



Municipality of Southwest Middlesex | September 2021

Facilities & Recreation Master Plan





MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTHWEST MIDDLESEX

Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

September 2021



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Executive Summary

Overview

The **Facilities & Recreation Master Plan** identifies the parks, recreation and cultural needs and priorities for the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex over a ten-year period. During this time, Southwest Middlesex is expected to grow by up to 700 residents (or by 12%), reaching a population of 6,700 residents by 2031. Changes to Southwest Middlesex's community profile, together with evolving interests and participation trends, provided the impetus for the Municipality to complete this Master Plan to determine current and future needs and priorities for parks, recreation and culture. A variety of key inputs were considered in preparing the Master Plan including research, consultation and data analysis.

The following is the vision statement that was developed to guide the Facilities & Recreation Department over the next 10 years in implementing the Master Plan.

Working together to create an active, healthy and engaged community for all.

The Master Plan was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented event has impacted the way people participate in their leisure time. With mandated facility closures and program cancellations, as well as other restrictions mandated by the Province of Ontario, there has been an increase in the use of parks, public outdoor spaces and trails that are close to home. The Municipality will need to monitor the long-term impacts of the pandemic, which are currently unknown at this time. These impacts have the potential to influence the recommendations (or timing) in this Master Plan.

Community Priorities

With restrictions on in-person public gatherings, innovative digital engagement tactics were utilized to inform the Master Plan, including a virtual open house, community survey, stakeholder focus group and consultation with public representatives including staff, Council, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

The following are key findings from the consultation process (detailed findings are found in Section 3.2), listed in no particular order.

1. There was a strong interest in **unstructured and passive activities** that can be self-scheduled.
2. The **COVID-19 pandemic** has influenced the way people participate in parks, recreation and culture activities.
3. Establishing **trail routes and connections to destinations** was identified as a high priority.
4. Parks, recreation and cultural opportunities should be available to **residents in all areas of Southwest Middlesex**; there was a general feeling that there tends to be a focus on Glencoe.

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5. There was support for the Municipality to continue acting as a **provider of facility space**, while **supporting groups** to deliver programs and services; duplication of opportunities should be minimized.
6. Efforts to improve **marketing, promoting, communicating** the parks, recreation and cultural opportunities that are available in Southwest Middlesex was suggested to ensure that residents are aware of what is available in the Municipality.
7. The Municipality's parks, recreation and cultural spaces should be focal points in Southwest Middlesex and function as **community hubs** where residents and visitors can gather to participate in activities.

Select Recommendations

The following synopsis summarizes some of the more prominent recommendations contained in the Master Plan. In certain instances, additional public consultation may be required to further refine implementation of recommendations, particularly with respect to new facility and park development and programming. A full summary of recommendations, including the priority in which they should be implemented, can be found in Section 7.2.

- a. Public spaces should be viewed as **community hubs** where residents can gather, socialize, and participate in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. The Municipality is recommended to work with its community partners to further enhance key public spaces to embody the community hub spirit. Strategic improvements and/or redevelopment to optimize sites as year-round facilities and to better support the activities, programs and services that take place within these spaces are recommended through the following initiatives:
 - I. Work in collaboration with the Glencoe Agricultural Society, Glencoe & District Curling Club and others to strengthen the **Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site (including all outdoor and indoor spaces)** as a premiere gathering destination for the Municipality. This will involve discussions to explore the potential to rename the site to one name that encapsulates all indoor and outdoor assets at this location, creating a trail loop, and completing the arena improvements that are already underway.
 - II. Undertake enhancements to the **Glencoe Train Station** to better support and attract users and events (e.g., stage, pavilion, servicing, etc.), delivering arts and cultural programs, rotating curated exhibits of historical artifacts, attracting/relocating arts and cultural organizations to utilize the Glencoe Train Station and general promotion of the facility (potentially in coordination with the Glencoe Historical Society or others).
 - III. Acquire a **new site in Wardsville** to serve as a community hub for the village. The site should be large enough to include a new indoor facility potentially consisting of a new fire station, library, community meeting space (e.g., multi-purpose hall and meeting room) and outdoor park and recreation space.
 - IV. Proceed with undertaking parking lot improvements to the **Ekfrid Community Centre** in Appin and engage facility users and others to identify and prioritize improvements to elevate the space as a community focal point for Appin residents as well as those living in Melbourne and the surrounding area. Improvements recommended to Appin Park

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include constructing a skateboard zone and multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey, replacing the playground with an accessible structure, and removing the washroom building.

- b. Prepare a **park development plan** for the outdoor space at the new community hub site in **Wardsville**, which should include an off-leash dog park, full-size multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey, skateboard zone, playground, walking pathways and open greenspace.
- c. Undertake a **redevelopment plan for Little Kin Park** for passive use in a manner that respect's the historical significance of the site as a former church and burial ground. The redevelopment plan should include walking pathways, seating, signage, landscaping, tree plantings, open greenspace and other low-maintenance amenities and features. Development over burials and active recreation amenities/activities must be avoided.
- d. **Re-imagine Simpson Park** to enhance utilization of the park and re-deploy the outdoor recreation activities that currently take place at the Glencoe District High School. The re-imagined park should include two pickleball courts, one tennis court, a re-positioned playground and pavilion, greenspace, walking pathways, outdoor fitness equipment, and potentially a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey (subject to discussions with the Thames Valley District School Board). The existing washroom building should be removed and not replaced.
- e. **Develop Middlemiss Park** to include a playground and multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey. Additional park amenities and features may be considered through consultation with local residents.
- f. Establish a **playground replacement program** to ensure the timely replacement and renewal of play structures to ensure that they are safe and stimulating environments for children. New play structures should be located in appropriate and visible locations within parks, align with the park type, and consider barrier-free components, accessible surfaces/pathways and opportunities for natural/adventure play (where appropriate).
- g. The Municipality should work with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority to ensure continued **public access to existing and future trail networks** and work collaboratively to create connections to future municipal trails and the active transportation network. Consideration should also be given to the **conceptual trail network** contained in this Master Plan to strengthen connections throughout Southwest Middlesex including: promoting cycling routes in accordance with the Middlesex County 2017 Cycling Strategy (some routes may be suitable for walking/hiking); working with the Glencoe Agricultural Society to establish walking pathways within future and existing parks (e.g., Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site); and connecting residents to key destinations within the community. A collaborative effort between community organizations, land owners and the public will be required to achieve a connected trail system.
- h. Casual use of parks, outdoor public spaces and trails has increased during the **COVID-19 pandemic**. Continued investment in outdoor spaces should be emphasized to make them more inviting, comfortable and safe. To this end, the Municipality should maintain a commitment to **universal accessibility, safety and comfort** within the parks and trails system, and emphasize the strategic provision of amenities such as seating, shade, trails and pathways, and signage within appropriate park types. **Increasing tree canopy cover** through tree planting initiatives also

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achieves benefits that are consistent with the Municipality's efforts to be more environmentally friendly.

- i. Southwest Middlesex is a growing community and efforts are required to respond to increased expectations, address a variety of needs, and identify and include diverse and marginalized populations, as it relates to parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. All residents must feel welcome and special efforts are required to demonstrate diversity, equity and inclusion. A review of existing **policies, procedures, approaches, and professional development/training** are first steps in these important endeavours.
- j. Strengthening the capacity of staff, volunteers and community organizations is vital to deliver parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. It is a shared responsibility to work collectively to provide programs and services, address gaps, share resources and minimize duplication. Recommendations have been advanced to **increase programming** (either through the Municipality or in partnership with community organizations), **bolster promotion and communication** (e.g., Recreation Guide, online resources, etc.) and **support volunteers**.
- k. The full impact of Covid-19 on the program delivery system for parks, recreation and culture services, which is highly dependent upon community organizations, volunteers and the private sector, is expected to be significant. The Master Plan recommends that the Municipality develops and implements a Parks, Recreation and Culture **Pandemic Recovery Plan** by working with other community service delivery providers (public, private, volunteer-based, etc.) to create a plan to address issues directly related to the pandemic to improve post-pandemic success and sustainability.

Implementation

Inclusive and affordable parks, recreation and cultural opportunities are essential to the health and wellbeing of Southwest Middlesex's residents and the broader community. Everyone benefits from having a high-quality system of facilities, programs and services provided by the Municipality and its community partners, which in turn provides tremendous social, environmental and economic value.

The Facilities & Recreation Master Plan recognizes these benefits and charts a course for the future with tools, best practices and recommendations that will be used to guide Municipal budgets and key initiatives. The Master Plan enables the Municipality and community to take stock, identify priorities and work with others to address community needs.

Departmental staff – with direction from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee – will integrate recommendations into their work practices in a phased manner and will bring projects requiring budget approval forward to Council at appropriate times. In addition, the Municipality will regularly review, assess and periodically revise the recommendations of the Master Plan to ensure that they remain reflective of local conditions and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A Facilities & Recreation Master Plan for Southwest Middlesex

Located in the southwest corner of Middlesex County, the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex is an amalgamation of the Villages of Glencoe and Wardsville and the Townships of Ekfrid and Mosa. Boasting deep agricultural and rural roots, Southwest Middlesex offers an urban-rural lifestyle that is rich in manufacturing, institutional and commerce activity. These opportunities are complemented by parks and recreation activities found at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site (including the Glencoe Arena, Glencoe & District Curling Club, outdoor pool, splash pad and playground), other parks and outdoor spaces across the Municipality and unique natural features such as the Thames River. Historical cultural assets are also located in Southwest Middlesex such as the Glencoe Train Station.



