resources to monitor and respond to the changing operating and legislative environment.

Specific policies requiring additional work include (but are not limited to):

- **Municipal Alcohol Policy:** This policy is in place to regulate the use of alcohol on municipal lands and buildings, including community halls. The Township has recently begun a comprehensive review of this policy last updated in 2008. This review was prompted by a noticeable trend toward more alcohol-related rentals by non-residents, sometimes resulting in large crowds and damage to the facilities. Between 2018 and 2022, 83% of hall rentals were from non-residents. An updated policy is necessary to ensure a safe environment for users, allowing residents to continue to enjoy the facilities and protecting the Township from undue risks (which ultimately



come at a financial cost to the community). One option would be to limit the Township’s exposure by significantly reducing the number of alcohol-related events which, in turn, would offer a greater ability to run community-based programming. The policy review is not intended to respond to the recently Liquor License Act reforms that allow municipalities to permit alcohol consumption in parks and public spaces, though this could become part of a future review.

- **Allocation Policies:** Allocation policies ensure fair and transparent access to priority groups such as residents. Some municipalities prioritize youth access during prime time and base allocation on registration levels, which allows for emerging groups to receive fair access to facilities. The Township does not currently have a policy specific to the allocation of facility spaces such as the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre and sports fields (instead relying on historical practices and allocations), but a more formal process may be required as community demand increases. Such a policy may be considered in tandem with the updated Fees and Charges By-law to align priorities for allocation/access with the fee structure, especially for non-resident and commercial users who do not contribute to the taxbase and/or profit from access to facilities (and thus should be charged higher fees and/or have more restricted access). The Township’s 2019 MURF Business Plan contained elements of such an allocation policy and would serve as a good starting point.



Further, as the Township expands its programming over time, additional policies and practices may be required to ensure that customer service and quality standards are in place. There are several quality assurance programs available to recreation providers, such as HIGH FIVE, which ensures that children’s programs are age-appropriate, meet safety and supervisory needs, are enjoyable, and offer some skill mastery. This program has recently been extended to older adult programming and is a suggested requirement for any full or part time staff working with older adults and seniors.

Digital technology and data are becoming more accessible and are being leveraged by both Township staff to create efficiencies and inform decision-making and by residents to access recreation opportunities. From online services, virtual programming, digital screens and wayfinding, people counters, and mobile and wearable technologies, the application of technology in recreation service delivery can assist in enhancing client experiences and engaging a wider user base. Specifically, the

Township’s recreation software and integrated online tools offer great opportunity for improved access to information and services.

### Recommendations

15. Review and update the existing **Municipal Alcohol Policy** to ensure a safe environment for users, allow residents to continue to enjoy the facilities, and protect the Township from undue risks.
16. Consider the development of **allocation policies** for the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre and sports fields to ensure that residents retain priority access to these spaces and that transparent procedures are in place to allow for access by non-resident and commercial users.
17. Review **policies and procedures** at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.
18. Implement Parks and Recreation Ontario’s **HIGH FIVE – Principles of Healthy Aging** to promote quality assurance in older adult recreational opportunities.
19. Continue to explore opportunities to **leverage data and technology** to improve community access to parks and recreation services, as well as the efficient and effective delivery of services (e.g., expanding online tools, mobile technologies, etc.).

## 5.7 Awareness and Branding

Consultation for this Master Plan found suggestions for greater promotion of programs and events to engage more residents in local parks and recreation activities (39% of households do not feel well informed about local parks and recreation activities). Due to the Township’s geography and “bedroom community” profile, it is a challenge to engage the entire community, especially those living in areas beyond Rockwood.

Currently, the Township disseminates information primarily through an annual printed community guide (for all municipal services, including parks and recreation), a website with updated information on parks and services, various social media channels, a monthly newsletter, press releases, and paid advertising. Overall marketing and communications are mostly a Departmental function, with several staff positions contributing. The Township’s social media accounts are managed by the Clerk’s Department, with both the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre and Rockmosa Older Adult Centre having their own Facebook accounts.

While these mediums would appear effective, there were requests for additional online, traditional, and non-traditional marketing. Specific examples include contact information for local organizations in the community guide, digital roadside signs at key locations (2023 initiative), flyers, newspaper advertisements, phone tree lists, and more.

To ensure that the Department’s communication and marketing tactics are effective in reaching the desired audiences, the Township should regularly test this through surveys or feedback forms of program participants. Recognizing that Guelph/Eramosa has a notable population of seniors, printed community guides should continue to be provided; however, as this is an annual publication that can

quickly become outdated, opportunities to migrate more real-time information online should be considered (e.g., digital roadside signs, etc.). Additionally, profiles of registrants through the Township’s new recreation management software may provide a lens that can be used for more targeted marketing. The key to effective marketing is to ensure that messaging is consistent, accurate, and in formats that are accessible to as many residents as possible, including continued messaging around the benefits of participation and community involvement.

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

### Recommendations

20. Continue to utilize and enhance a variety of **communication tools** to promote and gather feedback on parks and recreation services and initiatives. Options for expanding online and real-time information should be considered (e.g., digital roadside signs, social media networks, etc.), while maintaining and improving the printed community guide.
21. Maintain and publicly promote an **inventory** of local parks and recreation programs, events, and service providers (including contact information).
22. Host **annual forums** with community groups and residents to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks and recreation services.
23. Continue to prepare **feasibility studies and business plans** (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.

## 5.8 Fiscal Responsibility

Inclusive and affordable access to parks and recreation services improves both individual and community wellbeing. The Township strives to offer programs, parks, and facilities that can be used by all; however, user fees (along with transportation) can be barriers to participation for some residents. Reducing barriers to participation is a foundational goal of municipal service providers everywhere. While the Township does not directly offer an affordable access program, affordable pricing of programs is a priority and many community organizations promote financial assistance programs such as Canadian Tire Jumpstart.

The Township sets fees and charges for all fee-based municipal services, including park and facility rentals, admissions, and programs. The Fees and Charges By-law is approved annually by Council, with annual adjustments for inflation. The Parks and Recreation Department sets fees with consideration of historical levels and is sensitive to rates charged by nearby municipalities. Rates are intended to recover most of the maintenance and program cost for all leisure programs and services, but they are rarely set to recover full costs with the balance being subsidized by general taxation and other funding sources. Stakeholder and public input suggest that most local activities are relatively affordable. To provide

transparency and to guide future rate changes, the Township should undertake a user fee review to identify true costs and establish recovery targets for its major facilities and programs. The review should consider various categories of users (e.g., youth, adults, older adults, non-residents, commercial providers, etc.) and the desire to maintain affordable access to core programming.

The following tables examine the Department’s operating budgets for 2019, 2022, and 2023 (2020 and 2021 are excluded due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The Township’s recovery on its operating costs has ranged from 37% to 45% in recent years. When capital costs are included, this range increases to between 59% and 64%. These recovery rates are within the range we typically see for similar small urban/rural communities. Should the Township develop a multi-use recreation centre, a higher degree of subsidization may be required depending on the components and operating model.

**Table 7: Parks and Recreation Department Budgets (Operating)**

Year	Operating Expenditures	Revenues	Net Operating Expense	Operating Recovery
<b>2019 (actual)</b>	\$2,137,660	\$929,684	<b>\$1,207,976</b>	43%
<b>2022 (actual)</b>	\$2,327,768	\$1,056,680	<b>\$1,271,087</b>	45%
<b>2023 (proposed)</b>	\$2,360,472	\$865,304	<b>\$1,495,168</b>	37%

Note: Revenues and expenditures include transfers to and from reserves and do not include annual amortization or gains or losses on disposal of capital assets.

**Table 8: Parks and Recreation Department Budgets (Operating and Capital)**

Year	Capital Expenditures	Total Operating and Capital Expenditures	Net Operating and Capital Expense	Operating and Capital Recovery
<b>2019 (actual)</b>	\$1,227,729	<b>\$3,365,389</b>	<b>\$1,207,976</b>	64%
<b>2022 (actual)</b>	\$962,844	<b>\$3,290,612</b>	<b>\$1,271,087</b>	61%
<b>2023 (proposed)</b>	\$1,288,400	<b>\$3,648,872</b>	<b>\$1,495,168</b>	59%

Note: Revenues and expenditures include transfers to and from reserves and do not include annual amortization or gains or losses on disposal of capital assets.

In terms of capital spending, this Master Plan calls for continued financial investment and outlines a series of planning priorities for the provision of new and existing parks and recreation infrastructure for the next ten-years. Recent increases in the costs to develop, revitalize, and maintain parks and recreation facilities have been substantially greater than the rate of inflation, creating challenges for moving projects forward (such as the washroom replacement at Rockmosa Park). Costs are also rising due to the general public’s heightened quality expectations, accessibility standards, increasingly complex projects, etc.

The Parks and Recreation Department is generally able to maintain sufficient reserves to sustain the replacement of play structures, fleet, and equipment, but upgrades to aging infrastructure and



improved amenities require additional funding sources. The need for sufficient, stable, and predictable infrastructure funding streams will be increasingly important to support sound and proactive facility planning. Working collaboratively with the community and other partners will also be important to successfully keeping pace with escalating needs for improved amenities.

The Township has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires, underscoring the importance for undertaking the Master Plan in the first place. Although Guelph/Eramosa may experience various challenges in providing the applicable financial and human resources to achieve the Master Plan’s recommendations, it is expected that the Township will make every effort to implement these strategies through appropriate means.

Full implementation of the Master Plan will require the use of numerous funding sources, including (but not limited to):

- Development Charges
- Parkland Cash-in-Lieu
- Municipal Taxation and Reserves
- Fundraising, Donations, and Sponsorships
- Naming Rights
- Advertising
- User Fees and Surcharges
- Debenture Financing
- One-Time Grants
- Ongoing Government Programs and Transfers, such as Provincial Gas Tax Revenues (for active transportation projects)
- Partnerships

### Recommendations

24. Complete a comprehensive review of **parks and recreation fees and charges**, identifying direct and indirect costs and exploring the use of cost recovery thresholds for various services and categories of users (including non-residents and commercial providers). The goal is to ensure that costs are borne by users in a fair, equitable, and transparent fashion.
25. Continue to encourage **long-term financial sustainability** through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate application of user fees, and the pursuit of external funding. Where appropriate and consistent with Township policies and priorities, consider **alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches** such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, sponsorships and advertising (e.g., at the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre), and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.
26. Use this **Master Plan as a resource** in establishing the Township’s annual budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.





**SECTION 6. RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT**





This section reviews the Township’s provision of indoor recreation facilities through a qualitative and quantitative needs assessment focused on the next 10 years. A particular focus is placed on the demand for a multi-use recreation facility in Rockwood.

### 6.1 Recreation Facility Inventory Summary

Recreation facilities play an important role in the daily life of Guelph/Eramosa residents. The Township invests in infrastructure to promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles, skill development, athletic competition, community building, and economic growth. These not only have positive influences on residents, but also contribute to the community’s culture and local sense of pride.

The following table contains a summary of existing indoor facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Township of Guelph/Eramosa, sometimes in partnership with others.

**Table 9: Current Inventory of Municipal Recreation Facilities**

Facility Type	Number	Location
<b>Community Centres / Halls</b>	<b>3</b>	Rockmosa Community Centre, Marden Community Centre, Eden Mills Community Hall (privately-operated)  Note: excludes the Rockwood Town Hall and Marden Park House, which are leased for non-recreational uses.
<b>Indoor Athletic Facilities</b>	<b>1</b>	Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre (fieldhouse)
<b>Older Adult Centres</b>	<b>1</b>	Rockmosa Older Adult Centre

Additionally, the Township is home to six elementary schools (Eramosa Public School, Elora Road Christian School, Harris Mill Public School, Ponsonby Public School, Rockwood Centennial Public School, and Sacred Heath Catholic Elementary School) which may offer some degree of access to gymnasiums, classrooms, and outdoor amenities. There are no high schools in the Township.

There are few private recreational providers in Guelph/Eramosa aside from some small-scale fitness operators. Some area churches and places of worship provide gathering spaces and quasi-recreational activities for residents in the community.

Several municipalities adjacent to the Township provide notable and higher-order recreation facilities that offer drop-in and registered programming, facility rentals, etc. that are accessible to Guelph/Eramosa residents. The following table identifies public arenas, community centres, indoor pool facilities, and other major facilities available in adjacent municipalities (note: this is not an exhaustive list).

Table 10: Notable Municipal Recreation Facilities in Adjacent Municipalities

Facility Type	Number	Location
<b>Arenas</b>	<b>23</b> (plus one covered rink)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Guelph: Centennial Park Arena; Exhibition Arena; Sleeman Centre – event venue; Victoria Road Recreation Centre Arena; West End Community Centre Arena (2 pads)</li> <li>• Town of Erin: Erin Community Centre/Erin Centre 2000</li> <li>• Town of Halton Hills: Acton Arena and Community Centre (2 pads); Mold-Masters SportsPlex (2 pads)</li> <li>• Town of Milton: John Tonelli Sports Centre Arena; Milton Memorial Arena; Milton Sports Centre (4 pads); Sherwood Community Centre (2 pads)</li> <li>• Township of Centre Wellington: Community Sportsplex (2 pads); Elora Community Centre</li> <li>• Township of Puslinch: Optimist Recreation Centre (covered pad)</li> <li>• Township of Woolwich: Memorial Centre (2 pads)</li> </ul>
<b>Community Centres</b> (including multi-use centres, halls, cultural centres, seniors centres, etc.)	<b>17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Guelph: Centennial Park Arena; Evergreen Seniors Community Centre; River Run Centre; Victoria Road Recreation Centre; West End Community Centre</li> <li>• Town of Erin: Erin Community Centre/Erin Centre 2000; Hillsburgh Community Centre; Ballinafad Community Centre &amp; Park</li> <li>• Town of Halton Hills: Acton Arena and Community Centre; Mold-Masters SportsPlex; Gellert Community Centre</li> <li>• Town of Milton: Sherwood Community Centre</li> <li>• Township of Centre Wellington: Community Sportsplex; Elora Community Centre</li> <li>• Township of Puslinch: Optimist Recreation Centre</li> <li>• Township of Woolwich: Breslau Community Centre; Woolwich Memorial Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Gymnasiums</b> (excluding schools)	<b>7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Guelph: Centennial Park Arena; Evergreen Seniors Community Centre; West End Community Centre</li> <li>• Town of Milton: Mattamy National Cycling Centre; Milton Leisure Centre; Milton Sports Centre</li> <li>• Township of Puslinch: Optimist Recreation Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Artificial Turf Fields</b>	<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Halton Hills: Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre (Prospect Park) (owned/operated by Acton Agricultural Society)</li> <li>• Town of Erin: Erin Indoor Recreational Centre</li> <li>• Town of Milton: Milton Indoor Turf Centre (School field / domed in winter season)</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Pools</b>	<b>9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Guelph: Victoria Road Recreation Centre; West End Community Centre</li> <li>• Town of Halton Hills: Acton Lion’s Indoor Pool; Gellert Community Centre</li> <li>• Town of Milton: Milton Leisure Centre; Milton Sports Centre; Sherwood Community Centre</li> <li>• Township of Centre Wellington: Community Sportsplex</li> <li>• Township of Woolwich: Woolwich Memorial Centre</li> </ul>

Note: Excludes non-municipal facilities, such as schools, non-profits (YMCAs), universities, private businesses, etc.



## 6.2 Existing Community Recreation Facilities

The Township provides space for programs, community activities, and rentals at four primary facilities: Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre; Marden Community Centre; Rockmosa Community Centre; and Rockwood Older Adult Centre). Additionally, the Eden Mills Community Centre is owned by the Township but operated under agreement by the Eden Mills Community Club. The buildings are distributed across the Township and most are well equipped to accommodate meetings, gatherings, and some degree of physical activity (e.g., low intensity fitness, etc.). The Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre (RDAPC) is the Township's largest venue and primary location for more active indoor sports and recreation. There are no similar facilities located in proximity to Rockwood, the Township's largest settlement area.

In response to growing demand for more active indoor spaces, the 2013 Master Plan recommended that the Township consider opportunities to accommodate a broader range of uses within its community centres. Since that time, the Rockmosa Older Adult Centre (OAC) has been built and the Township has dramatically increased its range and extent of drop-in and registered programming for all ages, especially seniors. This has led to greater daytime use of the RDAPC, OAC, and Rockmosa Community Centre in particular. These expanded services have been well received by residents. However, facilities such as the Rockmosa Community Centre are being used for activities they were not originally designed for (e.g., despite having a low ceiling and no floor lines, pickleball is played in the hall) and are unable to accommodate additional daytime use, leading to concerns that certain activities and age groups (most notably children and teens) are underserved. Four-fifths (82%) of survey respondents want to see more indoor programs at community centres, with programming for teens being identified as a gap.