Home to approximately 6,000 residents, Southwest Middlesex is anticipated to add up to 700 new residents by 2031. The majority of growth is expected to be accommodated through new development within Glencoe, the Municipality's largest urban area. Combined with trends such as the growing emphasis on personal health and wellness, environmental and economic sustainability, and community vibrancy, the need for high quality parks, recreation and culture services has never been more important.

The Facilities & Recreation Master Plan has been undertaken to guide needs related to parks, recreation and culture opportunities in Southwest Middlesex over the next ten years. It will establish strategies and provision options to meet these needs over time, potentially in partnership with the community and others. The Master Plan aligns with Council's strategic priorities as identified in its Strategic Plan and implemented in conjunction with the Municipality's Official Plan and other related studies.

To ensure that the Master Plan is responsive to community needs, it has been grounded in public and stakeholder input and research into best practices, trends, demographic shifts, growth forecasts, service gaps, and park and facility requirements. Understanding that things can change over the course of the next ten years, the Master Plan contains decision frameworks and recommendations that will help the Municipality explore and evaluate new opportunities as they arise. As a living document, the Master Plan will need to be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it responds to new opportunities and changing needs in the community. In doing so, the Master Plan will assist the Municipality in prioritizing corporate initiatives and departmental budgets, and support the search for external funding, partnerships, and alignment with related initiatives.

Specifically, the scope of the Master Plan analyzes and provides recommendations on the following:

- Recreation and cultural facilities;
- Recreation and cultural programs, activities, and events;
- Parks, open spaces and trails; and
- Service delivery policies and practices.

1.2 Creating a Vision for Facilities & Recreation in Southwest Middlesex

Parks, recreation and culture opportunities in Southwest Middlesex are delivered by the Facilities & Recreation Department. It is imperative that these opportunities are aligned with this corporate vision and to achieve this, the Department must demonstrate strong leadership and work collaboratively with others on a day-to-day basis as well as in long-term planning.

The vision for the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan tells a story of how parks, recreation and culture in Southwest Middlesex will be viewed in the future, and in turn what the Municipality and its partnership will strive towards achieving. The genesis of this vision stems from the common themes expressed through the community consultation for this Master Plan.

Working together to create an active, healthy and engaged community for all.

1.3 Planning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Master Plan was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had a significant impact on national, provincial and local economies. Public health measures that have been put in place have affected the way in which Southwest Middlesex and its community partners deliver parks, recreation and culture services, which includes facility closures and rental and program cancellations mandated by senior levels of government. The pandemic has also impacted the way in which residents have spent their leisure time. There has been a greater demand for parks and trails and people are more likely to seek opportunities closer to home. The pandemic has certainly demonstrated the importance that parks, recreation and cultural opportunities have on personal and community health and wellbeing.

The development of the Master Plan was adapted as a result of the pandemic. Consultation activities were shifted online (e.g., Project Team meetings, stakeholder focus groups, Council meetings, staff workshop, etc.) and analysis of many Master Plan components relied upon data compiled for 2019 or earlier. Data for 2020 and 2021 is not considered to be directly comparable to past years nor may it be a strong indicator of expected future performance due to the facility shutdowns and shifts in participation trends.

While the future impacts of COVID-19 on the parks, recreation and culture system are unknown, a future outlook for parks, recreation and culture services in the time of the pandemic is presented in Section 2.3. Southwest Middlesex will need to remain abreast of these potential impacts and closely monitor facility usage and participate rates, which may not return to historical levels within the short-term. This data and other decisions made by the Municipality may influence the timing of recommendations contained in this Master Plan and thus, it will be important to consider the implementation of this Master Plan with a pandemic lens as staff prepare annual work plans and undertake capital budget processes.

1.4 Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Culture

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

The Municipality recognizes these benefits and advances them through investment in the Master Plan and its implementation.

Parks, recreation, and cultural opportunities:

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

1.5 Alignment with Strategic Documents

Guiding national and municipal documents have been reviewed for use throughout the planning process. To ensure alignment, the findings and directions from these reports – as they relate to parks, recreation and culture – are considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the Master Plan. Key strategic documents are highlighted below.

1.5.1 Framework for Recreation in Canada

The Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC) was developed through significant consultation with Canadians as to their thoughts on the benefits and importance of recreation.

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – in collaboration with the senior levels of government and the Provincial Recreation and Parks Associations – developed a framework that rejuvenates the definition of recreation and parks, articulates the economic impacts of recreation and parks, identifies their benefits, and states five evidenced-based goals for communities across Canada to strive towards.

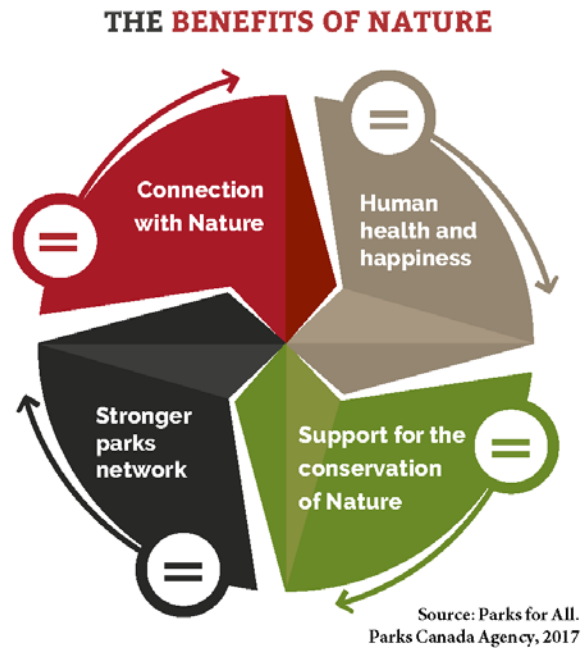
Southwest Middlesex's Master Plan recognizes the framework, integrates elements of the FRC into the vision created for the Facilities & Recreation Department, and ensures that the recommendations align with the FRC's goals.



1.5.2 Parks for All

Parks for All is **An Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community**, published in 2017 through a collaboration between the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. It aligns with and supports the Framework for Recreation in Canada, particularly the FRC’s third goal of “Connecting People and Nature”.

Parks for All focuses on how all Canadians benefit from healthy parks and natural areas and shares the community’s vision and goals for our parks. Parks for All includes a variety of perspectives that helped form a distinct set of responsibilities and practices moving forward. Parks for All is intended to unite the parks community through specific actions, priorities and strategic directions. The plan is guided by four strategic directions: **Collaborate, Connect, Conserve, and Lead**. Some specific actions that have been considered through the Southwest Middlesex Master Plan and/or should be through subsequent implementation initiatives include:



Collaborate

- Reach out to unconventional partners and organizations that could creatively contribute to the Parks for All vision.

Connect

- Forge connections between community parks and less accessible wilderness parks by sharing information and coordinating activities and campaigns.
- Support the creation of new parks and the expansion of current parks to offer more opportunities for local connections.

Conserve

- Share expertise and best practices among the parks community.
- Champion the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits provided by healthy ecosystems. Ensure these are accounted for in decision-making as contributing to stronger economies.

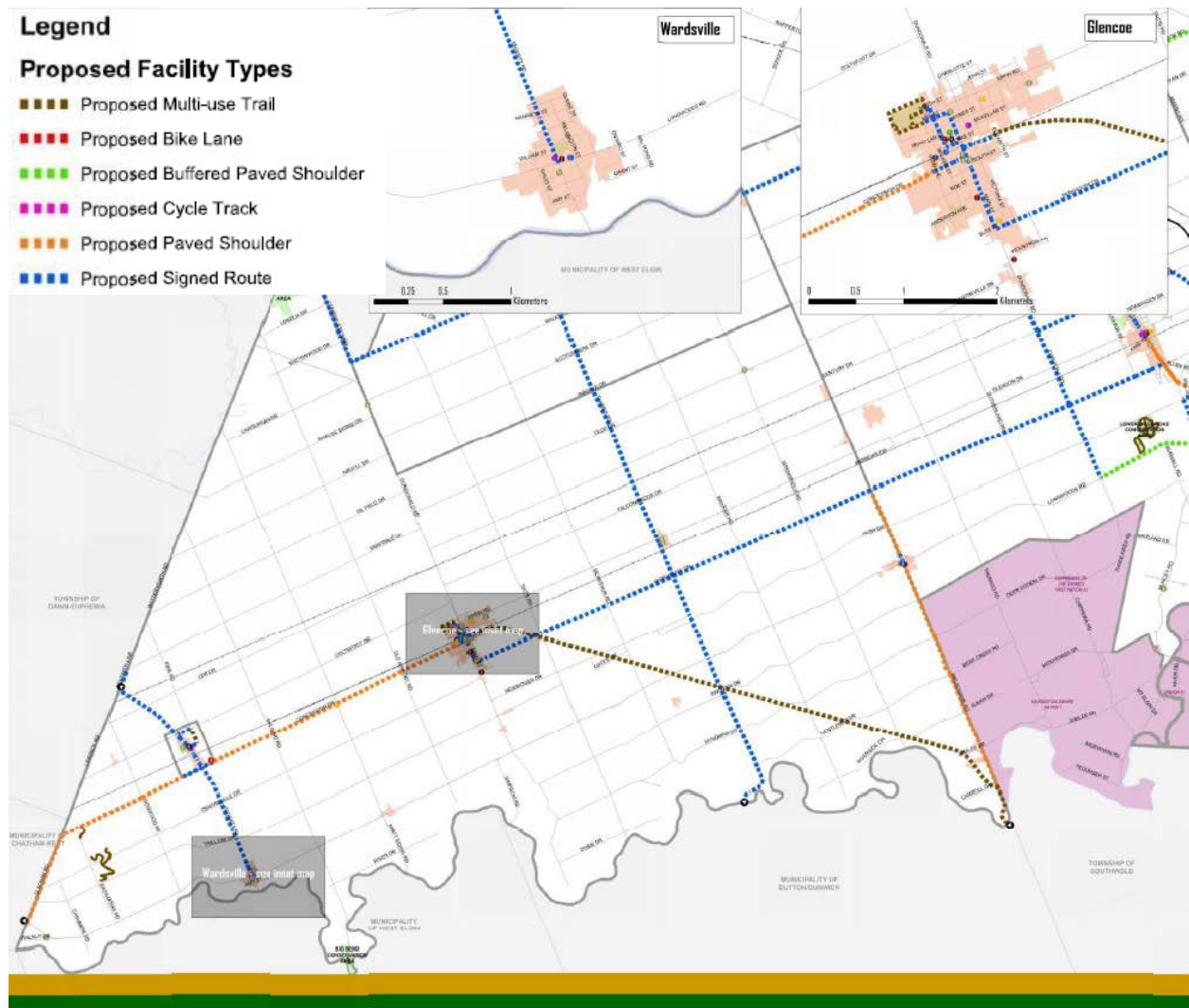
Lead

- Invest time and money in employees for the development of high-performing, dynamic, and caring leaders.

1.5.3 Middlesex County Cycling Strategy (2017)

The Middlesex County Cycling Strategy is a guiding document that provides direction on planning, designing, implementing, and operating cycling infrastructure and programming in the County. With a vision to connect communities through cycling routes and facilities, over 700 kilometres of cycling routes were identified across the County. With respect to Southwest Middlesex, a series of signed routes and paved shoulders were proposed along Concession Drive, Parkhouse Drive, Hagerty Road, Thames Road and Melbourne Road. An on road cycling route through Glencoe and Wardsville were also identified, as well as a multi-use trail from Glencoe to the Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich through the former railway.

Figure 1: Excerpt of Middlesex County Cycling Strategy, Proposed Cycling Network for Southwest Middlesex



1.5.4 Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Strategic Plan (2019)

Through the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Strategic Plan the following vision, mission, strategic priorities, goals and strategies relevant to the Master Plan have been set by the current term of Municipal Council (2019 – 2022).

Vision:

- Growing Communities through Population Retention and Attraction
- A Place Where People Can Live, Work, and Play
- Strong Agricultural System
- Resilient Natural Environment
- Interconnected Systems for Mobility
- Open and Responsive Government

Mission Statement:

Providing responsible, efficient, and effective local services for safe, and strong communities by building local economies, affordable and suitable homes, to enhance quality of life for our residents.

Table 1: Summary of Priorities, Goals and Relevant Strategies from the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Strategic Plan, 2019-2022

Priority Area	Goal	Relevant Strategies (paraphrased; not a complete list)
Prosperity	To pursue economic development in Southwest Middlesex.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Economic Development Strategic Plan (completed) • Ensure current agreements for municipal lands is providing a financial or community benefit
Community	To support efforts to promote Southwest Middlesex liveability, health, and social well-being for residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide community services to promote health and social well-being such as skating and swimming • Prepare a Recreation Master Plan to evaluate needs • Work with community partners such as minor sports organizations, to promote and support activities, organizations, and events • Support the County of Middlesex Health Communities program to allow local youth to access recreation opportunities

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Priority Area	Goal	Relevant Strategies (paraphrased; not a complete list)
Sustainability	To protect the natural environment, including water quality, and prime agricultural land and to ensure financial sustainability, including our ability to develop and maintain levels of service and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a Tree Canopy Policy • Update the Municipality’s Green Energy Plan • Continue building energy audits and green initiatives • Develop a Stormwater Management Strategy • Implementation of an Asset Management Plan (completed) • Adoption of Asset Management Policy and Strategic Asset Management Plan (completed) • Adopt key financial indicators • Review financial strategies and adopt an investment policy • Regular review of budget to actual spending
Excellence	To have an open, accountable, and transparent government, and reliable municipal programs and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an electronic document management system for all departments • Investigate partnering opportunities • Develop a new municipal website • Adopt an internal and external communications policy • Review accessibility of services • Provide excellent customer service

1.5.5 Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Official Plan (2006)

The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Official Plan provides a framework for the physical development of the community over a 20-year period, while taking into consideration important social, economic, and environmental matters. Among other items, the Official Plan directs where new development can locate and the planning of parks, trails, and recreation facilities. Several new legislative requirements, policy frameworks, and initiatives have come into effect since the Municipality’s Official Plan was approved – such as Bill 197 (COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act), 2020 Provincial Policy Statement, and updated population forecasts and related land needs – and future updates to the Official Plan are anticipated.

Of relevance to the Master Plan, the Official Plan (Section 2.6) directs that planning for recreation shall: (a) provide a variety of recreational facilities to meet the diverse needs of the community; (b) maintain recreational facilities to a safe and high standard; (c) increase opportunities for physical fitness and outdoor recreation activities; and (d) achieve long-term sustainability and community participation in the provision and maintenance of recreational facilities. Walking trails, bicycle paths, jogging trails, and similar facilities are to be encouraged. The involvement of the public, community organizations and clubs, conservation authorities, and the private sector in the provision and maintenance of recreation facilities is also encouraged. Guiding information for parks and open spaces are contained in Section 3.4.5, 4.4.3 and 5.4.4, and policies for parkland dedication are found in Section 3.4.5.2, and Section 4.4.3).

1.5.6 Economic Development Strategy (2019)

An Economic Development Strategy was prepared in 2019 in an effort to position the Municipality for continued economic growth by increasing employment opportunities, diversifying the economic base and attracting future development and municipal revenues. The following table summarizes the themes and strategic actions relevant to the Master Plan.

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Relevant Strategic Actions from the Economic Development Strategy, 2019

Themes	Relevant Actions (paraphrased; not a complete list)
Improving First Impressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a communications strategy including print, web, social media, and electronic communication. Develop a beautification and revitalization program for Glencoe. Continue to build upon, manage and promote the arboreta; work with others including the Thames Talbot Land Trust, conservation authority and potentially others to educate the value of arboretas. Work with Middlesex County on developing a community signage program including logo design and branding. Provide opportunities for people to explore the attractions in Southwest Middlesex by developing an inventory of tourism assets and promoting tourism opportunities and visiting the Middlesex County tourism website.
Building Cohesive Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a “Pride of Southwest Middlesex” program to instill community pride and to support social cohesion through local events or activities.
Supportive Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to market the 44.8 acre, municipally-owned certified industrial property. Encourage Middlesex County to establish guidelines for Community Improvement Plans.
Sustainable Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a residential land review to determine where residential development can occur in Southwest Middlesex.

1.5.7 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2016-2021

Adopted in response to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA), the Municipality’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is a policy document that demonstrates Southwest Middlesex’s commitment to making the community more accessible and inclusive to persons with disabilities.

Specifically pertaining to the Facilities and Recreation Master Plan, the Municipality’s Accessibility Plan guides the design of public spaces by ensuring compliance with the Design of Public Spaces regulation as it applies to newly constructed or redeveloped municipally-owned public spaces.

1.6 Planning Approach

The Master Plan was initiated in Winter 2021. The planning process consisted of five phases: (1) Analysis and Review; (2) Community Consultation; (3) Key Findings/Strategic Directions and Recommendations; (4) Prepare Draft Report; and (5) Finalize Draft Report and Master Plan.

Table 3: Project Phasing

PHASE 1	Analysis & Review
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background Review 2. Trends and Demographic Analysis 3. Inventory of Facilities, Programs and Services 4. Preliminary Findings Report 5. Council Presentation
PHASE 2	Community Consultation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Public Information Centre 7. Community Survey 8. Stakeholder Focus Groups 9. Key Informant Interviews 10. Staff Workshop 11. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee 12. Vision Statement 13. Interim Report 14. Council Presentation
Phase 3	Key Findings/Strategic Directions & Recommendations
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Program and Service Delivery Needs Assessment 16. Parks and Trails Needs Assessment 17. Facility Needs Assessment 18. Draft Master Plan 19. Council Presentation
Phase 4	Prepare Draft Report
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Public Information Centre
Phase 5	Finalize Draft Report and Master Plan
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Final Master Plan 22. Council Presentation