To help address these needs, the Township prepared a business plan in 2019 to advance the development of a multi-use recreation facility (MURF) in Rockmosa Park. The vision for the MURF was to create a community hub offering accessible year-round indoor activities for all ages consolidated into one facility. Despite being unsuccessful to date in receiving senior government grant funding for this initiative, the project has widespread support in the community. Additional analysis on community demand and options for establishing a multi-use facility is provided in the next section of this report.

Regardless of whether the Township continues to pursue the MURF project, there are opportunities to improve existing facilities to better address current and emerging needs. The table on the following pages provides additional information on each local indoor recreation facility, along with key challenges and potential opportunities for the Township and community to consider as they make operational and capital decisions over the next ten years. Building condition assessments for all facilities should also be prepared on a regular basis to inform capital priorities.

Table 11: Description of Existing Community Recreation Facilities and Options for Further Consideration

Facility Name	Description	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Rockmosa Community Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Located in Rockmosa Park (Rockwood)</li> <li>- 2-floor community hall with 300-person capacity</li> <li>- Features a large hall with stage and commercial kitchen; lower level contains activity/meeting rooms, offices, and storage</li> <li>- Main floor is fully accessible</li> <li>- Used for Township programming (e.g., pickleball, fitness, etc.), events, meetings, and rentals (e.g., Order of the Bear, Rockwood FC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facility is not designed for active community uses (e.g., pickleball, youth sports, etc.)</li> <li>- Lower level is under-utilized and accessible only by stairs</li> <li>- Unable to further expand daytime programming due to lack of additional space and staffing resources</li> <li>- It is an unstaffed facility, but its presence within Rockmosa Park creates an expectation that it be open to the public</li> <li>- Occasional parking challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land within the park has been earmarked for a future MURF, should the Township pursue this further, the Rockmosa Community Centre could be repurposed for other uses</li> <li>- If the Township does not pursue the MURF (or extends the project out well into the future), a business plan should be prepared to evaluate the viability of updating the Rockmosa Community Centre to better serve needs for active programming. Some options include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving accessibility to the lower level</li> <li>- Adding more program space (e.g., remove stage, convert coat and/or storage rooms, basement renovations, etc.)</li> <li>- Adding sport lines to the hall floor (and reducing rentals)</li> <li>- Exploring partnership opportunities (leased space)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Marden Community Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Located in Marden Park (Marden)</li> <li>- 1-floor community hall with 100-person capacity</li> <li>- Features a hall, kitchenette, and access to enabling garden</li> <li>- Co-located with County Library branch and Township Public Works facility</li> <li>- Fully accessible</li> <li>- Used largely for community rentals and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilization is low with opportunity for greater use should demand rise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Township is encouraged to expand rentals and direct/indirect programming in response to demonstrated needs</li> </ul>

Facility Name	Description	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Rockmosa Older Adult Centre (OAC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Located in Rockmosa Park (Rockwood); built in 2014</li> <li>- 1-floor older adult centre with ~40-person capacity</li> <li>- Features an activity room, kitchenette, and access to enabling garden</li> <li>- Co-located with County Library branch</li> <li>- Fully accessible</li> <li>- Used for drop-in and registered Township programming for older adults age 55+ (members and non-members); also available for community rental on evenings and weekends</li> <li>- Available to be rented for private events on evenings and weekends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The OAC is small and unable to meet the active recreational needs of older adults; it is not connected to the Rockmosa Community Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the Township pursues a multi-use recreation facility, seniors space could be integrated within the new facility and alternate uses found for the current OAC (e.g., library expansion, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre (RDAPC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Located in Marden Park (Marden) and staffed by the Township</li> <li>- Built in 2010, the RDAPC is a 56,000sf multi-purpose recreation facility that contains an indoor artificial turf sports field (210' x120'), rubberized perimeter walking track (210-metre 4-lane), change rooms, activity room, and upper level viewing gallery</li> <li>- Used for drop-in and registered Township programming (e.g., fitness, walking, preschool, etc.), sport field rentals, and events</li> <li>- Serves a diverse range of uses and users, including markets outside of Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Summer use of turf field is low (but fully booked during prime times November to April)</li> <li>- Artificial turf is original and requires replacement (reserve fund)</li> <li>- Noted limitations include storage and lack of a larger lounge area for informal gatherings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to expand daytime and summer programming in response to demand</li> <li>- Township to ensure that residents receive fair access to the facility (an allocation policy is recommended), while still benefitting from revenue generated from regional users</li> <li>- Capital improvements may be undertaken to address challenges (new turf, storage expansion)</li> </ul>

Facility Name	Description	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Eden Mills Community Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2-floor community hall owned by the Township; built in 1916; main floor is accessible (lift)</li> <li>- Operated by non-profit volunteer group under agreement with the Township</li> <li>- Features a hall (120-person capacity) with bar and stage on the second level; main floor offers a meeting room, club room, and kitchen</li> <li>- Used for community programs, events, rentals, meetings, etc.; usage is community-based and responsive to local interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Although it is an older facility, it serves as the centre of the village and – as a net zero facility – promotes Eden Mills’ goal of being a carbon neutral community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continues to be operationally self-sufficient; fundraising is typically sought for capital improvements</li> <li>- A continuation of the current operational model is anticipated</li> </ul>



### 6.3 Future Multi-use Recreation Facility

#### Overview

The provision of high quality, multi-use facilities encourage physical and social activity among all age groups, while also creating opportunities to build community. To enhance convenience and cost recovery, most municipalities – including Guelph/Eramosa – are striving to centralize multiple recreational and community components under one roof within multi-use facilities. There are a range of benefits of multi-use venues, including the creation of a “one-stop” destination where all household members can gather and engage in activities, thereby contributing to sport development, tourism, and operational efficiency. Increasingly, these facilities are being designed as hubs that provide a central access point to a range of community and social services, often in partnership with other agencies.

#### Project Details

Through the expansion of Rockmosa Park, the Township has secured land for a future recreation amenity, currently earmarked as a multi-use recreation facility (MURF). Due to the significant cost of construction and Guelph/Eramosa’s limited tax base, it is likely that external funding will be needed to develop such a facility.

With a current population around 5,500 residents, Rockwood is still growing and on track to exceed 6,100 residents by 2041. The catchment area of such a facility would extend to local communities such as Eden Mills and Everton, with the potential for a secondary market beyond the Township’s boundaries.

In 2019, Township Council supported a grant application for the construction of a then estimated \$18 million recreation facility consisting of an indoor ice surface, gymnasium, indoor walking track, older adult centre, youth centre, programming space, and supporting amenities. While this grant was not successful, support for the project remains and Council wishes to use the input received through this Master Plan to bolster a future grant request, should a suitable opportunity become available.

#### Master Plan Input

As noted earlier in this report, there appears to be substantial community support for the development of a multi-use facility in Rockwood – nearly four fifths (78%) of survey respondents agree that the development of MURF should be a high priority for the Township. Such a facility could offer new activity spaces and programs to the community, while replacing the Rockmosa Community Centre and Older Adult Centre.

From the Master Plan survey and consultations, interest was highest in the following amenities:

- fitness and wellness spaces
- indoor swimming pool
- dedicated space for youth
- arena for ice sports
- gymnasium for court sports
- indoor walking track

**Analysis**

Past studies have identified a gap in indoor recreational and community space in the Rockwood area, particularly for younger residents, families, and active older adults. Guelph/Eramosa residents have always travelled outside of their community for indoor recreational pursuits. The area also lacks a “bumping space” and “community hub” where residents can foster and cultivate a strong sense of community, promote health and wellness in the community, and support the needs of local residents on a year-round basis. These observations were also confirmed through the Master Plan’s consultation process.

The potential benefits of the proposed facility are noted in the Township’s 2019 Operation and Business Plan:

*“The success of the building will be based on its community connection. Residents can be proud of their community; its facilities, spaces and opportunities it offers. Recreation and leisure opportunities will be accessible, connecting and including individuals and families. Fitness and wellness programming will be available to all ages and ability levels. The complex will foster non-competitive/recreational sports for youth, teens and adults while also creating multi-generational opportunities for programming and socialization. Special consideration on programming for populations facing barriers to participation (physical, financial, social) will be a priority as currently this is lacking in the community.”*

The following table provides updated analysis and considerations for the major components originally contemplated for the MURF. Based on the local input and demand factors, the focus of the facility should be on year-round indoor drop-in and programed activities for all ages. While rentals will present some opportunity to realize increased revenues, the location and scale of the facility suggests that programming to local residents will be the primary factor behind its success. These services will need to be supported by additional Township staffing resources and community partnerships.

**Table 12: Key Considerations for Potential Facility Components within the Proposed Multi-use Recreation Facility**

Component	Demand Factors and Key Considerations
<b>Gymnasium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gymnasiums have become an anchor component of most new municipal recreation centres. They can accommodate a broad range of activities, including active sports (e.g., basketball, volleyball, pickleball, etc.), large fitness classes, free play, and events and gatherings. Most of these activities cannot occur within the current Rockmosa Community Centre due to the facility’s design and dimensions, as well as its limited capacity to accommodate additional use.</li> <li>- The Township does not have a municipal gymnasium within its inventory. School gymnasiums provide some community access after school hours, but are not available during the daytime (the most desired time for older adult programs) and evening/weekend access is limited.</li> <li>- Space is needed to accommodate registered and drop-in court sports for youth and adults, as well as daytime programs for pre-school aged children and seniors.</li> <li>- <b>A double gymnasium (approximately 94 by 50 feet, divisible in two by a curtain) would be appropriate to consider as a base component within a future recreation centre.</b></li> </ul>

Component	Demand Factors and Key Considerations
<p><b>Multi-use Community Space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multi-purpose spaces can be used for a range of active recreation activities (e.g., fitness, dance, martial arts, etc.), as well as a variety of other uses (e.g., general interest programs, meetings, etc.). Incorporating multi-purpose space within community facilities offers efficiencies in cross-programming, staffing, construction, and other factors.</li> <li>- There are currently no private fitness providers in the Rockwood area and strong demand was expressed for expanded fitness and wellness opportunities. Group fitness programming has become one of the fastest growing segments of the fitness sector, more so than traditional weight-training, as these programs are designed to be fun and social activities.</li> <li>- <b>Multi-use program rooms should be included in any future recreation centre. An equipment-based fitness centre is not a recommended level of service.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Indoor Walking Track</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walking is the most popular recreational pursuit and an indoor track provides a safe and controlled environment for walking year-round. While indoor walking tracks are not likely to generate revenue, they promote personal physical activity opportunities and promote healthy communities.</li> <li>- Building on the success of the indoor track at the RDAPC, the Township anticipates that up to 300 users per day could utilize a track if one was provided at the proposed MURF. A track is a highly anticipated feature of the proposed complex.</li> <li>- <b>An indoor walking track should be included as a complementary amenity, possibly encircling the proposed gymnasium.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Dedicated Space for Youth and/or Seniors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programming for both youth and older adults are primary drivers for the MURF and were recommended as part of the 2013 Master Plan.</li> <li>- Members of older adult centres tend to be healthier and have strong activity patterns that help them remain physically well. However, the current Older Adult Centre is under-sized and cannot accommodate growing demands for more active sports and activities. With a growing and evolving older adult and senior population, there is a shift away from traditional programs towards those that focus on active living, health and wellness, education, etc. Offering a “home base” for older adult activities within the MURF will build upon current successes and increase capacity for the future. The existing OAC could be leased back to the County or used for other purposes if this space was integrated into the MURF.</li> <li>- Access to community wellness and recreation services are critical to the physical, mental, and emotional development of people during their formative years. The lack of activities, events, and “hangout space” for youth is a gap in Guelph/Eramosa, with most being unable to travel independently to other communities. Services that provide skill development and positive reinforcement are needed to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health among youth. An operational agreement with a suitable service provider could be considered should the Township wish to outsource the youth centre’s operation.</li> <li>- Due to their different patterns of use, there is the potential for the same room(s) to be used for both older adult services (daytime) and youth services (late afternoon and evening). A comfortable and welcoming space is essential, supported by storage for equipment, games, etc.</li> <li>- <b>Space for youth and older adults should be included in the proposed MURF, complemented by other recommended components such as the gymnasium and multi-use community rooms.</b></li> </ul>

Component	Demand Factors and Key Considerations
<b>Indoor Swimming Pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are no public swimming pools (indoor or outdoor) in Guelph/Eramosa. Residents seeking indoor swimming opportunities are likely to use facilities in nearby communities (e.g., Guelph, Acton, Fergus, etc.). Nevertheless, resident interest in an indoor pool is high. The community survey found that 58% of respondents identified an indoor swimming pool as a high priority for a future MURF.</li> <li>- Requests for indoor pools are common in smaller communities as swimming is a (potentially) year-round activity that appeals to people of all ages and abilities. However, indoor pools are more commonly provided in communities with larger populations (typically 30,000+) or those in more remote geographic locations; Guelph/Eramosa has a population level that is less than half of this threshold.</li> <li>- Further, the decision to provide an indoor aquatic centre is heavily influenced by cost, as municipal indoor pools are highly subsidized facilities that require annual tax support within the range of \$750,000 (this would be equivalent to approximately 9% of the Township’s 2023 tax levy) along with substantial construction costs.</li> <li>- <b>There is insufficient demand to warrant the development of an indoor aquatic centre in Guelph/Eramosa into the foreseeable future.</b> Options may be explored to partner with other agencies to offer summertime swim lessons at conservation areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Ice Arena</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Township’s original business plan for a MURF included the development of an NHL-size indoor ice rink. Currently, residents seeking to play in recreation and competitive ice sports travel to Guelph, Fergus, Acton, and beyond.</li> <li>- Arenas are a staple of Canadian sport and many small communities. However, shifting demographics, leisure interests, and economics are leading to fewer new arenas being built and some older facilities being shuttered across Ontario. While usage can be strong during prime times (typically weekday evenings), daytime and shoulder hours are in low demand. Usage is largely driven by organized hockey, figure skating, and ringette clubs rather than public skating. Off-season use is sparse in most communities, although they can be used for lacrosse, ball hockey, tradeshow, etc.</li> <li>- Governing bodies for Ontario youth hockey have indicated to the Township that Rockwood does not have the population to become a designated centre, meaning that any organized use would have to come from unsanctioned leagues, private hockey schools, or overflow from other communities. While this may present a partnership opportunity, there is a significant financial risk to the Township to include an indoor arena in the MURF concept.</li> <li>- The Township also previously considered the potential for a covered outdoor rink (such as the one in Aberfoyle), but dismissed this due to concerns over financial performance (lack of revenue) and climate trends towards warmer winter temperatures that would limit the winter season. If the Township does not pursue an enclosed arena, the option to develop and operate a smaller outdoor (covered) refrigerated ice surface should be strongly considered. This option would be significantly more reliable than a natural rink and more cost effective than a larger indoor arena, address resident requests for leisure and recreational skating, and offer opportunity for all-season use (e.g., pickleball, basketball, ball hockey, etc.) during warmer months. Covering the artificial rink would provide for an extended season (60+ days per year, depending on weather and temperature variation) and improved ice conditions (and shade in the summer).</li> <li>- <b>Current growth and usage trends within the community do not appear to support an indoor arena. The development of a smaller covered (open air) outdoor refrigerated ice rink would provide local skating and shinny opportunities and present less financial risk. A complete business case would need to be prepared as part of any grant application for the consideration of the construction of an indoor arena or outdoor covered rink.</b></li> </ul>



Component	Demand Factors and Key Considerations
<b>Other Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are a wide range of other potential components and uses that can be considered within a multi-use recreation centre. For example, a request was received for squash courts and indoor tennis courts, while some communities also provide indoor turf field (such as at the RDAPC), cultural spaces, community kitchens, equipment-based fitness centres, and more. Due to the size of the primary market, it is unlikely that any of these uses would be feasible, although the Township is encouraged to explore opportunities for new and emerging activities through the process recommended in Section 6.4 of this Master Plan (including support from a business plan acceptable to the Township).</li> <li>- <b>No additional facility spaces are recommended for the MURF at this time.</b></li> </ul>

### Next Steps

The development of a MURF remains a worthy goal and one that would have wide community benefits for Guelph-Eramosa. However, given Guelph/Eramosa's size and limited growth capacity, it is vital that any major capital project be affordable to the community. Recognizing that a substantial funding shortfall has the potential to alter Guelph/Eramosa's plans for a MURF, it is important for the Township to understand the financial impacts caused by trends in today's construction market.