2.0 Key Considerations

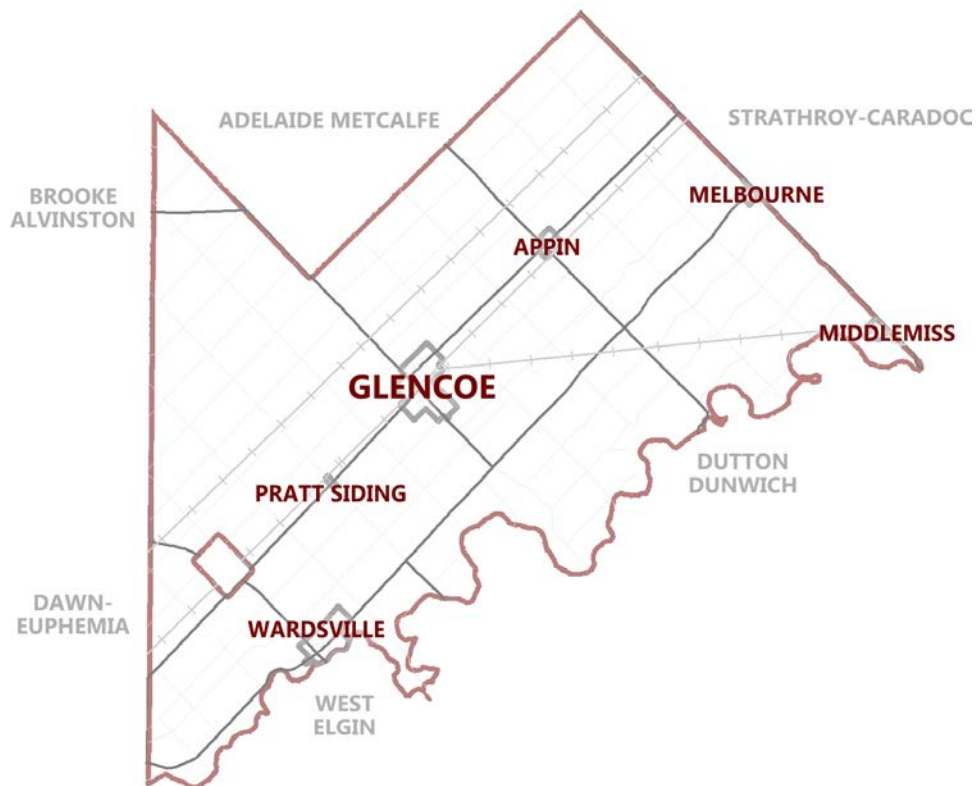
2.1 Community Profile

Understanding who, how, and where population growth will occur during the Master Plan's planning period is important in order to position Southwest Middlesex's parks, recreation and culture system to respond to changing community demographics. This section highlights Southwest Middlesex's historical and projected population, age profile, and related statistics (e.g., income and education levels, language, and cultural makeup) that may have implications on parks, recreation and culture needs.

2.1.1 Historical and Projected Population Growth

Southwest Middlesex's population declined marginally between the 2011 and 2016 Census, decreasing by 2% or 140 persons to 5,715.¹ This trend is contrary to Middlesex County, which grew by 4% during the same time period. Approximately 37% (2,126 residents)² of the population resides in Glencoe, while 7% (382 residents)³ live in Wardsville. The remainder of the population live in the Municipality's hamlets (e.g., Appin, Melbourne, Pratt Siding and Middlemiss) and rural areas.

Figure 2: Municipality of Southwest Middlesex



¹ Statistics Canada. 2016 Census.

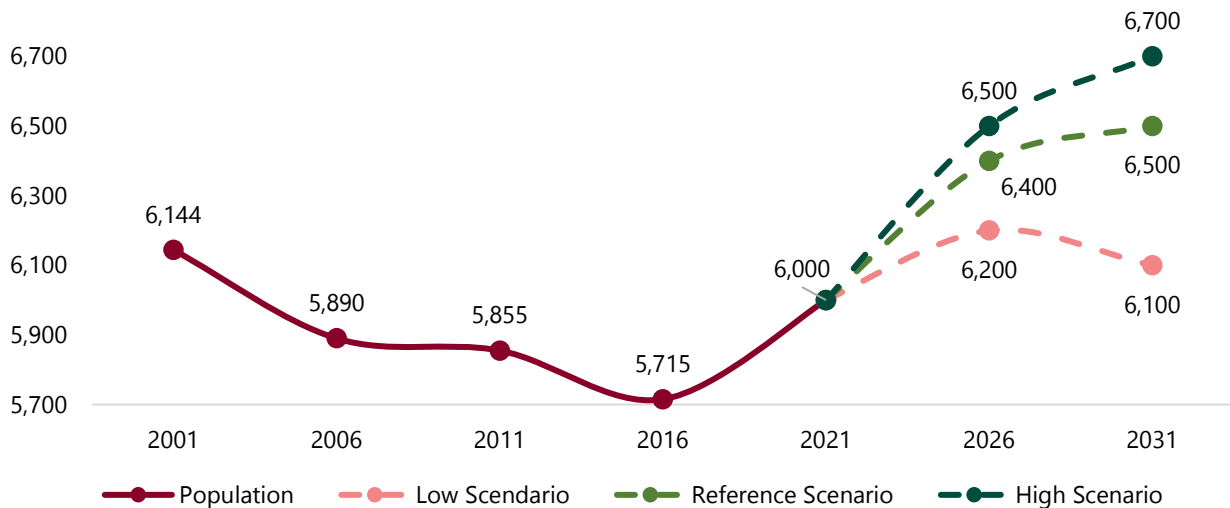
² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

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Population projections prepared by Middlesex County indicate that the Municipality has experienced population growth in the most recent 5-year period. The County estimates that Southwest Middlesex has a current 2021 population of approximately 6,000 residents (including the Census undercount), which will be used as the baseline population for the Master Plan. Over the planning period, Southwest Middlesex is projected to grow to between 6,100 to 6,700 residents by 2031 (Figure 3).⁴ The majority of growth is anticipated to be accommodated within Glencoe – the Municipality’s largest urban area.

Figure 3: Historical and Projected Population, Municipality of Southwest Middlesex 2001 - 2031



Statistics Canada 2001 – 2016 Census; Watson & Associates Economists Ltd, 2019.

2.1.2 Population by Age

Southwest Middlesex’s age profile provides insight into the types of parks, recreation and culture opportunities that are or will be in demand. For example, a large market of children and youth tends to bolster active activities such as organized sports, while a larger segment of older adults and seniors tend to drive demand for low impact and cultural activities that centre around social interaction and cognitive stimulation.

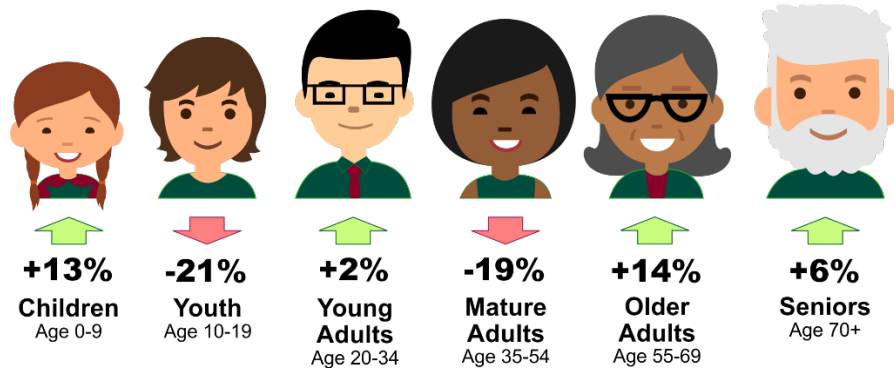
Similar to other communities, Southwest Middlesex’s population is aging. Between 2011 and 2016, Southwest Middlesex’s median age increased from 45.3 years old to 46.3 years old, which is higher compared to Middlesex County (40.3 years) and the Province (41.3 years).

⁴ Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. 2019. Middlesex County Housing Growth Forecast and Allocation by Local Municipality.

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Between 2011 and 2016, the number of older adults (age 55-69) increased by 14% (Figure 4). The population of children (age 0-9) and seniors (age 70+) increased by 13% and 6%, respectively. The population of young adults (age 20-34) grew marginally by 2%. By contrast, the number of youth (age 10-19) and mature adults (age 35-54) declined by 21% and 19%, respectively.⁵ These population trends suggests a need to provide a balance spectrum of parks, recreation and culture facilities, programs and services that appeal to all age groups, while ensuring that the opportunities for older adults and seniors are recognized as potential areas of increasing demand.

Figure 4: Population Growth by Age Group, 2011 - 2016



2.1.3 Income and Education

Research has found that income and education levels influence (or are at least an indicator of) participation levels in parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Generally speaking, the greater a person's level of income and education, the more likely they are to participate in leisure activities.

The 2016 Census reported that Southwest Middlesex's median income was \$64,000 in 2015, which was lower compared to Middlesex County (\$64,797) and the Province (\$74,287). 14% of residents are considered to be low-income, which is consistent with Middlesex County and the Province.⁶

In terms of educational attainment, 49% of Southwest Middlesex residents have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, which is lower compared to Middlesex County (55%) and the Province (55%).

One potential implication of Southwest Middlesex's income and education profile is that some residents may face financial barriers to participation and may be less likely to engage in parks, recreation and culture activities. In response, the Municipality offers financial support for the programs it provides as well as free program opportunities to assist residents who cannot afford to participate in activities.

⁵ Statistics Canada 2011 and 2016 Census.

⁶ Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

2.1.4 Immigration, Diversity and Language

According to the 2016 Census, 7% of Southwest Middlesex's population are immigrants (born outside of Canada) and a significant proportion immigrated to Canada before 2006. As the vast majority of the Municipality's population are non-immigrants or have been established immigrants for some time, barriers to participation associated with ethnicity (or culturally specific activity interests) are not likely to be significant in Southwest Middlesex; however, given that the Province as a whole is becoming more diverse, these factors may require more consideration over the longer-term.

Recognizing that the Municipality is located adjacent to the Chippewa of the First Nation Reserve, Southwest Middlesex is also home to approximately 200 people who are Indigenous residents.

2.2 Trends in Facilities and Recreation

The provision of parks, recreation and culture opportunities are influenced by a number of trends that are being experienced across Ontario. This section explores some of these trends, which have been considered in developing the Master Plan.

2.2.1 Socio-Demographic Trends

Population Growth: Based upon County population projections, Southwest Middlesex is poised for growth over the planning period. With residential development occurring in the Glencoe area, the Municipality is expected to increase by up to 12% by 2031. This level of growth can be expected to result in demand for new or expanded leisure opportunities while creating opportunities to optimize existing facilities and activities.

Aging Population: The aging of Canada's population is significantly influencing parks, recreation and culture opportunities. This trend is driven by older adults wishing to remain active as they age, including those seeking lifelong-learning opportunities; and persons managing chronic illness, disease and/or those that are seeking low-impact, therapeutic and rehabilitative programs. Southwest Middlesex and its community partners offers a number of recreational and cultural activities geared towards older adults and seniors including pickleball, trails, aqua-fit, fitness, and other activities offered through the New Horizons Seniors Club. Steps have also been undertaken to improve accessibility through the Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Economic Trends: Income disparity is a growing concern in Ontario, causing a shift in recreational and cultural offerings to include more low-to-no cost alternatives. Participation rates are declining among many registered activities in response to increasing costs of participation, such as registration, equipment and travel. With a lower median household income and a higher proportion of low-income residents compared to their broader counterparts, Southwest Middlesex has taken steps to minimize financial barriers through its "Can I Play, Too?" program where the Municipality subsidizes up to 50% of the program, which is supplemented by other subsidy programs offered by others (e.g., Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Play it Forward) as well as no/low fee opportunities.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities: To comply with the 2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), municipalities have renovated public spaces to meet barrier-free standards, provided AODA-specific customer service training, and are continuously seeking opportunities to offer

inclusive programs and services, regardless of ability. Southwest Middlesex's Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan demonstrates the Municipality's commitment to removing accessibility barriers. In 2019, the Municipality began replacing playground ground cover with engineer wood fibre to enhance impact absorption. Plans are also in place to undertake accessibility retrofits at the Glencoe Arena (washroom and dressing rooms).

2.2.2 General Participation Trends

Health and Wellness: A holistic and multi-faceted approach to health and wellbeing (including health promotion, socialization, mindfulness, and management of stress and anxiety) is significantly influencing active living. Another key trend is adoption of Sport for Life's Long-Term Development Models and introduction of physical literacy in programs and training. Southwest Middlesex primarily focuses on providing skating and swimming programming, which are complemented by programs delivered by community groups and sports organizations. The Municipality recently added a Recreation Program Coordinator to work with others to expand program opportunities in order to provide a well-rounded portfolio of parks, recreation and cultural activities for residents.

Physical Inactivity: Research has found that physical activity levels are low and have not improved in the past number of years due to high reports of increasingly busy lifestyles and the rise of sedentary behaviours. To combat this decline in physical activity, many service providers are working together to increase communications, modify programs and service levels, encourage participation, and support healthy, active lifestyles.

Active Transportation: Active transportation is becoming a core element of complete communities. Human-powered modes of travel that are undertaken for utilitarian (day-to-day) purposes such as cycling, walking or skateboarding are common forms of active transportation. Examples of active transportation facilities may include dedicated cycling infrastructure, signed pathways and trails, or wayfinding and navigation assistance. Sidewalks can be found along many of the roads within the urban settlement areas of Glencoe and Wardsville while motorists are encouraged to share the roadway with cyclists.

2.2.3 Programming and Policy Trends

Demand for Unstructured Activities: Participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set participation schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured and self-scheduled activities and times to participate. This is compounded by changes in demand for prime-time access – more adults and seniors are seeking activities in the evening, a shift from traditional daytime or late-evening provision. Participation in adult activities is also growing and youth engagement is being embraced in many municipalities.

Serving All Ages, Abilities and Backgrounds: Inclusion and access is a key goal for municipal departments. To ensure access for all, addressing barriers to participation include: 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 welcome and supported). The Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines several ways Southwest Middlesex ensures that its services are inclusive of all residents.

Use of Technology: Recent technological advances have enabled both service providers and users to be more aware of the parks, recreation and culture opportunities in their communities. This may include: websites that summarize facilities, services and program offerings; online portals for program registration; synchronization with smartphone applications; and more. The Municipality has embraced the use of technology in a number of ways to improve communication with the public. For example, the Municipality is connected with over 1,500 social media followers. The Municipality also plans to prepare a Department Social Media Plan to improve communication with the public.

Partnership Opportunities: Collaborations with private or non-profit organizations are becoming increasingly common in Ontario municipalities. These help to distribute financial costs and benefit from economies of scale and shared expertise. Many municipalities (including Southwest Middlesex) also encourage community use of schools (especially for access to gymnasiums), though reliable and cost-effective access is frequently cited as barrier to use.

2.2.4 Facility Provision and Design Trends

Aging Infrastructure: Many municipalities in Ontario are faced with aging infrastructure (e.g., arenas, outdoor pools, courts, program spaces, halls, etc.) and are pursuing renewal and reinvestment projects, often using non-traditional funding approaches. These projects also provide opportunities to rethink provision and consider facility conversion or adaptive re-use options that accommodate emerging activities. The Municipality was recently successful in obtaining an ICIP grant for revitalization/renovating the Glencoe Arena, as well as the curling facility. Plans to undertake accessibility and lifecycle improvements to the outdoor pool are also in place.

Maximizing Existing Assets: Strategic programming and design are key factors in maximizing functionality and utilization of existing parks and facilities. Municipal providers are improving use of non-prime time by encouraging non-traditional uses. This may include partnerships with school boards, service clubs, or other emerging activities (including drop-in opportunities). Designing facilities to accommodate multiple uses also helps to maximize usage. The Municipality is currently exploring utilizing the Glencoe Arena during the summer for pickleball and other indoor activities.

Multi-Dimensional and Comfortable Spaces: Best practices in facility design consider safety, comfort, and opportunities for community socialization. This may include strategic placement of seating areas, proximity to washroom facilities and open concept design features, as examples. Many municipalities further support convenience in public spaces through provision of wireless internet access.

2.2.5 Parks Planning and Design Trends

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

System of Parks: It is important for municipalities to provide a variety of parks with varying functions, including active and passive spaces. These parks should be animated through thoughtful design

(including access to shade, seating, and washrooms, where appropriate) and promotion of community activities and events.

Environmental Design and Climate Change: Principles of environmental sustainability and environmentally-conscious facility designs are being ingrained in the sector. Parks are being increasingly recognized for their role in improving air quality, mitigating flooding from extreme weather, and reducing the urban heat island effect. Common standards for environmental sustainability help to guide investment and ensure that new infrastructure includes design features such as low impact development practices, solar panels, geothermal heating, recirculation systems, etc. The Municipality is committed to making Southwest Middlesex more environmentally-friendly with plans to prepare a Green Energy Plan and Tree Canopy Policy.

2.2.6 Trails Trends

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

Supporting Comfort Amenities: Comfortable experiences to trail users is paramount in ensuring successful utilization and attracting users. An effective trail network typically incorporates a number of convenience and comfort-based features at strategic locations along major routes and trail heads. Users often look for amenities such as natural landscaping, signage, shade, benches, bathrooms and rest areas, showers, fitness equipment, parking and pavilions.

2.2.7 Arts and Cultural Trends

Attendance and Participation: Research on attendance in arts and culture activity is broad but highlights growing participation and high levels of appreciation for arts and culture across the country. Residents value authentic experiences and the unique attributes of communities. People are also experiencing and appreciating arts and culture in less traditional ways and have increasing expectations for programs and events. The Municipality and its community partners offers a variety of annual special events and festivals such as Canada Day Celebrations, Glencoe Fair, and Sundays at the Station.

Celebrating Local: Support for cultural activities can be a means of achieving many social goals, beyond simply supporting arts and culture for its own sake. For example, large-scale community events and public engagement opportunities highlight the value of celebrating local experiences and embracing the Municipality's rich heritage. Southwest Middlesex celebrates local and regional groups in various ways through the support of community and service groups such as the Glencoe Agricultural Society.

Economic Value of Cultural Industries: Increased collaboration among groups and local businesses helps to build grassroots and sustainable support for creative industries. It is critical that municipalities help organizations build capacity and establish a sense of place. Southwest Middlesex's Train Station is one example of how the Municipality can create a sense of place with this unique landmark venue that draws tourists and visitors, creating economic spin-off opportunities.

2.3 Potential Impacts of COVID-19 on Facilities and Recreation

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

Recognizing that the situation is evolving and new information and guidance is emerging on a regular basis, municipalities (including Southwest Middlesex) must prepare for a wide range of scenarios. The following are some potential impacts the pandemic may have on the sector in the short- to longer-term.

- Continued population growth in less urbanized areas;
- Emphasis on health equity and access to parks, trails, etc.;
- Growing interested in unstructured, individual and small group activities;
- Desire for outdoor recreation (including four season use), placing pressure on trails, parks, washrooms, etc.;
- A possible shift in prime time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteers and events;
- Substantial changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.), possibly requiring higher levels of subsidy;
- Significant impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – people need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking of some third-party partnerships (schools, YMCAs, etc.); and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.).