The construction estimate of \$18 million for the MURF is from 2019 and is now outdated. Since that time, the construction industry in Ontario and across the globe has experienced rapidly accelerating cost escalations at unprecedented rates. Both building material and labour prices have more than doubled in some markets and pricing remains volatile, partly driven by historically high inflation rates. Added costs for design and capital construction can be anticipated should the Township continue to pursue the proposed MURF, though project scoping (i.e., reducing the size or level of proposed amenities, as recommended above) could help to reduce this impact. It is recommended that the Township update the MURF business plan to reflect the input received through this Parks and Recreation Master Plan and subsequent directions, to prepare updated capital and operational costing, and to establish a funding strategy that can be used to inform future grant proposals. At the appropriate time, additional consultation may take place to update the community on these directions and seek input on final facility design.

### **Recommendations**

27. Continue to pursue the development of a **multi-use recreation facility in Rockmosa Park**, with primary components consisting of a gymnasium, walking track, multi-use community space, and space for youth and seniors (note: although previously supported, an indoor ice arena is not currently viewed as viable). Key steps include: (a) Establish and contribute to a **capital reserve** for the development of the MURF and actively seek **grants** and partnerships to support the project; and (b) Update the **business plan** for the proposed MURF to reflect the directions of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan, prepare updated capital and operational costing, and establish a funding strategy that can be used to inform future grant proposals. Should the Township not pursue the MURF (or extend the project out well into the future), a business plan should be prepared to evaluate the viability of updating the Rockmosa Community Centre to better serve needs for active programming.

## 6.4 Other Facility Types

The Township may receive requests regarding new facility types that are not identified in this plan. In these events, the Township should be prepared to address these requests on a case-by-case basis until such time as an accepted standard emerges. Generally, the development of these types of facilities should only be undertaken with the cooperation and involvement of interested groups.

In the interest of providing facilities and recreation options that support healthy, active lifestyles for residents, the Township should be open to exploring and discussing opportunities for new and emerging activities. While it is possible that participants in specialized recreation activities may desire additional facilities in the future, this demand is often representative of a relatively small group of residents. This Master Plan may be used as a starting point in determining if a proposal serves a priority need for the community.

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

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

### Recommendations

28. Evaluate **requests for facilities and services** that are not part of the Township's core mandate on a case-by-case basis after measuring them against this Plan's principles and goals. **Unsolicited proposals** should be supported by a proponent-led market assessment and business plan that demonstrates why the Township should be involved in the delivery of a non-core service.



**SECTION 7. PARK FACILITY ASSESSMENT**





This section identifies needs and considerations for the outdoor recreation and parks facilities in Guelph/Eramosa, such as playgrounds, sport courts, sport fields, and more.

## 7.1 Park Facility Inventory Summary

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa possesses a wide variety of facilities and park spaces for its community to participate, gather, and stay active. The following table provides a summary of existing outdoor facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Township of Guelph/Eramosa.

**Table 13: Current Inventory of Municipal Park Amenities**

Facility Type	Number	Park Location
<b>Trails</b>	<b>various</b>	Municipal trails: Indian Trail, Marden Park Trail, Rockmosa Park Trail, plus various neighbourhood-level trails in Rockwood  Notable non-municipal trails: Rockwood and Guelph Lake (GRCA), Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Kissing Bridge Trailway
<b>Soccer fields</b>	<b>10</b>	Marden Park (two 11v11, one with lights), Memorial Park (one 11v11), Rockmosa Park (one 11v11, three 9v9, two 7v7, one 5v5)
11v11	4	
9v9	3	
7v7	2	
5v5	1	
<b>Ball Diamonds</b>	<b>4</b>	Lloyd Dyer Park (1 lit), Marden Park (1 lit), Memorial Park (1 unlit; not actively permitted), Rockmosa Park (1 lit)
<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>10</b>	Cross Creek Park, David Masson Park, James Lynch Park, John Jolliffe Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, Marden Park, Max Storey Park, Memorial Park, Rockmosa Park, Valentino Park
<b>Splash Pads</b>	<b>1</b>	Rockmosa Park
<b>Skateboard Parks</b>	<b>1</b>	Rockmosa Park
<b>Outdoor Courts</b>	<b>10</b>	Basketball: James Lynch Park (full), Lloyd Dyer Park (full), Memorial Park (half), Valentino Park (full)
Basketball	4	
Beach Volleyball	1	Beach Volleyball: Marden Park (1)
Pickleball	2	Pickleball: Rockmosa Park (2 lit, shared with tennis)
Tennis	3	Tennis: Rockmosa Park (3 lit) – maintained by Rockwood Tennis Club
<b>Outdoor Ice Rinks</b>	<b>7</b>	Cross Creek Park, David Masson Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, Max Storey Park, Memorial Park, Rockmosa Park, Valentino Park
<b>Off-Leash Dog Parks</b>	<b>1</b>	Rockmosa Park



Facility Type	Number	Park Location
Community Garden Plot Locations	2	Memorial Park, Valentino Park
Enabling Gardens	2	Marden Park, Rockmosa Park
Toboggan Hills	4	Cross Creek Park, John Jolliffe Memorial Park, Memorial Park, Rockmosa Park

In addition to these municipal facilities, the community also has access to amenities owned and managed by other providers (note: some may have limited access). These include:

- The **Rockwood Conservation Area** is frequently used by the Township’s parks and recreation users. This conservation area is maintained by the Grand River Conservation Authority.
- **Elementary schools** offer playgrounds, outdoor courts, and fields.
- **Non-profit providers** such as the Rockwood Lions Club (who maintain the Lions Club Waterside Park), Rockwood Tennis Club, CYO Camp Brébeuf, and others.
- **Adjacent Municipalities** provide parks and programming such as field sports, disc golf, swimming, and other opportunities that may not be available locally.



## 7.2 Trails

Resident input indicates that local trails are highly valued assets. Off-road trails maintained by the Township include:

- Indian Trail (1km linear trail, used under agreement with private landowners);
- Marden Park Trail (2.5km of looped trails with the park);
- Rockmosa Park Trail (2-km, 3-metre-wide asphalt trail through the park and adjoining neighbourhood);
- Sarah Ransom Woodlot (nature trails); and
- several trails and pathways in Rockwood that connect neighbourhoods (e.g., Nobleridge, Bonarrow, Rockwood North, etc.).

Several additional trails are provided by other public sector and private organizations, such as GRCA trails within Rockwood and Guelph Lake Conservation Areas, Ignatius Jesuit Centre of Guelph (approximately 15km of looped trails), and the Kissing Bridge Trailway (a regional linear trail that connects Guelph to Millbank and runs through Robert Pilkington Park in Ariss). Portions of the Kissing Bridge Trailway are designated as part of the Trans Canada Trail and there are plans to further extend this trail through Guelph/Eramosa to connect to Guelph.

Trail development and maintenance is guided by the Official Plan and County of Wellington Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP), the latter of which also provides direction for on-road cycling infrastructure. Most municipal and non-municipal trails contain amenities such as benches, parking, signage, and waste receptacles and are widely promoted on social media and through local trails guides (Wellington Walks). Both staff and volunteer resources are relied upon to conduct trail maintenance.



Through the community engagement process, participants expressed the Township's trails are well maintained and well used. Most survey participants indicated they walk or hike for leisure (67%), with 76% indicating that investment in nature trails should be a high priority for the Township (the third highest priority). Additional comments suggest respondents would like to see more hiking trails in the community.

The demand for trails has been growing in response to an aging but more active population, as well as outdoor recreation trends that began during the pandemic. Research completed by Trans Canada Trail indicates that 72% of Canadian use trails, with 89% stating that trails add value to the quality of life in their community. Furthermore, 69% of Canadians say that easy access to trails and outdoor activities have an impact on where they choose to live. This research also illustrates the wide-reaching benefits of trails to the local economy, combatting climate change, enhancing nature, and strengthening tourism.<sup>4</sup>

With few new subdivisions planned, opportunities for new trail development in Guelph/Eramosa will be more limited. However, the Township has several unopened road allowances and additional lands that may have potential for trail development (e.g., Charleston Property). Additionally, the existing trails at Marden Park have potential to be improved and expanded to allow for broader use, as identified in the Marden Park Master Plan. When developing and improving trails, consider the incorporation of support amenities at key trail locations, such as parking, benches, lighting, washrooms, wayfinding signage, and rest areas to facilitate elements of inclusivity and accessibility. Trail development and enhancements that allow for multi-modal and multi-season use (e.g., walking, cycling, snowshoeing, etc.) should also continue to be a priority and be guided by overarching master plans, such as the County's 2012 ATMP that helps to coordinate connections that span local area municipalities. An update to the County's ATMP may be in order due to its age and new opportunities that may have emerged since that time.

### Recommendations

29. Continue to place a priority on **trail infrastructure projects** that connect communities and enhance existing networks, supported by the County's Active Transportation Master Plan. Potential projects include: connections to the City of Guelph; resident access to Conservation Areas; trail development on the Charleston Property; improved/expanded trails within Marden Park; and use of unopened road allowances.

## 7.3 Soccer Fields

The Township offers a total of twelve (12) soccer fields, located at Marden Park (3), Memorial Park (1), and Rockmosa Park (7). Rockmosa Park is the Township's premier soccer location, offering seven purpose-built fields of varying sizes. Having the Township's only lit field, Marden Park has space to expand and establish additional fields should they be required. Local user groups also make occasional use of fields at public schools on an as needed basis.

Relative to other organized activities, soccer is a more accessible form of recreation with international and all-gender appeal. The recent success of both the Canadian men's and women's teams by participating in the World Cup and Olympics on the international stage has also sustained Canadians'

---

<sup>4</sup> National Léger Survey Reveals Canadians' Trail Use on the Rise in 2023. Trans Canada Trail, April 16, 2023. <https://tctrail.ca/news/national-leger-survey-reveals-canadians-trail-use-on-the-rise-in-2023/>



interest toward the sport, despite registration in Ontario Soccer's affiliated organizations having peaked more than ten years ago. Locally, Rockwood FC has built a strong program that offers both recreational and competitive streams, as well as various camps and training opportunities.

Soccer is a popular sport amongst Guelph/Eramosa youth, with 40% of community survey respondents containing at least one household member that plays. Interest in adding field lighting to allow for evening games was expressed through the public and stakeholder consultation program (improvements to soccer fields ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 17 outdoor facility options on the survey). Furthermore, a couple user groups expressed cost sharing as a potential approach for adding lighting to Rockmosa Park's 11v11 field.



The 2013 Master Plan proposed a provision target for soccer fields of 1 field per 65 participants. Rockwood FC is the primary user of area soccer fields and has a membership around 600 players, resulting in a current ratio of one field per 60 registrants. The club anticipates future growth and is supportive of adding lights to the large 11v11 field at Rockmosa Park, which will increase capacity for evening play (each lit field can support 30% to 50% more play). With these improvements, the supply of fields should be sufficient to meet longer-term needs. However, should demand be found for additional soccer fields in the future, consideration should be given to providing them at existing sites such as Marden Park. The clustering of sports fields improves operational/maintenance efficiencies and opportunities for programming and tournament play.

### Recommendations

30. Work in partnership with local user groups to **add lights to the 11v11 soccer field at Rockmosa Park** to increase capacity for evening play.



## 7.4 Ball Diamonds

The Township maintains a total of four (4) ball diamonds, including lit fields at Lloyd Dyer Park, Marden Park, and Rockmosa Park, as well as an unlit field at Memorial Park in Eden Mills (this diamond is not permitted due to low demand and deteriorating condition). Lit sports fields are preferred by adult user groups and offer more capacity (about 50% more) as they extend play opportunities in the evenings. An unlit diamond is also located at Rockwood Centennial Public School (permitted through the school board).

After being considered a sport in decline, baseball and softball have been experiencing renewed interest across many communities, partially driven by grassroots programs that engage children and youth at a young age (such as those offered through the Rockwood Eramosa Minor Ball Association) and greater opportunities at competitive levels. Full size diamonds with lights are in the greatest demand in most municipalities. Many diamonds-built decades ago are too small to accommodate adult sports and may require expansion or netting (the latter is a particular concern for certain diamonds in Guelph/Eramosa).

From the community survey, 28% of respondents indicated their household participated in baseball or softball and 57% placed a high priority on improving or developing diamonds (ranking 9<sup>th</sup> out of 17 outdoor facility options on the survey). Primary concerns expressed by field users were the under-sized dimensions of the ball diamonds at Marden and Rockmosa Parks; the current configuration of Rockmosa Park makes it challenging to install netting in this location, which can impact allocation and scheduling of diamonds.



A commonly used provision target for baseball is 1 diamond (unlit equivalent) per 90 participants. With 3 to 4 lit ball diamonds (the field at Memorial Park is not be actively used at the present time), the Township’s diamonds should be capable of accommodating between 405 and 495 regular participants. Registration data is not available for all local organizations (e.g., minor ball, fastball, slo-pitch, etc.), but is believed to be below this threshold, indicating sufficient capacity to accommodate current demands. It is recommended that the Township actively collect registration figures annually to inform future planning. Should demand be demonstrated for additional ball diamonds in the future, consideration should be given to providing them at existing sites such as Marden Park. The clustering of sports fields improves operational/maintenance efficiencies and opportunities for programming and tournament play. The Township’s 3 lit diamonds should be maintained with lights replaced at the end of life.

Questions were also raised about the future of the ball diamond at Memorial Park in Eden Mills. This diamond is not actively being maintained by the Township due to low demand and its lights have partially been removed; some lighting and fencing remain in place to support a volunteer-led winter ice rink. As noted above, this diamond is not needed to support organized play in the Township. The previous Master Plan recommended consultation with the community to determine future uses. As no viable alternative uses have been identified through this Master Plan process, the Township’s likely options are to either: (1) remove the diamond and convert it to open space; or (2) improve maintenance of the diamond to support casual use. The latter option – maintaining the diamond (e.g., semi-regular infield weeding and dragging, etc.) – is recommended at this time as this would also facilitate the continued provision of a winter ice rink.

### Recommendations

31. Work with user groups to assess opportunities to **expand one or more existing lit ball diamonds** to accommodate organized use, including adult play.
32. Maintain the **ball diamond at Memorial Park** in Eden Mills for casual community use and to support winter rink use.

## 7.5 Playgrounds & Outdoor Fitness

The Township offers playgrounds within most of its active parks for a total of 10 locations; most sites consist of swings, slides, and a climbing structure for creative play. Play structures are also available at several area schools, conservation areas, and private locations. Playgrounds are an essential neighbourhood-level amenity that are typically dispersed throughout urban areas to promote early childhood play and learning.

Respondents to the community survey indicated strong support for investment in playground equipment (82%, ranking only behind park washrooms), with 45% of households having recently used these features. Specifically, residents are seeking improvements to existing playgrounds, such as installing a new playground at Rockmosa Park and expanding play opportunities within Lloyd Dyer Park. These projects are in the Township’s long-term capital forecast (supported by a reserve fund; grant funding is helping to support the installation of a destination playground at Rockmosa Park), along with future playground replacements at Max Storey Park and John Jolliffe Park. Regular playground inspections are necessary to identify maintenance and replacement priorities.





The 2013 Master Plan recommended a 500-metre radius as the catchment area for playgrounds within built-up residential areas. The Township provides good coverage within Rockwood and smaller communities including Cross Creek, Eden Mills, Everton, and Marden. While there is no playground in Ariss, the relatively small number of homes, larger estate lots, and road pattern make this a low priority.

Accessible playgrounds and playground components are also becoming standard elements in higher use locations like Rockmosa Park. At minimum, playgrounds should be accessible via pathways connecting from sidewalks and parking lots; consideration should be given to improving pathway access to playgrounds at Dave Masson Park, Marden Park, and Valentino Park.

As the Township installs new playgrounds and replaces existing structures, consideration may be given to natural/adventure playgrounds that use materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders. These designs are becoming more common as they can provide greater sensory and imaginative play compared to traditional plastic structures, but they may not be candidates for every site so should be selected with care.

Similar to playgrounds, many municipalities are beginning to install outdoor fitness equipment within parks. These pieces of equipment provide low-impact, bodyweight activities that focus on mobility, flexibility, and strength training – great exercise options for older adults and seniors. As the population ages, more adults are seeking opportunities to get outside and be physically active. The Township does not currently have any such features within its parks system; however, this may be a future consideration for Rockmosa Park.

### Recommendations

33. Continue to **invest in playgrounds** through a new destination playground within Rockmosa Park, creative play structure in Lloyd Dyer Park, and end-of-life replacements (e.g., Max Storey Park, John Jolliffe Park, etc.). Consideration may be given to natural/adventure playgrounds at selected locations, in consultation with the community.
34. Monitor the need for playgrounds in growth areas while striving to provide **playgrounds within approximately 500 metres** (roughly a five-to-ten-minute walk, unobstructed by waterways, railway lines, highways, etc.) of all major built-up residential areas.
35. Ensure that all playgrounds with accessible components are connected to a **pathway** (firm and stable surface). Locations requiring assessment include (but may not be limited to) Marden Park, Valentino Park, and David Masson Park.
36. Consider installing **outdoor fitness equipment** at a community park site, such as Rockmosa Park.