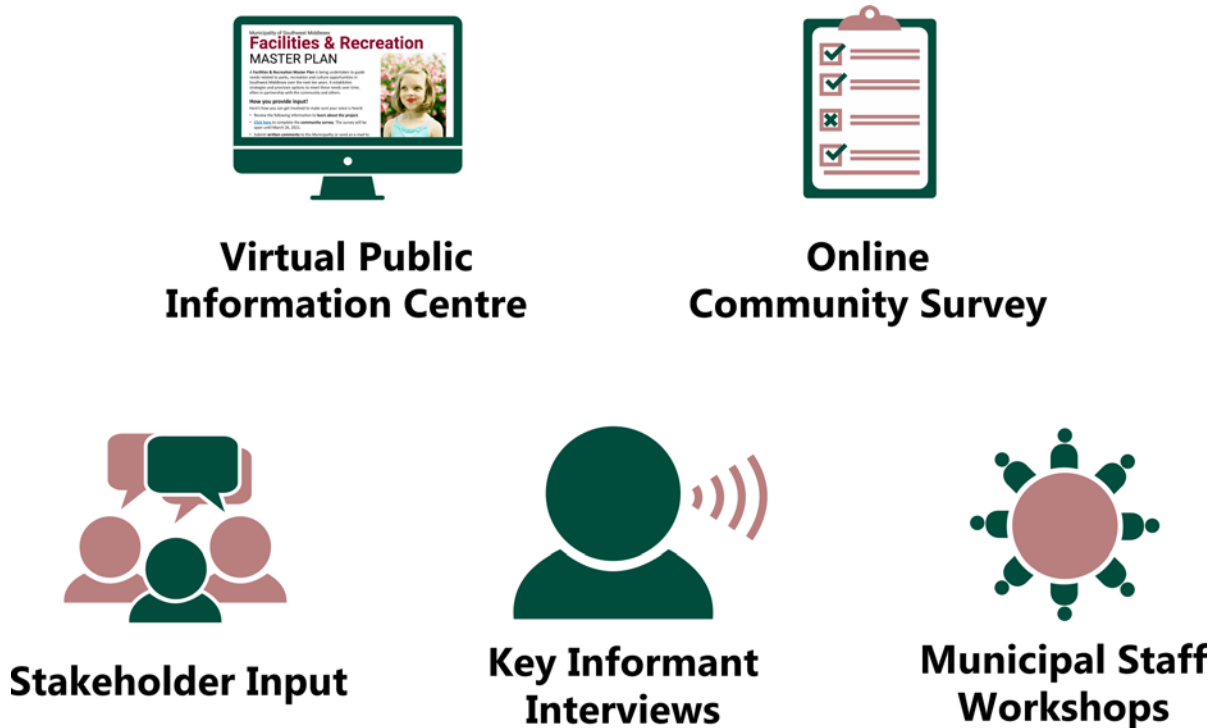
3.0 Community Consultation

Public consultation is critical to the success of the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan. The perspectives of residents, stakeholders, Council, and Municipal staff are important elements in the development of strategies to address current and future needs. This section summarizes the consultation findings from each activity undertaken for the Master Plan.

3.1 Community Consultation Strategy

A Community Consultation Strategy was prepared to identify the engagement activities as part of the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan. The Strategy also identified initiatives to raise awareness of the project including the creation of a project webpage on the Municipality’s website, social media, road signage, and word of mouth. Figure 5 summarizes the consultation activities held to collect input.

Figure 5: Summary of Consultation Activities



3.2 Summary of Consultation Themes

Community consultation is vital to the planning process. More than 200 households completed the community survey, while 11 parks, recreation and cultural organizations actively participated through the Stakeholder Focus Groups. Input was also obtained from Municipal staff and Council and the Municipality’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Findings and observations from the initial community consultation activities are summarized in Table 4. Listed in no particular order, these highlights are considered in conjunction with other specific feedback and planning inputs articulated in the Master Plan.

Table 4: Summary of Consultation Themes

Demand for Self-Scheduled Activities	There is strong interest in unstructured, passive activities that can be self-scheduled. The community survey found that the most popular activities (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) were walking and hiking for leisure, going to special events, enjoying parks and open space, and using playgrounds and splash pads. This finding is consistent with broader participation trends across Ontario.
Influences of the COVID-19 Pandemic	The COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the way people participate in parks, recreation and culture. Staff and the public indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic an increase in passive outdoor activities took place such as walking along with a decline in participation/membership among organized sports (with some cancelling seasons entirely). The public’s connection with parks and the outdoors has become more important to mental health during COVID-19 and there is a keen interest in how COVID-19 will impact the future of parks, recreation and culture facilities, programs and services, particularly as it relates to long-term planning and investment.
Support for Trails	Establishing trail routes or connections to existing trails was identified as a high priority. The community survey found that trails and pathways are the most important type of recreation facility, yet have the lowest level of satisfaction among respondents, suggesting that there is room for improvement. Trail connections between settlement areas and outdoor spaces, including to Big Bend Conservation Area were requested.

Distribution of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities

There is a general feeling that facilities, programs and amenities tend to be focused in Glencoe; thus, ensuring that there are also opportunities provided in other settlements (e.g., Wardsville, Melbourne, Appin, Middlemiss), as well as the rural areas was identified throughout the consultations. It was recognized, however, that Glencoe is the Municipality's largest settlement area that is expected to accommodate most of the foreseeable population growth.

Empowering Community Providers to Delivery Services

Stakeholders support the Municipality's community development model of delivering parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Stakeholders identified that the Municipality should continue to act as a provider of facility space. There was some support for the Municipality to offer programs, provided that it does not duplicate what is already provided by community groups.

Building Awareness of Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities in Southwest Middlesex

Efforts to improve marketing, promoting and communicating the parks, recreation and cultural opportunities in the Municipality was suggested to ensure that all residents are aware of what is available. Suggestions included utilizing the Municipal website and social media to promote all activities, programs and services that are available, print media (e.g., community guide), and ongoing communication with stakeholders and residents. The need for consistent service and support from municipal staff on an annual basis was also suggested.

Reinvesting in and Repurposing Facilities and Parks

The Municipality's recreation and culture spaces were identified as focal points in Southwest Middlesex that should function as activity hubs where residents and visitors could gather to participate in organized and unorganized activities. To achieve this, there was support for revitalizing aging infrastructure and establishing a long-term strategy for facility investment. Some key assets within Southwest Middlesex are aging and advance planning is required to consider the replacement and/or expansion of needed facilities. It was suggested that some facilities and park amenities may be underutilized and options for repurposing should be considered. There were suggestions that the Municipality pursue any grants that may be available to re-invest in aging infrastructure.

3.3 Public Information Centre

An initial Public Information Centre was held at the beginning of the planning process to raise awareness about the Master Plan and how the public could get involved. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Information Centre was held virtually. Information panels were presented on the Municipality's project webpage, which contained details about the Master Plan, key background information, and how the public could get involved including completing the community online survey.



3.4 Online Community Survey

An online community survey was administered to provide an opportunity for the residents of Southwest Middlesex to provide input into the development of the Master Plan. The survey explored local parks, recreation and culture activity participation, usage patterns, and community priorities. The community survey was conducted through a third-party platform and promoted through the project webpage on the Municipality's website, social media, road signage, and word of mouth (including requests of stakeholders to inform their members/participants). The survey was available between March 9 and April 2, 2021.

A total of 234 responses were received and analyzed. Due to the self-administered format of the survey, results should not be considered statistically significant or representative of the entire population. Being a voluntary, self-directed survey, respondents were not required to respond to all questions and thus response rates for each question may vary. Survey highlights are summarized in this section, while a complete summary of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

3.4.1 Summary of Respondents

The following is a summary of the demographic profile of responding households:

- There was an over-representation of households with children (age 0-9), youth (age 10-19) as well as with young adults (age 20-34). The survey was under-represented in adults over the age of 40. Households with young families are more likely to complete surveys of this type.
- The average age of survey respondent was 41 years old (2016 Census median age was 46.3); and
- The average household size was 3.4 persons (2016 Census average household size was 2.4 persons).