## 7.6 Splash Pads

Splash pads are interactive water play features that are activated using motion sensors and buttons. They are highly sought-after amenities for young families and are best located in destination parks. They have no standing water and are unsupervised sites, but can attract large numbers of children and youth looking to cool off on a warm day.

There is one township-wide splash pad located at Rockmosa Park which provides an unstructured form of recreation for younger children during the warmer months (generally June to Labour Day weekend). The splash pad has convenient access to washrooms, as well as nearby parking. Consideration will need to be given to replacement of the splash pad as it approaches the end of its lifespan; monitoring of asset condition and function will assist in determining timing of major capital works. At the time of replacement, the current recirculation system (which requires chlorination and daily checks by staff) should be replaced with a flow through system that is more operationally efficient and results in fewer closures due to fouling.

In smaller municipalities like Guelph/Eramosa, provision targets are typically one per community, suggesting that the Township's current provision is sufficient. Several splash pads are provided in the City of Guelph, providing convenient access to residents on the west end of the Township. Nearly one-half (45%) of community survey respondents indicated that they have used splash pads and 76% placed a high priority on improving or developing additional splash pads, which ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of the list of park amenity options.

### Recommendations

37. Prepare for the eventual replacement of the **splash pad in Rockmosa Park** as it approaches its life expectancy. Replace with an appropriately-sized system that uses a more operationally efficiency flow through water management system.



## 7.7 Skateboard and BMX Parks

The Township provides a concrete skateboard park at Rockmosa Park – usage extends to “all wheels” profiles, including skateboards, scooters, bikes, and inline skates. These parks respond to increasing interest in unstructured, low-cost activities and support physical activity. Participation in wheeled sports has a broad appeal to both youth and young adults, as well as an emerging market for young families. Additionally, action sports are an outlet for self-expression and an opportunity to find a sense of belonging that many youth cannot get elsewhere. By their very nature, action sports build independence and resilience.

The Rockmosa skate park was developed in 2015 and is in good condition, capable of serving the community for many years to come. One out of five (19%) survey respondents indicated participating in skateboarding or scootering and another 14% participating in BMX or mountain biking. Improvements to the existing park and/or establishment of new parks was a relatively low priority, with 43% supporting additional spending on skateboard parks (ranking 14<sup>th</sup> out of 17 choices) and even fewer (36%) indicating a need for bike parks. This research suggests that the Township’s current provision levels are sufficient, and no additional skate or bike parks are recommended during the next ten years.



## 7.8 Outdoor Courts (Tennis, Pickleball, Basketball, Beach Volleyball)

This assessment groups the needs of all courts together as there is the potential for multi-use activities on the same surface (e.g., tennis and pickleball) and conversion potential due to similar footprints and requirements for some sports. The Township’s outdoor sport court inventory consists of:

- 3 recently redeveloped lit tennis courts at Rockmosa Park operated under agreement by the Rockwood Tennis Club;
- 2 pickleball courts overlayed on a single tennis court at Rockmosa Park; these are publicly accessible during specific times;
- 3 full-sized basketball courts at James Lynch Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, and Valentino Park, plus 1 half court at Memorial Park; and
- 1 beach volleyball court at Marden Park.

Local schools and conservation areas may have additional courts that offer limited public access.

Community survey respondents indicated the following household participation rates: basketball (19%); tennis (19%); beach volleyball (9%); and outdoor pickleball (6%). Priority of investment was greatest for outdoor basketball courts (63%, ranking 8<sup>th</sup> out of 17 options), followed by outdoor tennis courts (55%, ranking 10<sup>th</sup>), outdoor pickleball courts (43%, ranking 13<sup>th</sup>), and beach volleyball courts (35%, ranking last). These percentages are indicative of the local appeal for these sports, but it should be noted that demand for all four of these activities has been trending upward in recent years.

More targeted consultation found interest in multi-use courts for pickleball from the area seniors. Having witnessed the recent growth of pickleball, the Rockwood Tennis Club (which has over 200 members) indicated concerns around shared use of courts. The Club also requested additional investment in the court complex, including accessibility improvements to the clubhouse and installation of LED court lighting.

Research suggests that **tennis** is experiencing a resurgence over the past several years in Ontario, including among youth and women players. The courts in Rockmosa Park are poised to accommodate this demand into the future as the Township is within the commonly applied range of one court per 4,000 to 5,000 residents. As for improvements to the clubhouse and lighting, these are club-based amenities that go beyond the typical municipal level of service, the costs should be predominantly borne by the clubs and its membership, though the Township may consider sponsoring a grant application or participating in a cost-sharing agreement that adequately reflects the cost-benefit to the general public.



**Pickleball** – which the Township is accommodating through two shared use outdoor courts as well as indoor venues – is experiencing a popularity boom across North America. It is an accessible, affordable, and social sport, able to be played by newcomers and more seasoned players alike. As it appeals predominantly to seniors (though it is increasingly being played by younger participants), daytime usage is more frequent than evening use.

As an emerging sport, Ontario municipalities are gradually adopting strategies to address needs, such as painting pickleball lines on other sport courts (sometimes using online court booking systems) and establishing purpose-built dedicated pickleball courts through new construction or the permanent conversion of tennis courts. Shared courts are often seen in communities where there is capacity for added use due to lower demand for tennis, whereas dedicated pickleball courts (usually 4 or more in a complex, supported by washrooms and parking) are becoming more common in many communities. Increasingly, municipalities have cited problems with pickleball courts being located too close to residential areas due to both the racquet noise and the social nature of the game, so proper siting is a must.

There is currently no accepted provision target for pickleball as the sport is still maturing. Successful models elsewhere suggest that opportunities should be offered for both outdoor and indoor year-round pickleball. This Master Plan has supported the development of a gymnasium capable of accommodating pickleball and other sports as part of a future multi-use recreation centre in Rockmosa Park, as well as continued efforts to maximize community access to school gyms. Additionally, it is recommended that additional outdoor pickleball courts be provided – either dedicated or shared use – as the current supply of 2 shared courts is not adequate or sustainable. Options for accommodating new pickleball courts include line painting on the basketball court at Lloyd Dyer Park, expansion at Rockmosa Park (possibly as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad), and/or the development of 2 to 4 dedicated courts at Memorial Park in Eden Mills.

The popularity of **basketball** is also on the rise due to its affordability and growing appeal, with courts becoming a standard element of park design in most municipalities. Outdoor basketball courts can be designed with one or two hoops, as well as opportunities to accommodate other activities throughout the year (e.g., ball hockey, ice skating, etc.). As the Township's courts approach end of life, consideration should be given to replacing them with designs that can also support winter ice skating (e.g., Valentino Park).

In smaller communities such as Guelph/Eramosa, a priority is placed on ensuring equitable geographic access to basketball courts as the primary demographic is children and youth and being able to walk to a facility is a key requirement. Currently, there are no public basketball courts north of the railway tracks or east of Main Street in Rockwood – opportunities should be explored to establish a full court in Rockmosa Park (possibly as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad) and a half court in a location in the Noble Ridge Area (e.g., Max Storey Park, Hampson Parkette, John Joliffe Park, etc.).

Outdoor **beach volleyball** is a social sport that appeals largely to youth and young adults. In communities across Ontario, interest has been growing for organized recreational leagues and camps, often facilitated by private clubs that promote and deliver programs. The Township has recently received a request for a beach volleyball complex at Marden Park as this site has available land, access to parking, washrooms, and other leisure amenities. The proposal has the potential to advance gender equity and sport tourism in the Township as the leagues would serve both residents and non-residents. The Township is encouraged to work with interested sport organizations to upgrade this site through an agreement that supports both public access and programming – section 6.4 of this Master Plan lays out a process for evaluating unsolicited requests, including the development of a proponent-led business case. If the project proceeds, design and maintenance standards should be developed to support the provision of these amenities.

## Recommendations

38. Additional **outdoor pickleball courts** should be provided to meet short- and long-term needs. Options include painting pickleball lines on the basketball court at Lloyd Dyer Park, developing 2 to 4 dedicated courts at Memorial Park in Eden Mills, and/or creating additional courts at Rockmosa Park as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad.
39. Work with the Rockwood Tennis Club to address barrier-free accessibility improvements to the **tennis clubhouse** through an appropriate cost-sharing agreement.
40. Develop a **full-size basketball court in Rockmosa Park** (possibly as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad).
41. Conduct a site assessment to determine a viable location for one **half basketball court in the Noble Ridge Area** (e.g., Max Storey Park, Hampson Parkette, John Joliffe Park, etc.).
42. When existing basketball courts reach end of life, consideration should be given to replacing them with **designs that can also support winter ice skating** (e.g., Valentino Park).
43. Work with interested sport organizations to pursue the development of **beach volleyball courts** at Marden Park. Any such agreement should protect the public interest and offer some degree of public access and programming, supported by a business case acceptable to the Township.

## 7.9 Outdoor Ice Rinks

The Township supports several volunteer-run outdoor ice rinks within parks across Guelph/Eramosa, including seasonal rinks at Cross Creek Park, David Masson Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, Max Storey Park, Memorial Park in Eden Mills, Rockmosa Park, and Valentino Park.

Seasonal outdoor ice rinks provide local opportunities for residents to skate, but are subject to the weather, volunteer commitments, and site conditions. Input from volunteer committees suggest that many sites have had difficulty getting up and running due not only to inconsistent weather, but also inadequate lighting, slopes, and an insufficient number of volunteers. Continued municipal support for these volunteer-led initiatives should be supported, including grading improvements to selected park sites (e.g., Valentino Park, Dave Masson Park). Consideration may also be given to accommodating ice skating in Valentino Park through the renewal of the existing basketball court.

Outdoor skating is a popular Canadian pastime and community interest has been expressed for local skating opportunities, whether through an indoor arena (52% of survey respondents indicated that this should be a priority in a MURF, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> out of 9 indoor facility options) or outdoor ice rink (72% supported additional investment, ranking 5<sup>th</sup> out of 17 outdoor facility options). Approximately 38% of survey respondents participate in indoor skating or ice sports and another 30% participate in outdoor skating or ice sports.

Interest in outdoor skating increased substantially during the pandemic as people looked for more ways to stay active outdoors. However, climate change and the comparatively warmer winters can sometimes make it difficult to maintain natural ice surfaces. As an alternative, some communities have established artificial ice surfaces (sometimes covered with a roof) that have helped to provide more consistent



skating conditions. Artificial ice rinks offer a longer operating season, but are much more expensive to construct and operate.

The option of constructing a covered outdoor refrigerated rink in Rockmosa Park (in lieu of an indoor ice arena as part of the proposed MURF) was identified in Section 6.3. This option would be significantly more reliable than natural rinks and more cost effective than a larger indoor arena, address resident requests for leisure and recreational skating, and offer opportunity for all-season use (e.g., pickleball, basketball, ball hockey, etc.) during warmer months. Covering the artificial rink would provide for an extended season (60+ days per year, depending on weather and temperature variation) and improved ice conditions (and shade in the summer).

### Recommendations

44. Evaluate options for developing a **smaller covered (open air) outdoor refrigerated ice rink** for leisure skating and shinny within Rockmosa Park to provide residents with skating opportunities within their own community.

## 7.10 Off-Leash Dog Parks

Rockmosa Park contains the Township's only designated off-leash dog park, constructed as part of the 2018 expansion and opened for public use in 2020. Off-leash dog parks provide pet owners an opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs in a controlled area and also offer venues for interaction amongst residents. Urban areas benefit the most from off-leash dog parks, opposed to rural areas where there is more private open space for dogs.

From the community survey, 30% of area households indicated that they utilize off-leash parks and 53% of respondents supported additional investment in these amenities (ranking 15<sup>th</sup> out of 17 park amenities). While some consideration may be given to establishing an off-leash park in the western portion of Guelph/Eramosa (e.g., Marden Park) to promote geographic equity, the rural nature and small population of this area (combined with low support from the survey) would suggest that additional dog parks are not a priority for the Township at this time.

It is common to see off-leash dog activity in open space areas within Township parks, outside of authorized areas for this activity despite this being in contravention of local leash laws. In order to mitigate conflict, additional signage and enforcement may be required should new recreational opportunities be brought into these parks.

## 7.11 Community Gardens

Community vegetable gardens have been established in two municipal parks (Memorial Park and Valentino Park), both with adjacent edible forests/orchards. These gardens are small plots of land that are collectively maintained by a group or stewardship organizations to produce fruit, vegetables, and/or flowers. Community gardens support community improvement, improve physical and mental wellbeing, enhance food security, and encourage social interaction among gardeners and visitors.

One-half (51%) of survey respondents identified community garden plots as a priority for public spending (ranking 12<sup>th</sup> out of 17 outdoor facility types), although several open-ended suggestions were received for additional garden locations indicating that there is moderate demand.

These gardens may be established on dedicated parcels of land or may be incorporated into existing parks and open spaces.

Demand for community gardens is rising in many communities due to aging populations, higher density developments (with less private open space), increased grocery costs, and a growing emphasis on food security. The Township is encouraged to establish additional locations for community vegetable gardens and orchards within its parks system, with a focus on under-utilized lands that have adequate access to a water source and parking. These sites should continue to be overseen and managed by local community groups.

### Recommendations

45. Encourage the integration of volunteer-managed **community vegetable gardens and orchards** within the Township’s park network, focusing on under-utilized lands that have adequate access to a water source and parking.

## 7.12 Toboggan Hills

Winter tobogganing is an authorized use within four Township parks: Cross Creek Park, John Jolliffe Park, Memorial Park, and Rockmosa Park. The hill at Rockmosa Park was added recently to serve as an attraction for local and visiting families and youth.

Tobogganing is a popular winter pastime in Canada, but it can be a dangerous activity, so much so that some Canadian municipalities have banned tobogganing on municipal property. The Township has a duty to keep properties in a safe condition that is commensurate with their intended purpose. Effective risk management is vital for tobogganing hills, with consideration given to establishing designated hills, providing public education and signage, and regular inspections, maintenance, and monitoring of use. Designated hills should have long runoffs (allowing sledders to come to a natural stop), be free from obstacles such as rocks, fences, and trees, and that do not end on roads, parking lots, sidewalks, or frozen bodies of water.<sup>5</sup>

An inspection of the hill at John Jolliffe Park finds that it has potentially unsafe conditions due to its steep slope and short run-out. To ensure resident safety, it is recommended that the Township remove this location as a designated hill and take steps to restrict winter usage. Usage at this location can be shifted to the new hill at Rockmosa Park, which was built to serve as the community’s primary tobogganing location.

### Recommendations

46. Remove **John Jolliffe Park** as a designated tobogganing hill and take steps to restrict winter usage.

---

<sup>5</sup> Intact Insurance. [Risk Management Considerations for Tobogganing as Municipal Liability](https://www.intactpublicentities.ca/storage/media/files/COE/Risk_Management_Considerations/Risk_Management_Considerations_for_Tobogganing_as_Municipal_Liability.pdf).  
[https://www.intactpublicentities.ca/storage/media/files/COE/Risk\\_Management\\_Considerations/Risk\\_Management\\_Considerations\\_for\\_Tobogganing\\_as\\_Municipal\\_Liability.pdf](https://www.intactpublicentities.ca/storage/media/files/COE/Risk_Management_Considerations/Risk_Management_Considerations_for_Tobogganing_as_Municipal_Liability.pdf)



**SECTION 8. PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT**





Public parks are important places for sports, casual leisure activities, special events, building a sense of community, and social belonging. Communities have witnessed increased demand in parks and outdoor recreation emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic as people found or rediscovered new ways to remain active and connected. To ensure that the Township keeps pace with land-based demands, this section examines Guelph/Eramosa’s parks and open space system, along with future requirements and policy considerations.

## 8.1 Parkland Classification and Inventory

Municipalities use parkland classification systems to guide park development, design, level of service, and maintenance requirements. By identifying intended uses, size, form, function and/or level of amenity, a parkland classification system allows the public to understand what a park may include and positions parkland to be compatible with adjacent land uses. It also helps to support the Township in directing its financial and operational resources where they are needed most.

The 2013 Master Plan established a parkland classification system to define the function, permitted uses, and maintenance levels of each park type in Guelph/Eramosa. The proposed parkland classification system has been updated to reflect the evolving role of parks and the means by which they are conveyed to the Township, including the introduction of “parkettes” and “open space linkages”, which are smaller parcels of land that have become more commonplace in more recent forms of development. This hierarchy should be integrated within the Township’s reporting and data management.

The proposed parkland system consists of:

1. **Parkland:** refers to all lands owned, leased and/or managed by the Township and classified as **Parkette, Neighbourhood Park or Community Park**. Parkland typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, gardens, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features.
2. **Open Space:** refers to all lands owned, leased and/or managed by the Township (and sometimes other public entities) and classified as **Natural Areas and Open Space Linkages**. These sites generally have no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental protection/conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. The Township may choose to assume open space lands, they should not generally be accepted as part of the parkland dedication requirements.



Table 14: Proposed Parkland and Open Space Classification System

Classification	Service Area	Permitted Facilities / Amenities	Size (ha)	Example
<b>Parkland</b>				
<b>Parkette</b>	Highly visible and accessible locations, typically in pedestrian-oriented commercial or mixed-use areas	Typically characterized by social and cultural amenities such as seating areas, public art, gazebos, and spaces to support smaller civic events	Less than 0.5 ha	None at present
<b>Neighbourhood Park</b>	Local residential areas; park should be located within walking distance of the service area (generally 500m)	Active and passive opportunities, including play equipment and informal playing fields / courts for unorganized activities	0.5 to 3 ha	Valentino Park
<b>Community Park</b>	Entire Township; may also satisfy functions set out under Neighbourhood Park classification	Range of recreational facilities and amenities including playing fields, pavilions, and other community-serving amenities	4 to 10 ha	Rockmosa Park
<b>Open Space</b>				
<b>Natural Areas</b>	n/a	May contain trails, informal picnic areas, stormwater ponds, natural heritage features, and other low intensity amenities; may be undeveloped, but should generally be publicly accessible; should not be accepted as parkland dedication as it does not meet active park needs	Variable	Sarah Ransom Woodlot
<b>Open Space Linkages</b>	n/a	Typically comprised of trails, linear parks or open space parcels that provide connections within the open space system (for habitat) and between local points of interest (for pedestrians and/or cyclists); may be Township-owned or controlled (e.g., easement, agreement, etc.)	Variable	Col. Henry Strange Park

Table 15: Suitability of Potential Amenities by Park Type

Facility/Amenity	Parkland			Open Space	
	Parkettes	Neighbourhood Parks	Community Parks	Natural Areas	Open Space Linkages
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>					
Ball Diamond			●		
Basketball / Multi-use Court		●	●		
Community Garden Plot		▸	▸	▸	
Off-Leash Dog Park			▸	▸	
Outdoor Rink		▸	●		
Pavilion / Shelter	▸	▸	●	●	
Pickleball Court			●		
Playground	▸	●	●	▸	
Recreational Trail	▸	●	●	●	●
Skateboard / Bike Park			●		
Soccer Field – full size			●		
Soccer Field – mini/intermediate		●	●		
Splash Pad			●		
Tennis Court		●	●		
Toboggan Hill		▸	●	▸	
<b>Park Amenities</b>					
Bike Rack	▸	●	●	▸	
Casual Play Area / Open Space	▸	●	●	▸	
Naturalized Area		▸	▸	●	▸
Parking Lot			●	▸	
Potable Water Source	▸		●		
Seating (fixed or portable)	●	●	●	▸	▸
Washrooms	▸		●		

● = Permitted; ▸ = Conditional/Limited

Note: This table identifies potentially suitable uses by park type and is to be used as a guideline only. Site-specific analysis is required to inform park planning and design.

The Township of Guelph/Eramosa’s parks system consists of **11 sites accounting for 54.5 hectares (of municipally-owned and managed active parkland<sup>6</sup>**. This translates into a current service standard of **3.9 hectares per 1,000 residents**.

The following tables and map provide a summary of existing parks and open space that are owned and/or maintained by the Township of Guelph/Eramosa, with reference to notable non-municipal open space sites.

**Table 16: Listing of Municipal Parks (Active Parks only)**

Name	Classification	Location	Hectares
Cross Creek Park	Neighbourhood Park	Cross Creek	1.8
David Masson Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	0.48
Harris Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	0.8
James Lynch Park	Neighbourhood Park	Everton	0.28
John Jolliffe Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	1.68
Lloyd Dyer Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	3.8
Marden Park	Community Park	Rural	25.5
Max Storey Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	0.63
Memorial Park	Community Park	Eden Mills	5.07
Rockmosa Park	Community Park	Rockwood	12.5
Valentino Park	Neighbourhood Park	Rockwood	1.95
<b>Total Active Parkland</b>	<b>(3.9 ha per 1,000 residents)</b>		<b>54.49 ha</b>

Source: Township of Guelph/Eramosa, 2023

Per capita ratio based on population figure of 13,904 persons (2021 Census).

Excludes open space parcels, natural lands, stormwater ponds and non-municipal parks.

<sup>6</sup> "Active parkland" refers to municipal lands that are suitable for the development or installation of built recreational amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, etc.) and may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features.

**Table 17: Listing of Municipal Open Space Properties**

Name	Location	Hectares
Brotherstown Park	Rockwood	0.04
Hampson Parkette	Rockwood	0.1
Lou Fontinato Park	Rockwood	0.07
Mill Run Woodlot	Rockwood	1.60
Old Maple Blvd	Rockwood	0.16
Osburn Park	Rockwood	2.6
Promenade Park	Rural	3.02
Ramsey Park	Rockwood	3.8
Robert Pilkington Park	Ariss	0.3
Samuel Ryckman Park	Rockwood	0.20
Sarah Ransom Park	Rockwood	2.35
<b>Total Municipal Open Space</b>		<b>14.24 ha</b>

Source: Township of Guelph/Eramosa, 2023

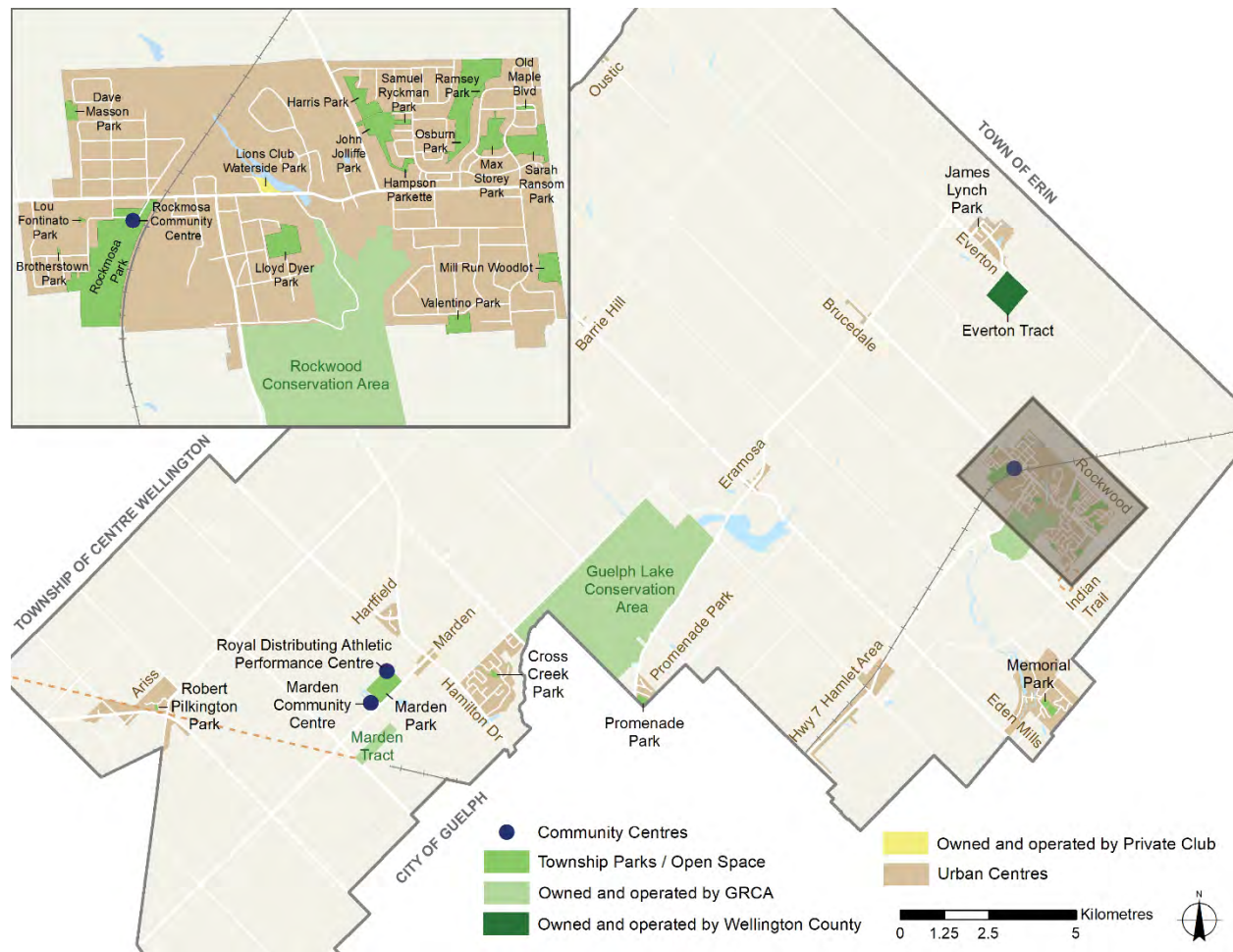
**Table 18: Listing of Non-Municipal Open Space Properties**

Name	Location	Hectares
Guelph Lake Conservation Area	Rural	659.41
Lions Club Waterside Park	Rockwood	0.45
Marden Tract	Rural	21.99
Rockwood Conservation Area	Rockwood	81.77
The Everton Tract	Everton	39.45
<b>Total Non-Municipal Open Space</b>		<b>803.07 ha</b>

Note: May not be a comprehensive list  
 Source: Township of Guelph/Eramosa, 2023



Figure 27: Parks and Open Space Sites in Guelph/Eramosa



**Recommendations**

- 47. Use the Master Plan’s **parkland classification policy framework** to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.
- 48. Update the parks and open space **inventory database and mapping** regularly to assist in the assessment of land requirements.

## 8.2 Parkland Acquisition Policies and Requirements

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland. Key documents include:

- **Planning Act:** Sections 42, 51.1 and 53 of the Ontario Planning Act establish the authority for the dedication of parkland and alternatives. The amount of parkland may vary depending on the application and project type. Further, the Township may require parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland from development and redevelopment projects.
- **Official Plan:** The County of Wellington Official Plan implements the Planning Act by setting out objectives for public parkland, along with policies for dedication and development.
- **Parkland Dedication By-law:** The Township's Parkland Dedication By-law contains additional guidelines associated with parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu.

In November 2022, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) partially received Royal Assent, impacting several provisions of the Planning Act and other pieces of legislation. The changes are significant and will impact how municipalities manage growth through implementation of official plans and how they provide essential infrastructure and community services. Notable to this Master Plan, Bill 23 introduced changes that will reduce development charges revenue, community benefits charges, and parkland dedication requirements. The changes to the Planning Act are significant and will reduce the amount of parkland and cash-in-lieu municipalities can receive as part of the development approval process.

Specific to parkland dedication, a summary of some of the changes introduced by Bill 23 include:

- The **maximum alternative dedication rate** has been reduced to 1 ha/600 units for parkland and 1 ha/1000 units for cash in lieu. Furthermore, the legislation caps the maximum alternative dedication rates at 10% of the land for sites under 5 ha and at 15% for sites greater than 5 ha.
- Affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments are **exempt** from parkland dedication requirements.
- **Parkland rates** are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval.
- To take effect at a future date, developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include **encumbered lands** and privately-owned public space (POPs). If agreement cannot be reached, the municipality or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.
- There is a new requirement for municipalities to **spend or allocate** at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year.
- Municipalities are required to develop a **parks plan** in consultation with local school boards prior to passing a parkland by-law.

The full impact of these changes will need to be considered by the County through its Official Plan review. Reduced levels of service are possible; however, as Guelph/Eramosa is not anticipating significant new residential development in the future, these impacts on the Township may be tempered.

The County's Official Plan and Township's Parkland Dedication By-law include several policies that provide guidance on parkland dedication rates, exemptions or reductions, suitable lands, cash-in-lieu of parkland, acquisition tools, siting and design, land valuation, reserve funds, and more. These policies are comprehensive, but do not reflect the legislative changes brought about by Bill 23 and will need to be updated at the appropriate time.

An appropriate level and equitable distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high quality of life and maximizing accessibility to services and amenities that achieve community objectives. Given the Township's strong ratio of parkland to population and service to all communities, the population forecasts do not support the establishment of new community or neighbourhood level parks in the future (unless additional growth occurs over anticipated levels). As development occurs, the Township is likely to receive cash-in-lieu of parkland or – in the case of any larger developments – may consider the conveyance of smaller parkettes to address localized needs or open space linkages to improve active transportation connections. Lands to be dedicated for park purposes must be to the Township's satisfaction and should not include restricted properties such as natural heritage system lands, hazard lands, steep slopes, contaminated lands, easements, stormwater ponds, etc. The Township may use Parkland Dedication reserve to purchase land or for other public recreation purposes.

Geographic equity and population-based targets are used to calculate and plan parkland supply. A review of parkland distribution finds that the Township's parks system provides good geographic coverage in Guelph/Eramosa's populated areas. The Township's current parkland provision rate is **3.9 hectares per 1,000 residents**, excluding open space lands. Comparable rural municipalities have traditionally targeted provision rates in the range of 3 hectares per 1,000 residents to meet their active recreational needs associated with sports fields, playgrounds, courts and more. Actual provision rates are often much higher, sometimes exceeding 5 hectares per 1,000 residents. **Guelph/Eramosa is near the middle of this range and – with minimal future growth anticipated – it is anticipated that this supply of parkland will be sufficient for the next ten years and possibly beyond.** As some of the Township's parks have opportunity to add additional amenities as new demands emerge, a focus should be placed on maximizing existing parks through strategic redevelopment projects and investments.

The Township's parks are generally well located and configured for their intended use. However, the Township owns a small number of vacant properties (e.g., Everton, etc.) and it is not uncommon for municipalities to identify other uses for undeveloped parkland and/or to receive offers for such lands. Should the Township consider declaring any **undeveloped park parcels as surplus** (in whole or in part) and disposing of them, this should follow a prescribed process and be evaluated using prescribed criteria. Any revenue generated from a sale of surplus lands should be allocated to investments in the parks and recreation system. Potential criteria may include:

- an assessment of the recreational value/need for the site and its requirement to meet parkland accessibility targets;
- the potential to relocate amenities/activities to other Township-owned lands, as well as the operational benefits to be achieved through consolidation;
- past investment in the site and the condition of existing amenities, vegetation, and landforms;
- development potential, adjacent uses, and applicable land use policies; and
- community input.

### Recommendations

49. Prioritize the acceptance of **cash-in-lieu of parkland** through land development and redevelopment applications, except in larger subdivisions or multi-unit residential projects that would require localized parkland. The Township may use its parkland dedication reserve to purchase land or for other public recreation purposes based on demonstrated needs. The Township's Parkland Dedication By-law should also be updated to reflect recent legislative changes (note: some provincial regulations have yet to be released at this time).
50. In the future, should the Township consider declaring any **small undeveloped park parcels as surplus** (in whole or in part) and disposing of them, this should follow a prescribed process and be evaluated using the criteria identified in this Master Plan, including a transparent public consultation process. Any revenue generated from a sale of surplus parkland should be allocated to investments in the parks and recreation system.

## 8.3 Park Design and Redevelopment Considerations

Since the pandemic, parks and outdoor facilities have experienced a surge in popularity. These community assets have taught us the importance of social connections and have become vital to our wellbeing. Along with greater use has come an increase in requests for improvements that serve both broad needs and specialized uses, such as accommodating special events, athletics, passive recreation, open space buffers, green space and habitat conservation, beautification, and more.

In recent years, the Township has been investing in its parks system by upgrading amenities and expanding the range of recreation opportunities through the introduction of multi-use sport pads, shuffleboard courts, pavilions, and modern playground installations. A keen focus must continue to be placed on making the best use of existing park sites, keeping parks relevant considering changing demographics, and improving connectivity within Guelph/Eramosa. The Township is currently expanding its asset management system to include all parks and recreation assets.

Designing parks requires a strong understanding of community needs, contemporary design practices, operational requirements, and programmatic considerations. From our observations, the Township's parks system is well maintained, but some older parks contain aging buildings (e.g., washrooms) and lack barrier-free features and contemporary park amenities. Strategic improvements and enhancements will help the Township continue to respond to emerging pressures, changing demographics, asset management, community priorities, etc.

Aside from initiatives that improve health, safety and environmental protection, park renewal projects should focus on those sites that receive the heaviest use. This means an emphasis on community-level parks. The possibilities for parkland renewal are limitless, but may include enhanced landscaping, provision of shade structures and other comfort amenities, improved parking, facility upgrades, and more.