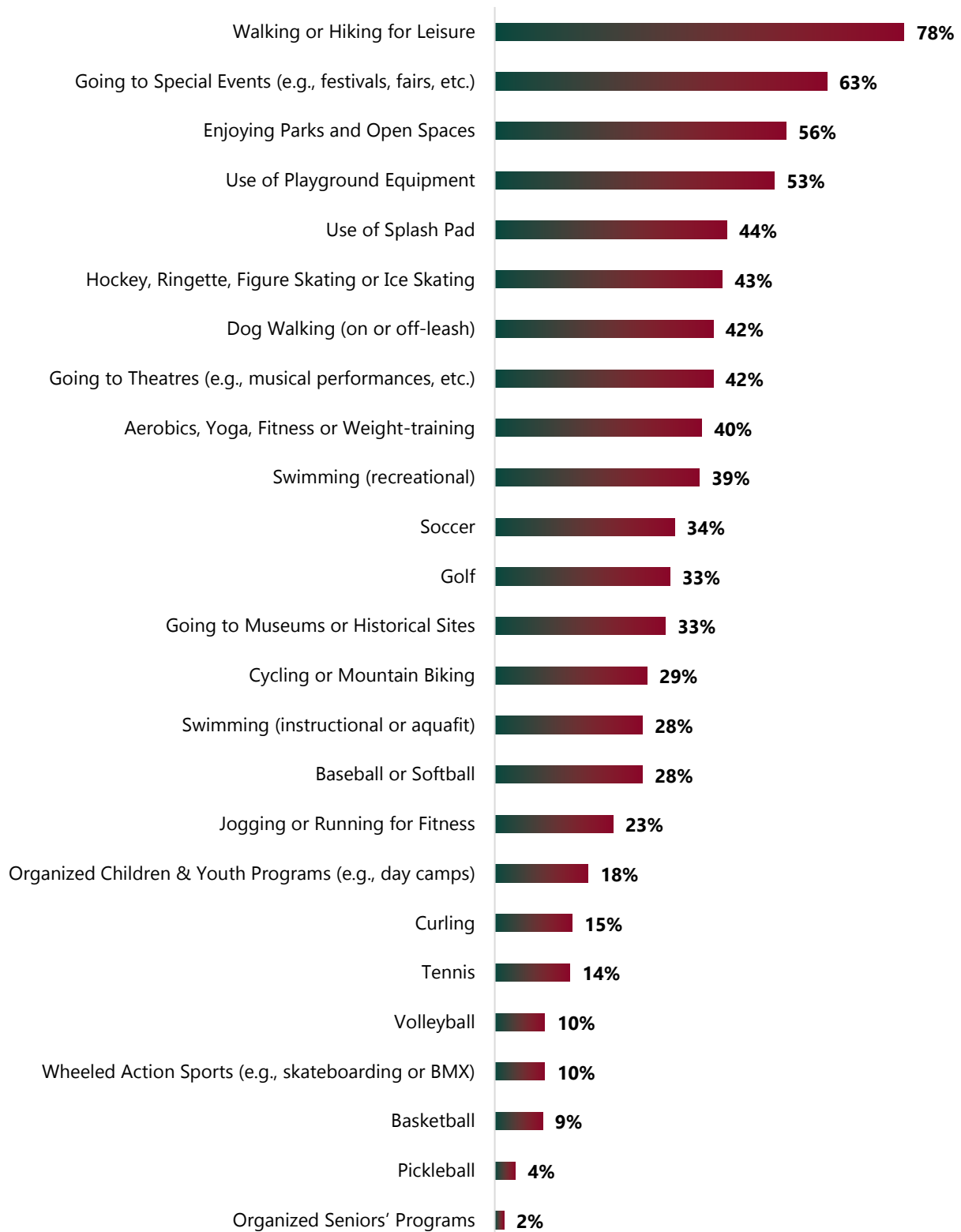
3.4.2 Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities

Research indicates that over the past year, physical activity levels have declined since the COVID-19 pandemic began. This trend was reflected through the survey results. Nearly half (45%) of the survey respondents indicated that they are now less physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic began. One-third (35%) of respondents felt they experienced no change or the same level of physical activity and 20% reported that they are more physically active than before.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, walking or hiking for leisure were the most popular activities that respondents participated in (78%). Other popular activities included going to special events (63%), enjoying parks and open spaces (56%), using playground equipment (53%), and using splash pads (44%). These activities are considered to be unstructured and self-scheduled pursuits that aligns with broader participation trends in the sector. Organized team-based sports such as hockey, soccer and baseball tend to be less popular. For example, 43% of respondents participated in ice sports such as hockey and figure skating prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which ranked sixth. Figure 6 summarizes participation levels in a variety of parks, recreation, and culture activities of respondents.

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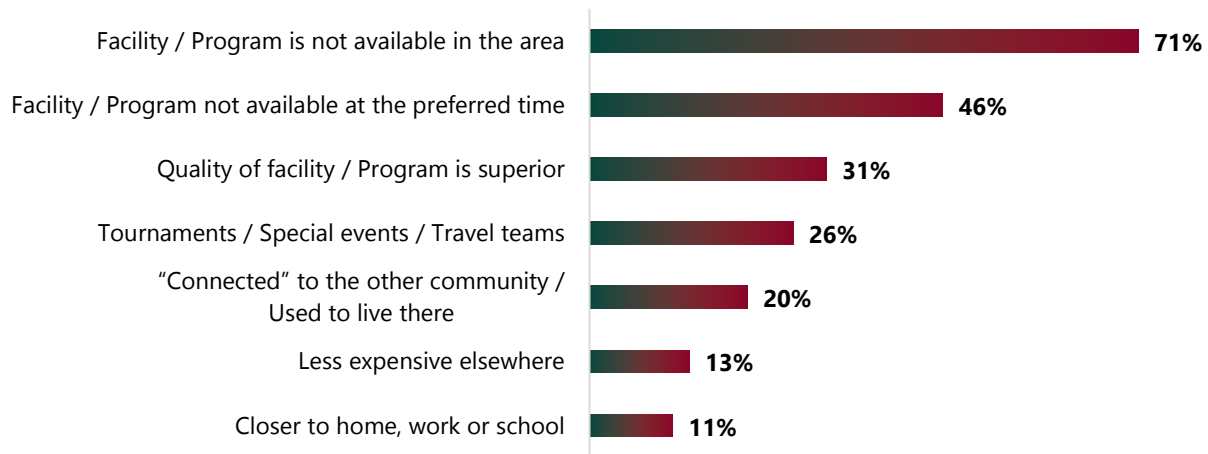
Figure 6: Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic



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Only 5% of respondents indicated that all of their parks, recreation and culture activities are met within Southwest Middlesex. 71% of respondents indicated that they participate outside of the Municipality because their desired facility or program is not available in the area. Other common responses included the desired facility or program is not available at the preferred time (46%) and the quality of the facility or program outside of the Municipality is superior (31%). Figure 7 summarizes why respondents participate in parks, recreation and culture activities outside of the Municipality.

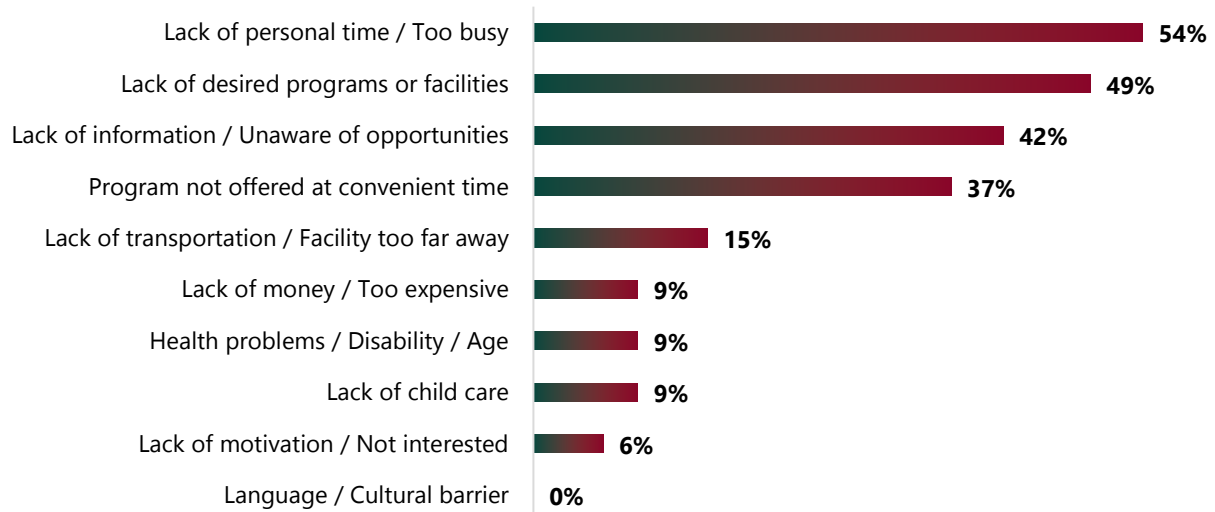
Figure 7: Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities Outside of Southwest Middlesex



3.4.3 Barriers to Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 74% of respondents were able to participate in parks, recreation, and culture activities as often as they would like, and 26% of respondents were not. The most common participation barrier that was reported was the lack of time or being too busy (54%), lack of desired programs or facilities (49%), and a lack of information/unaware of opportunities (42%), among others barriers (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Barriers to Participation in Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities



3.4.4 Requests for Parks, Recreation and Culture Activities

Respondents provided various suggestions for parks, recreation, and culture activities they would like to see provided in Southwest Middlesex. Walking and hiking trails was the most popular request, which was followed by an indoor swimming pool or swim programs, as well as fitness programs such as yoga, tai chi and other related activities. The top ten requests for parks and recreation activities are highlighted in Table 5.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been outside more often. It would be nice to build new or expand existing walking trails.

Respondent Comment

Table 5: Top Ten Requests for Parks and Recreation Activities

Top Requests for Parks and Recreation Activities	
1. Walking/Hiking Trail	6. Volleyball
2. Indoor Pool/Swimming	7. Indoor Track
3. Fitness Programs (e.g., Yoga, Tai Chi, Aerobics, Prenatal)	8. Parks
4. Fitness Centre	9. Cycling Trail
5. Indoor Skating	10. Baseball/Softball

With respect to arts and cultural activities, the most common requests were for creative or fine art programs such as painting and cooking, followed by more special events and gatherings such as events centred around food, crafts and cars; Live productions/theatre such as musical performances were also a common request. The top ten most requests for arts and cultural activities are highlighted in Table 6.

We have great facilities for sports and that is wonderful. Let's make room for crafts. I would love to see arts and crafts courses such as basket weaving and repair of clothes.