**Some initial ideas received through the public input process are presented in the following table; these are not necessarily recommendations of the Master Plan, but rather represent future considerations for when parks are redeveloped and expanded.** The implementation of these and/or other parkland renewal and redevelopment projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific master plans, and facility fit diagrams to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital



works. The timing of capital works will be influenced by needs determined through consultation, demand indicators, coordination of works, and the availability of funding.

**Table 19: Preliminary Ideas for Improvements to Selected Park Sites**

Park	Examples of Possible Improvements
<p><b>Rockmosa Park</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade playground (2023/24 project)</li> <li>• Redevelop support building (barrier-free washrooms, storage)</li> <li>• Retain space for future multi-use recreation facility</li> <li>• Continue to seek options (e.g., netting) to resolve issues of errant balls from the ball diamond</li> <li>• Addition of lights to one full-size soccer field</li> <li>• Upgrade electrical service to large pavilion to support small-scale concerts and events</li> <li>• Improve barrier-accessibility to tennis clubhouse</li> <li>• Improve park lighting</li> <li>• Improve parking</li> <li>• Plan for replacement of the splash pad and installation of flow through water management system (long-term)</li> <li>• Consider adding outdoor covered refrigerated ice rink (with summer use for basketball, pickleball, etc.) and/or outdoor fitness equipment (long-term)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Marden Park</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued implementation of the Marden Park Master Plan, including expanded trails (may require bridging)</li> <li>• Restore seasonal vehicular access to open event space through culvert/creek improvements</li> <li>• Remove gate booth and install gates and/or barriers to restrict winter access to unmaintained gravel parking lot</li> <li>• Install parking gates on RDAPC entrance road to restrict unauthorized after-hours access</li> <li>• Replace ball diamond lights at end of life</li> <li>• Add pathway connecting paved parking lot to playground</li> <li>• Post additional signs regarding leash by-law</li> <li>• Add more garbage receptacles</li> <li>• Consider adding disc golf course, sports field expansion (e.g., soccer fields or ball diamonds, in response to demonstrated needs), improvements to event space, and/or beach volleyball complex (through a suitable third-party partnership) (long-term)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lloyd Dyer Park</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand parking (nearest street), to degree possible</li> <li>• Install lines for pickleball (2) across multi-use court</li> <li>• Consider installation of creative playground (currently has swings and teeter totters)</li> <li>• Remove snack bar/washrooms (not accessible) at end of life; replace with washroom (portable or within works building) to support ball diamond</li> </ul>

Park	Examples of Possible Improvements
<b>Memorial Park (Eden Mills)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve maintenance of ball diamond to support casual community use and winter ice rink operations</li> <li>• Consider adding a small pavilion and/or dedicated pickleball courts (long-term)</li> </ul>
<b>Dave Masson Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regrade area used for seasonal outdoor rink</li> <li>• Add pathway connecting sidewalk (west side) to playground</li> </ul>
<b>Valentino Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regrade area used for seasonal outdoor rink; extend water and electrical services to this location</li> <li>• Add pathway connecting sidewalk to playground</li> <li>• Replace basketball court with multi-use court to support winter skating (long-term)</li> </ul>
<b>Max Storey Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace playground (installed 2003) at end of life; consider adding both junior and senior playground features</li> <li>• Consider adding a half-court basketball court at this or another location in the vicinity</li> </ul>
<b>John Jolliffe Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prohibit tobogganing due to safety concerns (steep slope, lack of runout, etc.); add plantings and/or fencing to sloped hill to discourage unauthorized winter use</li> <li>• Consider adding a half-court basketball court at this or another location in the vicinity</li> <li>• Replace playground (2008) at end of life</li> </ul>
<b>Robert Pilkington Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install small shelter / gazebo with benches to support adjoining Kissing Bridge Trail</li> </ul>
<b>James Lynch Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site lacks sidewalks, pathways, parking lot, etc.; seek ways to improve pedestrian access into the park from the roadway</li> <li>• Evaluate need to maintain or dispose of property in municipal ownership across road to the east</li> </ul>

The following are best practices that the Township may adopt in designing new or redeveloped parks. Many of these practices are already in place, but are undocumented.

- a) Promote **universal accessibility** in all parks, such as wheelchair access, pathways, and ramps to play structures, etc.
- b) Provide both junior and senior play opportunities in parks with **playgrounds**. Use engineered wood fibre for surfacing, at minimum. Ensure appropriate sight lines to play areas.
- c) Consider activities and programming for the growing **older adult population**, including increased daytime use and emerging activities such as pickleball.

- d) **Unstructured space** within parks that allows for a wide variety of **active and passive uses throughout all seasons** is considered an asset.
- e) Locate **shade structures and trees** central to amenities. Consideration may be given to shade pavilions, shade structures over playground equipment and tree planting to protect users from the harmful effects of the sun.
- f) Provide informal **seating** opportunities. Locate seating in shaded areas, along accessible routes, and in proximity to active amenities.
- g) Maintained **pathways** should be a minimum of 3.0m wide, unless otherwise required, with clearance along pathways (waste bins, benches, trees, bike racks, etc.) for maintenance vehicles.
- h) Locate **waste and recycle receptacles** close to park entrances to facilitate maintenance. This includes pet waste receptacles in selected parks and trailhead areas.
- i) Select **materials and equipment** (e.g., park furniture) that are not easily vandalized and can be easily sourced for repair and/or replacement.
- j) Provide **consistent branded signage** at all public parks identifying the park name, address and current municipal branding. Additional signage should include emergency contact information and regulatory requirements (e.g., non-permitted uses, park hours, etc.).
- k) Encourage **public art** at appropriate locations, in keeping with relevant municipal guidelines.
- l) Expand **community vegetable garden plots** (with access to a water source and parking) and orchards to expand urban agriculture opportunities and local food security.
- m) Use non-invasive native species in all **plantings**.
- n) Follow **CPTED** (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles to enhance community security and safety features.
- o) Include **buffer space** between pathways and adjacent lot lines (minimum of 5.0 metres when abutting a residential property and 2.0 metres when abutting other land uses), as well as high-activity zones and residential lot lines.
- p) Provide **naturalized buffers** adjacent to natural features. Where appropriate, consider the piloting of naturalization initiatives and pollinator gardens in under-utilized portions of parks to support habitat creation and other environmental objectives.





Additionally, parks help us achieve many of our environmental goals through their ability to mitigate flooding, reduce our carbon footprint, cool urban areas, and build more resilient public spaces. A well-connected and equitably distributed parks system can also reduce vehicle travel and promote active forms of transportation and leisure (cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, etc.). The Township is encouraged to explore ways in which the parks system can contribute to its environmental goals.

### Recommendations

51. Maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety, and comfort** within the Township’s parks system. Regularly consult with the County’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike racks, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types.
52. Provide a variety of active and passive spaces within the parks system to support **all-season usage**, including recreation and sports, casual use and unstructured play, special events and cultural activities.
53. Undertake **park amenity condition assessments** on a regular basis to inform the Township’s asset management plan and long-term capital plan.
54. Identify and plan for additional **park improvement and renewal projects** that address emerging needs and aging infrastructure. Primary candidates for evaluation in the short-term include **Rockmosa Park, Marden Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, and Memorial Park**. Engage stakeholders and the public when designing and redeveloping parks.





**SECTION 9. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**



Active implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders, and the public. This section provides guidance for the Master Plan’s implementation.

## 9.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

The Township should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise, the recommendations of this Master Plan to ensure that they continue to reflect local conditions and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring activity trends, tracking user satisfaction levels, coordinating with community organizations and the public, reporting on progress, and undertaking a comprehensive ten-year update to the Plan. Through these strategies – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

The Plan should be reviewed annually as part of the Township’s budget cycle. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan:

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

### Recommendations

55. Regularly **monitor and report on the progress of the Master Plan**, including tracking of activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council and the community.
56. Establish **annual work plans** that provide focus on Master Plan recommendations that staff will seek to implement within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, and other logistics required to implement the priority recommendations.
57. Undertake a comprehensive **review and update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan** to begin no later than 2033. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

## 9.2 Summary of Recommendations – Timing and Prioritization

This section contains a summary of recommendations contained within the Master Plan. By approving this Plan, the Township is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

The timing of the recommendations proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation and/or outside funding sources as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what may be financially achievable at the present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects. The full implementation of this Plan will require the use of various funding sources and partnerships with others.

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

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

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

Priorities have been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of amenities and services, etc.). Municipalities generally seek to address the widest range of needs and achieve maximum community benefit through the efficient use of resources. Priority is often aligned with timing, except for those recommendations that are tied to population thresholds.

Within the tables that follow, the priority, timing, and high-level costing of the recommendations are organized into the following categories:

### Priority

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



**Timing**

- **Short-term:** 2024 to 2026
- **Medium-term:** 2027 to 2029
- **Longer-term:** 2030 and beyond
- **Ongoing:** Guidelines and practices to be followed on a continual basis

**Potential Cost Impacts**

(note: all cost estimates are preliminary and to be confirmed through future study)

- **Minor (\$):** estimated at \$100,000 or less
- **Moderate (\$\$):** estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- **Major (\$\$\$):** estimated at \$500,000 or more





Table 20: Summary of Recommendations – Priority and Timing

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
<b>Section 5: Service Delivery and Programming</b>				
1	Align service delivery priorities and decision-making with the <b>vision and guiding principles</b> of this Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	
2	Continue to solidify the <b>Parks and Recreation Department’s role</b> as a park/facility provider, program provider and facilitator, and event coordinator through consistent messaging in all communications, budgeting, policies, and procedures.	High	Ongoing	
3	Continue to work with the community to maximize participation and use of existing parks and facilities through <b>affordable recreation programming</b> for children, youth, and older adults. Review program provision annually to ensure that priority age groups are receiving an appropriate range of opportunities and to consider new program offerings.	High	Ongoing	
4	Seek to expand <b>multi-use programming space</b> through major infrastructure renewal and development projects.	High	Ongoing	See recommendation 27
5	Support expanded <b>year-round park use, outdoor education, and programming</b> through community development activities, special event coordination, and partnerships.	High	Ongoing	
6	Identify and track key <b>performance indicators and targets</b> that illustrate the value of parks and recreation services, such as (but not limited to) participation data from programs and local sports organizations and satisfaction levels for activities offered and enabled by the Township.	Medium	Ongoing	
7	Continue to <b>seek and support community partnerships</b> that service, reduce reliance on tax dollars, and increase resident access to needed parks and recreation services. Evaluate municipal participation in proposals from outside interests (including a minimum fundraising requirement) using the criteria, principles, and findings outlined in this Master Plan.	High	Ongoing	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
8	Ensure that third-party partnerships are guided by <b>written agreements</b> that address the responsibilities of all parties and protect the public interest.	High	Ongoing	
9	Continue efforts to maximize <b>community access to local school facilities</b> .	High	Ongoing	
10	Explore community service initiatives with <b>adjacent municipalities</b> that improve collaboration and promote effective and efficient service delivery for Guelph/Eramosa residents.	Medium	Ongoing	
11	Continue to actively support <b>volunteers and volunteer-led community organizations</b> in the development and delivery of parks and recreation programs and services.	High	Ongoing	
12	Explore options to use <b>volunteers for the maintenance of trails</b> and increased <b>volunteering opportunities for youth</b> .	Medium	Ongoing	
13	Review and document <b>Departmental maintenance and service levels</b> to support a sustained and strategic approach to identifying staffing requirements. Additional staff resources are likely to be required if the Township's parks, facilities, programs, and services are expanded.	High	Ongoing	Additional staff requirements to be determined
14	Develop and keep current a <b>succession plan</b> to proactively plan for retirements and employee transition.	High	Ongoing	
15	Review and update the existing <b>Municipal Alcohol Policy</b> to ensure a safe environment for users, allow residents to continue to enjoy the facilities, and protect the Township from undue risks.	High	Short-term	
16	Consider the development of <b>allocation policies</b> for the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre and sports fields to ensure that residents retain priority access to these spaces and that transparent procedures are in place to allow for access by non-resident and commercial users.	Medium	Medium-term	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
17	Review <b>policies and procedures</b> at least once every five years, with legislative and regulatory requirements reviewed more frequently.	High	Ongoing	
18	Implement Parks and Recreation Ontario’s <b>HIGH FIVE – Principles of Healthy Aging</b> to promote quality assurance in older adult recreational opportunities.	Medium	Short-term	
19	Continue to explore opportunities to <b>leverage data and technology</b> to improve community access to parks and recreation services, as well as the efficient and effective delivery of services (e.g., expanding online tools, mobile technologies, etc.).	Medium	Ongoing	
20	Continue to utilize and enhance a variety of <b>communication tools</b> to promote and gather feedback on parks and recreation services and initiatives. Options for expanding online and real-time information should be considered (e.g., digital roadside signs, social media networks, etc.), while maintaining and improving the printed community guide.	High	Ongoing	
21	Maintain and publicly promote an <b>inventory</b> of local parks and recreation programs, events, and service providers (including contact information).	High	Ongoing	
22	Host <b>annual forums</b> with community groups and residents to discuss initiatives and topics of interest related to local parks and recreation services.	High	Ongoing	
23	Continue to prepare <b>feasibility studies and business plans</b> (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	High	Ongoing	
24	Complete a comprehensive review of <b>parks and recreation fees and charges</b> , identifying direct and indirect costs and exploring the use of cost recovery thresholds for various services and categories of users (including non-residents and commercial providers). The goal is to ensure that costs are borne by users in a fair, equitable, and transparent fashion.	Medium	Medium-term	\$ (if consultant support is required)

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
25	Continue to encourage <b>long-term financial sustainability</b> through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, appropriate application of user fees, and the pursuit of external funding. Where appropriate and consistent with Township policies and priorities, consider <b>alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches</b> such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, sponsorships and advertising (e.g., at the Royal Distributing Athletic Performance Centre), and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.	High	Ongoing	
26	Use this <b>Master Plan as a resource</b> in establishing the Township’s annual budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.	High	Ongoing	
<b>Section 6: Recreation Facility Assessment</b>				
27	Continue to pursue the development of a <b>multi-use recreation facility in Rockmosa Park</b> , with primary components consisting of a gymnasium, walking track, multi-use community space, and space for youth and seniors (note: although previously supported, an indoor ice arena is not currently viewed as viable). Key steps include: (a) Establish and contribute to a <b>capital reserve</b> for the development of the MURF and actively seek grants and partnerships to support the project; and (b) Update the <b>business plan</b> for the proposed MURF to reflect the directions of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan, prepare updated capital and operational costing, and establish a funding strategy that can be used to inform future grant proposals. Should the Township not pursue the MURF (or extend the project out well into the future), a business plan should be prepared to evaluate the viability of updating the <b>Rockmosa Community Centre</b> to better serve needs for active programming.	High	Ongoing	\$\$\$
28	Evaluate <b>requests for facilities and services</b> that are not part of the Township’s core mandate on a case-by-case basis after measuring them against this Plan’s principles and goals. <b>Unsolicited proposals</b> should be supported by a proponent-led market assessment and business plan that demonstrates why the Township should be involved in the delivery of a non-core service.	Low	Ongoing	



ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
<b>Section 7: Park Facility Assessment</b>				
29	Continue to place a priority on <b>trail infrastructure projects</b> that connect communities and enhance existing networks, supported by the County's Active Transportation Master Plan. Potential projects include: connections to the City of Guelph; resident access to Conservation Areas; trail development on the Charleston Property; improved/expanded trails within Marden Park; and use of unopened road allowances.	High	Ongoing	\$\$-\$\$\$
30	Work in partnership with local user groups to <b>add lights to the 11v11 soccer field at Rockmosa Park</b> to increase capacity for evening play.	Medium	Medium-term	\$\$
31	Work with user groups to assess opportunities to <b>expand one or more existing lit ball diamonds</b> to accommodate organized use, including adult play.	Medium	Medium-term	\$\$
32	Maintain the <b>ball diamond at Memorial Park</b> in Eden Mills for casual community use and to support winter rink use.	Low	Short-term	\$
33	Continue to <b>invest in playgrounds</b> through a new destination playground within Rockmosa Park, creative play structure in Lloyd Dyer Park, and end-of-life replacements (e.g., Max Storey Park, John Jolliffe Park, etc.). Consideration may be given to natural/adventure playgrounds at selected locations, in consultation with the community.	High	Ongoing	\$\$
34	Monitor the need for playgrounds in growth areas while striving to provide <b>playgrounds within approximately 500 metres</b> (roughly a five-to-ten-minute walk, unobstructed by waterways, railway lines, highways, etc.) of all major built-up residential areas.	High	Ongoing	
35	Ensure that all playgrounds with accessible components are connected to a <b>pathway</b> (firm and stable surface). Locations requiring assessment include (but may not be limited to) Marden Park, Valentino Park, and David Masson Park.	High	Short-term	\$

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
36	Consider installing <b>outdoor fitness equipment</b> at a community park site, such as Rockmosa Park.	Low	Medium-term	\$
37	Prepare for the eventual replacement of <b>the splash pad in Rockmosa Park</b> as it approaches its life expectancy. Replace with an appropriately-sized system that uses a more operationally efficiency flow through water management system.	Medium	Longer-term	\$\$
38	Additional <b>outdoor pickleball courts</b> should be provided to meet short- and long-term needs. Options include painting pickleball lines on the basketball court at Lloyd Dyer Park, developing 2 to 4 dedicated courts at Memorial Park in Eden Mills, and/or creating additional courts at Rockmosa Park as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad.	High	Short to Longer-term	\$\$
39	Work with the Rockwood Tennis Club to address barrier-free accessibility improvements to the <b>tennis clubhouse</b> through an appropriate cost-sharing agreement.	High	Short to Medium-term	\$\$
40	Develop a <b>full-size basketball court in Rockmosa Park</b> (possibly as part of the recommended covered outdoor pad).	Medium	Medium-term	\$ (see also recommendation 27)
41	Conduct a site assessment to determine a viable location for one <b>half basketball court in the Noble Ridge Area</b> (e.g., Max Storey Park, Hampson Parkette, John Joliffe Park, etc.).	Medium	Medium-term	\$
42	When existing basketball courts reach end of life, consideration should be given to replacing them with <b>designs that can also support winter ice skating</b> (e.g., Valentino Park).	Medium	Ongoing	\$-\$\$

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
43	Work with interested sport organizations to pursue the development of <b>beach volleyball courts</b> at Marden Park. Any such agreement should protect the public interest and offer some degree of public access and programming, supported by a business case acceptable to the Township.	Medium	Ongoing	\$
44	Evaluate options for developing a <b>smaller covered (open air) outdoor refrigerated ice rink</b> for leisure skating and shinny within Rockmosa Park to provide residents with skating opportunities within their own community.	Medium	Medium-term	\$\$\$ (see also recommendation 27)
45	Encourage the integration of volunteer-managed <b>community vegetable gardens and orchards</b> within the Township’s park network, focusing on under-utilized lands that have adequate access to a water source and parking.	Medium	Ongoing	\$
46	Remove <b>John Jolliffe Park</b> as a designated tobogganing hill and take steps to restrict winter usage.	High	Short-term	\$
<b>Section 8: Parkland and Open Space Assessment</b>				
47	Use the Master Plan’s <b>parkland classification policy framework</b> to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.	Medium	Ongoing	
48	Update the parks and open space <b>inventory database and mapping</b> regularly to assist in the assessment of land requirements.	Medium	Ongoing	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
49	Prioritize the acceptance of <b>cash-in-lieu of parkland</b> through land development and redevelopment applications, except in larger subdivisions or multi-unit residential projects that would require localized parkland. The Township may use its parkland dedication reserve to purchase land or for other public recreation purposes based on demonstrated needs. The Township's Parkland Dedication By-law should also be updated to reflect recent legislative changes (note: some provincial regulations have yet to be released at this time).	High	Ongoing	
50	In the future, should the Township consider declaring any <b>small undeveloped park parcels as surplus</b> (in whole or in part) and disposing of them, this should follow a prescribed process and be evaluated using the criteria identified in this Master Plan, including a transparent public consultation process. Any revenue generated from a sale of surplus parkland should be allocated to investments in the parks and recreation system.	Low	Ongoing	
51	Maintain a commitment to <b>universal accessibility, safety, and comfort</b> within the Township's parks system. Regularly consult with the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike racks, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types.	High	Ongoing	\$-\$\$
52	Provide a variety of active and passive spaces within the parks system to support <b>all-season usage</b> , including recreation and sports, casual use and unstructured play, special events and cultural activities.	High	Ongoing	
53	Undertake <b>park amenity condition assessments</b> on a regular basis to inform the Township's asset management plan and long-term capital plan.	High	Ongoing	



ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
54	Identify and plan for additional <b>park improvement and renewal projects</b> that address emerging needs and aging infrastructure. Primary candidates for evaluation in the short-term include <b>Rockmosa Park, Marden Park, Lloyd Dyer Park, and Memorial Park</b> . Engage stakeholders and the public when designing and redeveloping parks.	High	Ongoing	\$-\$\$\$ (variable/site-specific costs)
<b>Section 9: Implementation Strategy</b>				
55	Regularly <b>monitor and report on the progress of the Master Plan</b> , including tracking of activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council and the community.	High	Ongoing	
56	Establish <b>annual work plans</b> that provide focus on Master Plan recommendations that staff will seek to implement within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, and other logistics required to implement the priority recommendations.	High	Ongoing	
57	Undertake a comprehensive <b>review and update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan</b> to begin no later than 2033. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	High	Longer-term	\$ (if consultant support is required)

## APPENDIX A: RECORD OF PUBLIC INPUT

### Community Survey – Detailed Results

See following pages.

**Participation in Parks & Recreation Activities**

1) Since 2019 (the year prior to the pandemic), in which of the following activities did you or anyone in your household participate, in Guelph/Eramosa or elsewhere? Participation refers to situations where you or a member of your household actively take part (not as a spectator), either at home or in public. (select all that apply)

	#	%		#
Baseball or Softball	106	28%		
Basketball	69	19%		
BMX or Mountain Biking	52	14%		
Canoeing or Kayaking	109	29%		
Cycling	113	30%		
Disc Golf / Frisbee Golf	22	6%		
Dog Walking (off-leash park)	113	30%		
Fitness, Yoga or Weight-training	159	43%		
Football, Rugby or Field Lacrosse	25	7%		
Hockey, Skating, or Ice Sports (indoor)	140	38%		
Hockey, Skating, or Ice Sports (outdoor)	113	30%		
Organized Recreation Programs or Camps	94	25%		
Pickleball (indoor)	24	6%		
Pickleball (outdoor)	21	6%		
Running or Jogging	111	30%		
Skateboarding or Scootering	69	19%		
Soccer	148	40%		
Special Events in Parks	153	41%		
Swimming (indoor)	150	40%		
Swimming (outdoor)	111	30%	<b>Other (top responses)</b>	<b>#</b>
Tennis	70	19%	Social programming	4
Use of Outdoor Fitness Equipment	45	12%	Gardening	3
Use of Playground Equipment	167	45%	Skiing	3
Use of Splash Pad	166	45%	Older adult	2
Volleyball (beach)	35	9%	Music in the	2
Volleyball (indoor)	31	8%	Horseback	2
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	251	67%	Pole walking	2
Other (please specify)	31	8%	Squash	2
None of the above	15	4%	Frisbee	1
<b>answered question</b>	<b>372</b>			
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>			

2) Are you and members of your household able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like?

	#	%
Yes	207	56%
No	165	44%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>0</b>	

**3) Why are you and members of your household not able to participate parks and recreation activities as often as you would like? (select up to 3 responses)**

	#	%		#
Activity has not resumed due to the pandemic	4	3%	<b>Other (top responses)</b>	
Health problems / Disability / Age	9	6%	Programming not offered	6
Lack of Child Care	15	10%	A MURF is needed	1
Lack of desired facilities or programs	104	66%	Need a hockey rink	1
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	32	20%	Travel distance to programming	1
Lack of money / Too expensive	26	17%	Programming is full	1
Lack of motivation	6	4%	Off-leash dog park is needed	1
Lack of or inadequate parking	9	6%		
Lack of time / Too busy	40	25%		
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	43	27%		
Language / Cultural Barrier	1	1%		
Not a priority in our household	3	2%		
Program / Activity is often full	33	21%		
Program not offered at a convenient time	37	24%		
Don't Know	3	2%		
Other (please specify)	13	8%		
<b>answered question</b>	<b>157</b>			
skipped question	215			

**Program / Activity Gaps**

**4) What are the best ways to inform you about parks and recreation activities and events in Guelph/Eramosa? (select all that apply)**

	#	%		#
Community Guide (print)	138	38%	<b>Other (top responses)</b>	
Community Guide (digital)	186	52%	Email	13
Township Website	184	51%	Word of mouth	6
Township Social Media Channels	181	50%	Schools	3
Other Social Media Channels	131	36%	Social media	2
Poster, Advertisement or Handout	89	25%	Flyer	3
Community or Sports Organization	89	25%	Billboard	1
Don't Know	4	1%		
Other (please specify)	30	8%		
<b>answered question</b>	<b>359</b>			
skipped question	13			

**5) If the Township were to provide additional programs or activities in Guelph/Eramosa, which age groups should be the highest priorities? (select all that apply)**

	#	%
Pre-School (4 years and under)	91	25%
Children (5 – 12 years)	192	53%
Teens (13 – 18 years)	195	54%
Adults (19 – 54 years)	171	48%
Older Adults (55 – 69 years)	109	30%
Seniors (70 years and over)	82	23%
Families	107	30%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>360</b>	
skipped question	12	



6) Are there any parks and recreation activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa that are not currently available?

	#	%
Yes	240	66%
No	121	34%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	11	

7) Please identify up to two parks and recreation activities that you would like to see offered in the Township.

	#	%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>63%</b>
skipped question	139	37%

<b>Open-ended (Top Activities)</b>	#
Swimming	86
Hockey	40
Skating rink	58
Baseball	16
Trails	12
Pickleball	10
Indoor walking track	10
Volleyball	8
Basketball	9
Tennis	6

**Accessibility of Parks and Facilities**

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

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Don't Know		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
You feel well informed about the Township's parks, facilities, programs, and events.	15	4%	118	34%	181	52%	18	5%	13	4%	<b>345</b>	<b>100%</b>	27
The Township's parks are conveniently located.	9	3%	27	8%	240	69%	62	18%	8	2%	<b>346</b>	<b>100%</b>	26
The Township's community and recreation facilities are conveniently located.	27	8%	64	18%	206	60%	39	11%	10	3%	<b>346</b>	<b>100%</b>	26
The Township's parks and recreation services are affordable.	5	1%	29	8%	209	60%	47	14%	56	16%	<b>346</b>	<b>100%</b>	26
The Township should offer more recreation programming at its community centres.	8	2%	16	5%	165	48%	117	34%	40	12%	<b>346</b>	<b>100%</b>	26

**Indoor Multi-use Recreation Facility**

9) The Township is considering the future development of an indoor multi-use recreation facility in the Rockwood area, our largest population centre. The services and spaces within the facility have not been decided upon, but would focus on community wellness. To move forward, funding may be required from other levels of government. Such a project may result in a property tax increase, the amount of which would require further study. With this in mind, do you agree that the development of an indoor multi-use recreation facility should be a high priority for the Township?

	#	%
Strongly Disagree	31	9%
Disagree	24	7%
Agree	91	26%
Strongly Agree	177	51%
Undecided	21	6%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	28	

10) If the Township continues to consider an indoor multi-use recreation facility, which of the following amenities do you feel should be priorities?

	Low Priority		Medium Priority		High Priority		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Arena for ice sports	66	20%	68	21%	169	52%	22	7%	325	100%	47
Community Space for banquets and meetings	157	48%	107	33%	48	15%	15	5%	327	100%	45
Dedicated Space for Older Adults	110	34%	121	37%	75	23%	21	6%	327	100%	45
Dedicated Space for Youth	29	9%	115	35%	175	53%	10	3%	329	100%	43
Fitness and Wellness Spaces	20	6%	99	30%	207	63%	4	1%	330	100%	42
Gymnasium for court sports	33	10%	119	36%	162	49%	15	5%	329	100%	43
Indoor Swimming Pool	52	16%	82	25%	193	58%	5	2%	332	100%	40
Indoor Turf Facilities for soccer, etc.	105	32%	90	28%	115	35%	16	5%	326	100%	46
Indoor Walking Track	79	24%	97	29%	141	43%	12	4%	329	100%	43

Other high priorities (please specify)	#
Tennis courts	5
Pickleball courts	4
Workout space	4
Squash courts	3
Bike trails	2
Field lighting	2
<b>Responses Provided</b>	<b>46</b>

11) How willing would your household be to consider the following options to help financially support the development and operation of an indoor multi-use recreation facility in Rockwood?

	Very Unwilling		Somewhat Unwilling		Somewhat Willing		Very Willing		Don't Know		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Pay user fees for activities	22	6%	13	4%	122	36%	180	53%	3	1%	340	100%	32
Donate to a capital fundraising campaign (minimum \$100)	54	16%	34	10%	127	38%	95	28%	25	7%	335	100%	37
Pay higher property taxes (minimum 4% more)	108	32%	75	22%	111	33%	33	10%	9	3%	336	100%	36
Take on municipal debt, potentially delaying other community projects	73	22%	51	15%	114	34%	59	18%	36	11%	333	100%	39

**Priorities for Parks**

12) To assist the Township in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following amenities within parks?

	Low Priority		Medium Priority		High Priority		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	113	34%	126	38%	62	19%	28	9%	329	100%	43
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	99	30%	151	46%	56	17%	23	7%	329	100%	43
Beach Volleyball Courts	182	56%	78	24%	36	11%	31	9%	327	100%	45
BMX or Bike Parks	174	53%	93	29%	25	8%	34	10%	326	100%	46
Community Vegetable Gardens	135	41%	105	32%	63	19%	24	7%	327	100%	45
Nature Trails	71	21%	102	31%	149	45%	9	3%	331	100%	41
Off-Leash Dog Parks	171	53%	84	26%	39	12%	31	10%	325	100%	47
Outdoor Ice Rinks (natural ice)	78	24%	139	43%	95	29%	14	4%	326	100%	46
Paved Trails	110	33%	127	39%	83	25%	9	3%	329	100%	43
Pickleball Courts (outdoor)	139	42%	101	31%	40	12%	49	15%	329	100%	43
Playgrounds	45	14%	114	35%	155	47%	14	4%	328	100%	44
Skateboard Parks	153	47%	111	34%	31	9%	33	10%	328	100%	44
Soccer and Multi-use Fields	80	24%	121	37%	114	35%	13	4%	328	100%	44
Special Events Space	128	40%	127	39%	49	15%	20	6%	324	100%	48
Splash Pads	65	20%	117	36%	131	40%	15	5%	328	100%	44
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	122	37%	119	36%	62	19%	28	8%	331	100%	41
Washrooms	24	7%	104	31%	197	60%	6	2%	331	100%	41

Other high priorities (please specify)	#	%	Other high priority Categories (please specify)	#
Responses Provided	37	100%	Swimming pool	10
			Hockey arena	5
			Field lighting	4
			Washrooms	3
			Access to rental spaces	2
			Biking trails	2
			Outdoor fitness equipment	2
			Pickleball courts	2
			Bandshell	1
			Farmers market	1
			Fitness centre	1
			Indoor Pickleball	1
			Indoor Soccer	1
			indoor squash courts	1
			Playgrounds	1
			Walking trails	1

**Comments**

13) Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding parks and recreation in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa.

Additional Comments	#	%
Responses Provided	147	100%

**Examples:**

- "An indoor walking track, indoor turf soccer field, and indoor ice rink are huge priorities! As is an improved playground and swings at Rockmosa."
- "Lights at the soccer fields. We have beautiful fields and can't use them past 8 starting mid August."
- "We need facilities to keep our kids particularly teens engaged."
- "We would love to have our own swimming pool on Rockwood so as not to compete with all the other towns for community swimming lessons."
- "Personally I would love to have more hiking trails within nature areas and an indoor swimming pool."

### Demographic Information

#### 14) How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%
1	17	5%
2	79	24%
3	56	17%
4	128	38%
5	41	12%
6	15	4%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	36	
<b>Total Persons</b>	<b>1,150</b>	
Average Person per Household	3.4	

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

	# of House- holds	% of House- holds	# of People	% of People	2021 Census (Pop)
Under 10 years	146	39%	248	22%	10%
10-19 years	106	28%	182	16%	13%
20-34 years	83	22%	123	11%	15%
35-54 years	215	58%	384	33%	26%
55-69 years	78	21%	124	11%	23%
70 years and over	53	14%	89	8%	13%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>336</b>		<b>1,150</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
persons per household	3.4				

#### 16) How long have you lived in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa?

	#	%
Less than 5 years	76	22%
5 to 10 years	67	20%
More than 10 years	183	54%
Don't live in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa	14	4%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	32	

#### 17) Which local community do you live closest to:

	#	%
Ariss	2	1%
Eden Mills	25	8%
Everton	14	4%
Marden	17	5%
Rockwood	265	82%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	49	

#### 18) If you do not live in the Township of Guelph/Eramosa, in which municipality do you reside?

	#	%
Acton	1	8%
Erin	2	15%
Guelph	9	69%
Puslinch	1	8%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Online Discussion Forum (MindMixer)**

Discussion Topic	Top Suggestions
<p><b>How can we improve the Township’s Recreation Facilities?</b> (n=74)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spaces for youth and teens to hangout with organized activities (i.e., art studio space, music space)</li> <li>• Field lights at Rockmosa soccer fields</li> <li>• Separate pickleball courts</li> <li>• Improve Rockmosa park bathroom facilities</li> <li>• Indoor facility spaces:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ice pads</li> <li>○ Swimming pool</li> <li>○ Walking track</li> <li>○ Gymnasium space</li> <li>○ Community rooms</li> <li>○ Soccer field</li> <li>○ Indigenous land-based learning spaces</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>How can we improve the Township’s Parks?</b> (n=98)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-open access to the Rockwood Conservation area</li> <li>• Add playgrounds (i.e., Ariss Park) and improve existing playgrounds (i.e., Rockmosa Park, Lloyd Dyer)</li> <li>• Maintain walking trails in winter</li> <li>• Accessible entrance to enabling garden through the Older Adult Centre</li> <li>• Public bike repair stations at parkettes</li> <li>• Replace dying trees on Shadow drive parkland</li> <li>• Assess the ball diamond at Eden Mills Memorial Park</li> <li>• Provide a park map at each location</li> <li>• Add amenities (i.e., seating, shade)</li> <li>• Monitoring Rockmosa Park’s off-leash dogs</li> <li>• Add a disc golf course in Marden Park</li> <li>• More community gardens</li> <li>• Add more parks in residential areas</li> </ul>
<p><b>How can the Rockmosa and Marden Community Centres better meet your needs? What types of programs are you interested in?</b> (n=7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More access to different types of sports and exercise (including indoor)</li> <li>• Weeknight programs for youth (i.e., scouts, brownies, STEM classes, etc.)</li> <li>• Winter Programming for kids</li> <li>• Lower user fees</li> <li>• More senior programming</li> <li>• Seniors 55+ sports leagues</li> <li>• PA day programs for kids</li> <li>• Keep Older Adult programs in summer</li> </ul>

## Seniors Workshop – Detailed Comments

### Strengths: What do you like most about parks and recreation in Guelph/Eramosa?

#### Individual Responses

- **Good communication**
  - Good communication through emails
  - Communication
  - Friendly and helpful staff
  - Staff are very accommodating
  - Communication is great through emails and phone calls
  - Friendly staff
  - Newsletters
- **Variety of programs**
  - There are many programs offered
  - Very nice variety of programs
  - Various fitness opportunities
  - Many new programs are being added and staff is always helpful and cheerful
  - Diverse programs
  - Activities
  - Variety of programs
  - Many guest speaker events
- **Walking trails**
  - Trails are awesome to walk on
  - Green space/ walking track
  - A beautiful area for walks and camping
  - The trails in the parks
  - Walking trail at Rockmosa park
  - Walking path at Rockmosa park
- **Inclusive and affordable**
  - Cost of programs is affordable
  - Inclusivity
  - Availability
  - Friendly and affordable
  - Movies 1 month free in Library
  - Available Park land
  - Great for our mental minds
  - Meeting new people
  - Learning new things
  - That you acted on last community consultation, thank you!
  - Toboggan hill a great idea
  - Cooking classes
  - Music in the garden
  - Enabling garden Rockwood
  - Party in the park (2)
  - Rockmosa Older Adult Centre

**Barriers: What barriers keep older adults from participating in parks and recreation activities? How can we address these barriers?**

**Group Responses**

Priority	Responses
24	Transportation (volunteers, drive share list, carpool, taxi services, shuttles)
13	Financial (costs too high), need for free or subsidized programming
10	Accessible washrooms open year round at least until dark, even port a potty in all parks throughout Township (e.g. Marden Library bathrooms open when library closed)
9	Availability of time slots for indoor programs, not enough in afternoon and evening - space, use outside facilities such as churches, schools, etc.
8	Lack of parking around Rockmosa
7	Size of Older Adult Centre (OAC) small
7	Music performances great but area far too small (band shell?)
5	Lack of technological abilities (online access, wifi, internet), provide tech workshops
5	Resurrect twp. Walking trail, info needed and signage
4	Lack of indoor space, no fitness in summer because of camps
4	Health, therapeutic recreation opportunities needed, health condition may restrict users
4	Communication, linguistically, programs offered are made aware to the community
4	Slippery floor (e.g. Rockmosa and Eden Mills Hall), easy to fall when playing table tennis, need non-slip floor surfaces
4	Insufficient parking spots, winter plowing blocks accessible parking spaces
3	More benches, people need to sit
3	Communication with new residents
2	Groomed walking trails
2	Too much centered in Rockwood, need throughout Township for seniors
1	Lion's Park needs to be cleaner
1	Put in Wellington advertiser and other accessible print media and with a telephone number to reply
1	Simple, clear instructions for events such as location and room number
0	Weather cancellations

**Individual Responses:**

- **Washrooms**
  - Washrooms and parking access, design flow
  - Lack of bathrooms and water stations
  - Washrooms
  - Accessible washrooms open year-round at least until dark in all parks
  - Washrooms for handicapped
- **Transportation**
  - Volunteers to drive shuttles (2)
  - Transportation (5)
  - Transportation for non-drivers, carpools
- **Distance**
  - Distance to Rockwood for activities, have more at the community centre in Marden
  - In the winter, the township plows the road to Rockmore. Unfortunately, they put the snow on the parking lot forcing seniors to walk longer distances to participate in activities, easy solution place snow further away
  - Township kind of chopped up, businesses sprawled out
  - None for me, live within walking distance of older adult centre
- **Finances**
  - Financial
  - Lack of government funding
  - Financial barriers for myself as I am a single senior, use most of the free or minimal cost programs
  - Financial, cost can mount up if used regularly
  - Transportation, costs
  - Financial of time slot for indoor programs, more spaces
- **Timing of events**
  - Indoor availability for winter events
  - Programs in afternoon and evening such as fitness class and pole walking all currently in the AM
  - Social, mixers to introduce new members
- Physical, health or transportation
- Music
- Information and access to Royal Distributing Centre
- No computer skills, advertise events monthly in Wellington Advertiser



**Programs and Activities: What new or additional programs and activities are needed in Guelph/Eramosa?**

**Group Responses**

Priority	Responses
11	Dedicated outdoor pickleball courts
8	More entertainment and activities (all year)
7	Activity stations around Rockmosa Park
7	Bocce ball
6	New venue for music and garden in Marden, outdoor bandshell
6	More variety in exercise classes (Zumba, clogging, line dancing) and workshops
6	Speed walking track, indoor in Rockwood, cushioned
6	Arts and music activities
5	Movie in the park
5	Theatre
5	Exercise programs for physical limitations
4	Skating for seniors (currently limited due to junior hockey in neighbourhoods)
4	Blended programming offered (older/younger age groups, fall prevention, tai-chi, lawn bowling, mens group)
3	Drop-in gym
3	Crafting
3	Senior day programs (health related)
3	Programs in afternoon and evening
3	Indoor and outdoor swimming pool and classes (also accessible)
2	Lectures and speakers
2	Senior Olympics
2	Nutritional cooking lessons
2	Hockey ice/floor
2	More parking
2	Continuous grant proposals
2	Inventory of skillsets for leaders for activities
2	Seasonal fashion shows
2	Dog park, separate area for small dogs and puppies as main area dogs have attacked others

Priority	Responses
2	More programs in general besides fitness throughout Township
1	Children's programs
1	Line dancing
1	Square dancing
1	Washers
1	Access to conservation area for residents
1	Phone/Mail communication for those not online
1	18 hole Putting facility
1	Poker/card club
1	Movies in the park
1	More variety of fitness programs (zumba, osteo-fit, NIA, yoga, etc.)
1	Guided nature walks
1	Enhance use of Eden Memorial Park, needs community consultation with villagers
1	Multi use, e.g. tennis, pickleball, badminton plus for teens skateboard park
0	Drop-in coffee program
0	Family programs
0	Fundraising
0	Indoor table tennis
0	Outdoor yoga and tai chi
0	Handcrafts (knitting, crochet)
0	Year-round fitness class
0	Tech classes and consultants
0	Weekly communications on activities
0	Badminton
0	Marden and other trails made barrier free for strollers, wheelchairs, walkers
0	More yoga for seniors

**Individual Responses**

- **Arts**
  - Trips to theatre e.g., Stratford and Toronto
  - Arts activities
  - Zumba at Rockmosa
  - Music in Marden
  - More music in garden
  - Music in the park, bring a lawn chair
  - Music Bandshell
  - Line dancing, clogging
  - Bocce, washers, square dancing
- **Movies**
  - Movies in the park (2)
  - Movies and activities in park
- **Sports**
  - Badminton (2)
  - Dedicated outdoor pickleball court (2)
  - Have courts for multi-use, tennis pickleball
  - More pickleball dates
  - Indoor winter sports opportunities (volleyball, basketball, proper pickleball courts)
  - Bocce ball
  - Hockey rink, 10 years ago rink was 8 million, what's the cost now?
  - Sports groups, lawn bowling
  - Swimming pool (2)
  - A therapeutic pool would be helpful
  - Accessible indoor swimming pools/Marden Hall
  - Yoga classes
  - Tai Chi
- **More swim times**
  - Stop cutting swim times at Victoria Park pool (City of Guelph)
  - More swim time in Guelph pools
- **Fitness**
  - More fitness variety
  - Year-round fitness classes
  - Summer fitness
  - Outdoor fitness classes in afternoon/evening
- **Health**
  - Men's Group
  - Fall prevention
  - Health workshops, foot care clinics for all parks of township
  - Activities at Marden for seniors
  - Year-round activities
  - Use outdoor spaces for fall/winter activities
  - More activities in the park, activities throughout the day
  - We have lots of programs to choose from but can always add more affordable programs

- Computer lab where students can volunteer and assist us with tech
- Fundraising store
- Guided nature walks
- More barrier free accessible for strollers, walkers, wheelchairs
- Library bathrooms open until dark
- Port a potty

**Facility and Space Needs: How well do existing facilities meet your program and activity needs? How can existing facilities be improved? If the Township pursues a multi-use recreation facility in Rockmosa Park, what spaces should be considered?**

**Group Responses**

Priority	Responses
14	Arena with indoor walking track and multi-use ability (exercise classes, pickleball courts)
9	Multiuse indoor facility (gym, pickleball, fitness equipment)
9	Keep Rockmosa as a community centre for meetings, receptions, wellness and health
7	Expand senior centre with café facilities
7	Arena open all year to pull the whole community together (rural and town)
6	Activity stations at Rockmosa Park
6	Indoor space need exceeds the space now (Puslinch space Aberfoyle)
5	Expansion of older adult centre into library sitting area, partnership of facility space with other organizations
4	Pool or transportation to a pool
4	Indoor walking trails closer than Marden
4	Priority times for local community groups and organizations
4	Band stand/bandshell in the park
3	More picnic tables at Rockmosa park
3	Rockwood area too small, limits numbers
3	Youth drop-in centre
3	Storage and indoor walking spaces at new MURF
3	Lloyd Dyer Park, clean up bugs and poison ivy
2	Benches at Rockmosa CC
2	Exercise room
2	Stage - good acoustics
2	Need sponsors for facilities for free drop-in
2	Raised vegetable garden beds



Priority	Responses
2	Meeting rooms (small and large)
2	Garden at new MURF
2	New MURF at the same location as a future new build high school
2	More accessible bathrooms open year-round to dark
2	Rockwood Lions Park by river - canoe launch (boat cradle) like Fairy Lake in Acton, makes kayaking and canoeing more accessible
2	Divide dog park into areas for small and large dogs
1	More garbage cans
1	Rink with time for adults
1	Gym
1	Commercial Kitchen
1	Dedicated pickleball courts
1	Additional parking (plowed in winter)
1	Eden Mills memorial park enhanced use of old baseball diamond into badminton/pickleball, skateboard park, multigenerational
0	Men's den
0	Indoor permanent shuffleboard courts
0	Parking lot
0	Indoor/outdoor accessible bathrooms
0	Bocce facility
0	Skating
0	Indoor sports
0	Covered pavilions in the park

**Individual Responses**

- **Additional facility**
  - Gym space and indoor facility
  - Second indoor facility for township use, indoor courts for multi-use
  - Have another hall for sports events only
  - New centre should have indoor and outdoor areas
  - Too small, more storages, larger meeting areas, gym space needed and indoor walk ins
  - Multi use building for gym and exercise
  - Arena, hockey and figure skating in winter, ball hockey in summer, hockey camps in conjunction with the conservation park

- **Swimming pool**
  - Transportation to the pool
  - Pool
  - Swimming pool with accessibility for people with mobility issues, skating rink, cushioned walking trail
  - Therapy pool
  - Lots of social programs which I like, pool and ice rink
  - More pool, garbage cans, permanent shuffle board
- **Music**
  - Band stand (3)
- **Benches**
  - Tables and benches
  - Benches for seniors to sit
  - Benches outside entrance to Rockmosa centre
- **Parking**
  - Keep parking clean
  - Parking access
- **Bathrooms**
  - Provide a port a potty for Marden Park, need badly
  - Outdoor bathrooms
  - More bathrooms and outhouses open year-round until dark
- Need a bigger space for pickleball, Rockwood is older and too small
- More pickleball for beginners dates
- Utilize Marden Park for more activities
- Spaces for free drop ins
- Keep Rockmosa as hall for meetings, receptions

**Working together: How can we work together to improve recreation services for older adults?**

**Individual Responses**

- **Use various ways of communication**
  - Flyers, newspaper, phone calls
  - Some people at our table do not use internet so non-tech people may be missing out on information
  - Wellington Advertiser to list all activities at the first of each month or possible 2 weeks before that, everyone receives that free paper
  - Quarterly newsletter relaying info from other centres in Guelph Eramosa that Rockwood residents can access
  - Keep up the good communication, just know not all seniors are tech savvy and accommodate with old fashioned flyers/posters to advertise
- **Involvement**
  - Use volunteers to make it work
  - Let all organizations be involved, the whole community and Rockwood volunteers
  - Work together
  - Other service clubs and organizations for community events
  - Participant involvement in running programs promotes buy in and keeps cost down, how do we get more male involvement?

- Volunteers to clean up and maintain parks
- **Raising funds**
  - Draws raise money, lotteries, grants from province, federal govt.
  - Shared funding through community school concept, ref city of Hamilton Dalewood school
- Too much about Rockwood
- Seniors sharing facilities with schools does not always work, limits time slots for both age groups
- Build rural arena
- Attract all communities
- More free or low-cost services with low intense fitness regimes and available transportation
- Many programs and classes cancelled because of lack of participants
- More accessible trails for walkers/wheelchairs
- All season open to park bathrooms

### **Public Open House on Draft Master Plan – Detailed Comments**

Feedback on the Draft Master Plan was provided through email and during an Open House on November 8, 2023. Feedback consisted of:

#### **What do you like most about the draft Master Plan?**

- Proposed MURF and walking track (2)
- Upgrades to playgrounds
- A larger Seniors Centre
- Washrooms as a priority at ball diamonds and soccer fields
- Covered outdoor rink
- Community input has been very well represented
- Dedicated pickleball courts in Eden Mills to support inclusivity, health and fitness, social engagement, and increased property values

#### **What else should be considered?**

- Accessibility improvements and LED Lights at Tennis Club
- Another 55+ activity room
- Artificial turf and uprights at outdoor field facilities
- ATV trails
- Bubble over Rockwood's Tennis Courts for winter usage (2)
- Consider the location and orientation of the open-air rink with respect to the sun
- Dance, theatre, visuals arts, band and choir practice spaces
- Dedicated pickleball courts at new MURF
- Designing the new MURF in Rockwood with a divisible gymnasium for multiple uses
- Extend the length of the 55+ fitness sessions
- Full sized basketball courts
- A Glee Club / Band Room

- Indoor soccer field in Rockwood
- Lower Park concession rentals rates
- Lower rates for local Township teams at sports fields
- More outdoor court facilities distributed at smaller parks
- More programming for children
- Non-resident user fees
- Not removing the Tobogganing Hill at John Joliffe Park (2)
- Raise the priority for Rockmosa Park washroom accessibility
- Selling the naming rights for parks and recreation facilities to cover costs
- Separate office for the Community Coordinator Assistant
- Short-term space for youth centre
- Solutions to current parking issues at Rockmosa Park (2)
- Squash courts in new MURF (2)
- Year-round washrooms to all parks