Respondent Comment

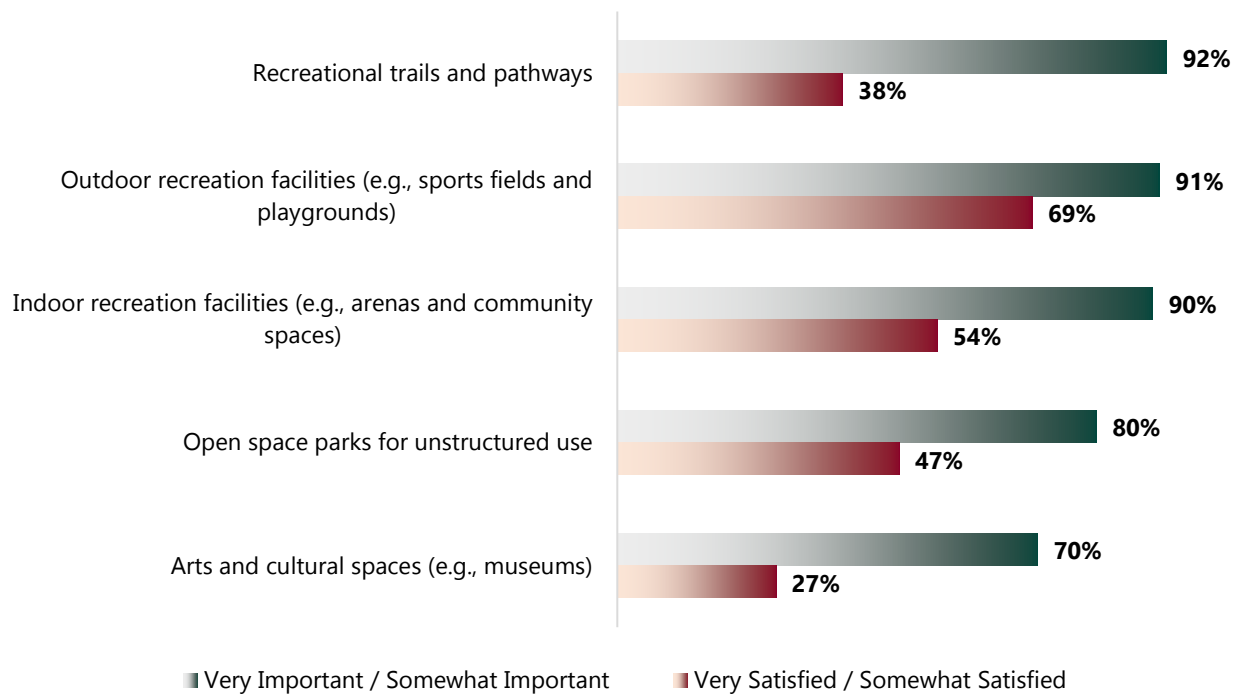
Table 6: Top Requests for Arts and Cultural Activities

Top Requests for Arts and Cultural Activities	
1. Creative or Fine Art Programs (e.g., painting, cooking, etc.)	6. History/Culture Programs
2. Special Events and Gatherings	7. Performing Art Programs (e.g., music, drama, etc.)
3. Live Theatre (e.g., musical performances, etc.)	8. Museum
4. Art Gallery/Shows	9. Movie Theatre
5. Farmers Market	10. Indigenous Programs

3.4.5 Importance and Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities

Figure 9 summarizes respondents' level of importance and satisfaction with respect to parks, recreation and culture facilities. Facilities that have lower levels of satisfaction when compared to the level of importance suggests that expectations are not being met. With this in mind, the biggest gap where expectations are not being met is recreational trails and pathways. Overall, the results suggests that there is room for improvement in all facility areas as expectations are not being met for any facility type.

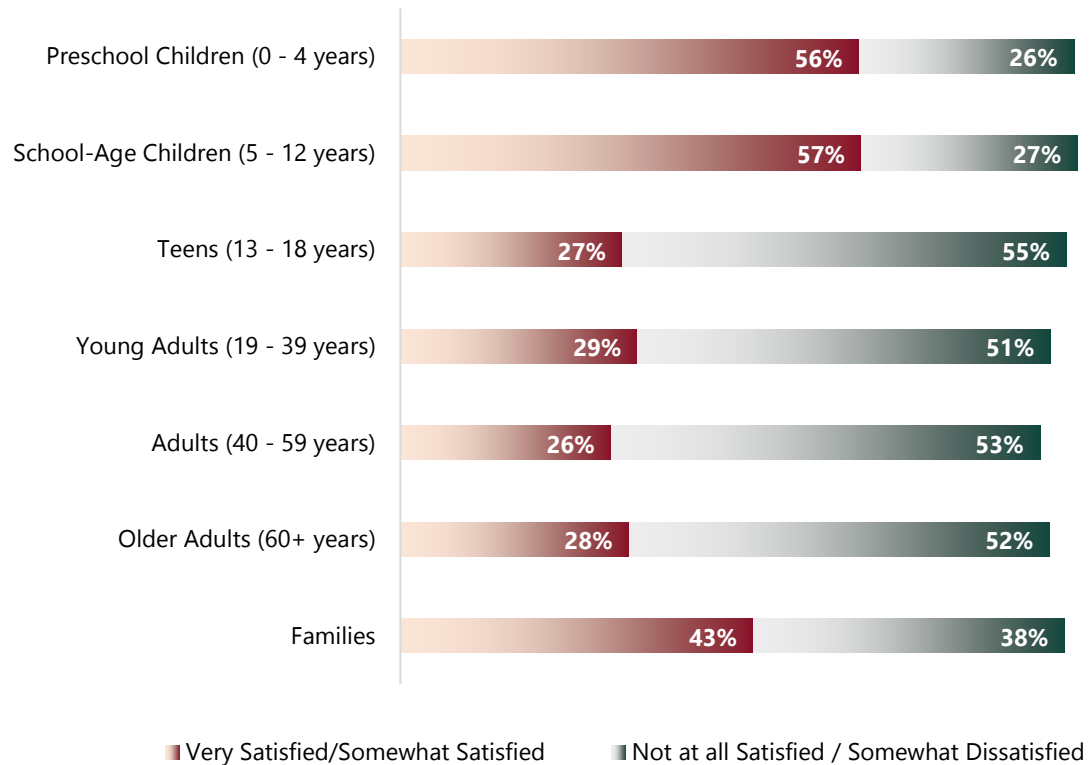
Figure 9: Importance and Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation and Culture Facilities



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Satisfaction levels with parks, recreation and cultural opportunities for each age group is summarized in Figure 10. Respondents were most satisfied with opportunities for school-aged children (5-12 years) and preschool children (0-4 years), as well as family-oriented activities. Satisfaction levels were generally lower for all other age groups. These results suggests that there is room to improve parks, recreation and cultural opportunities in these demographic groupings.

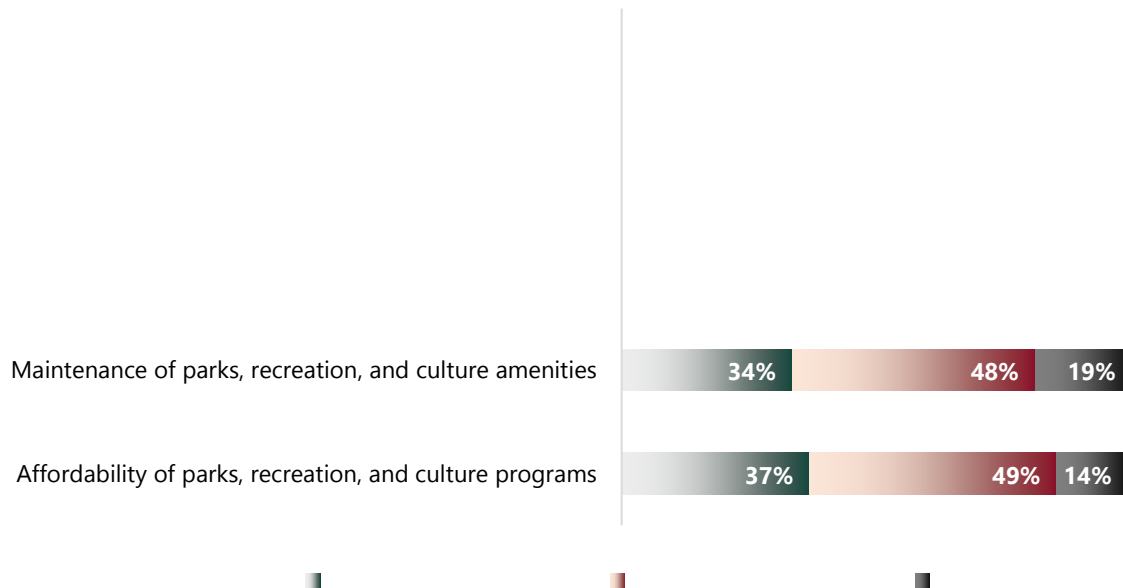
Figure 10: Satisfaction with Parks, Recreation and Cultural Opportunities by Age Group



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Expectation levels with respect to various areas of the parks, recreation and culture system in Southwest Middlesex were also measured, which is highlighted in Figure 11. Generally speaking, 55% of respondents felt that inclusion and accessibility for residents experiencing low-income or persons with disabilities was below expectations. Approximately half (55%) of respondents also felt that the value of tax dollars spent towards facilities and recreation was also below expectations. Between 48% and 58% of respondents felt that the location, affordability and maintenance of parks, recreation and culture amenities matched expectations. These results demonstrate that there is room for improving parks, recreation and culture experiences to meet the expectations of residents.

Figure 11: Expectations for Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities



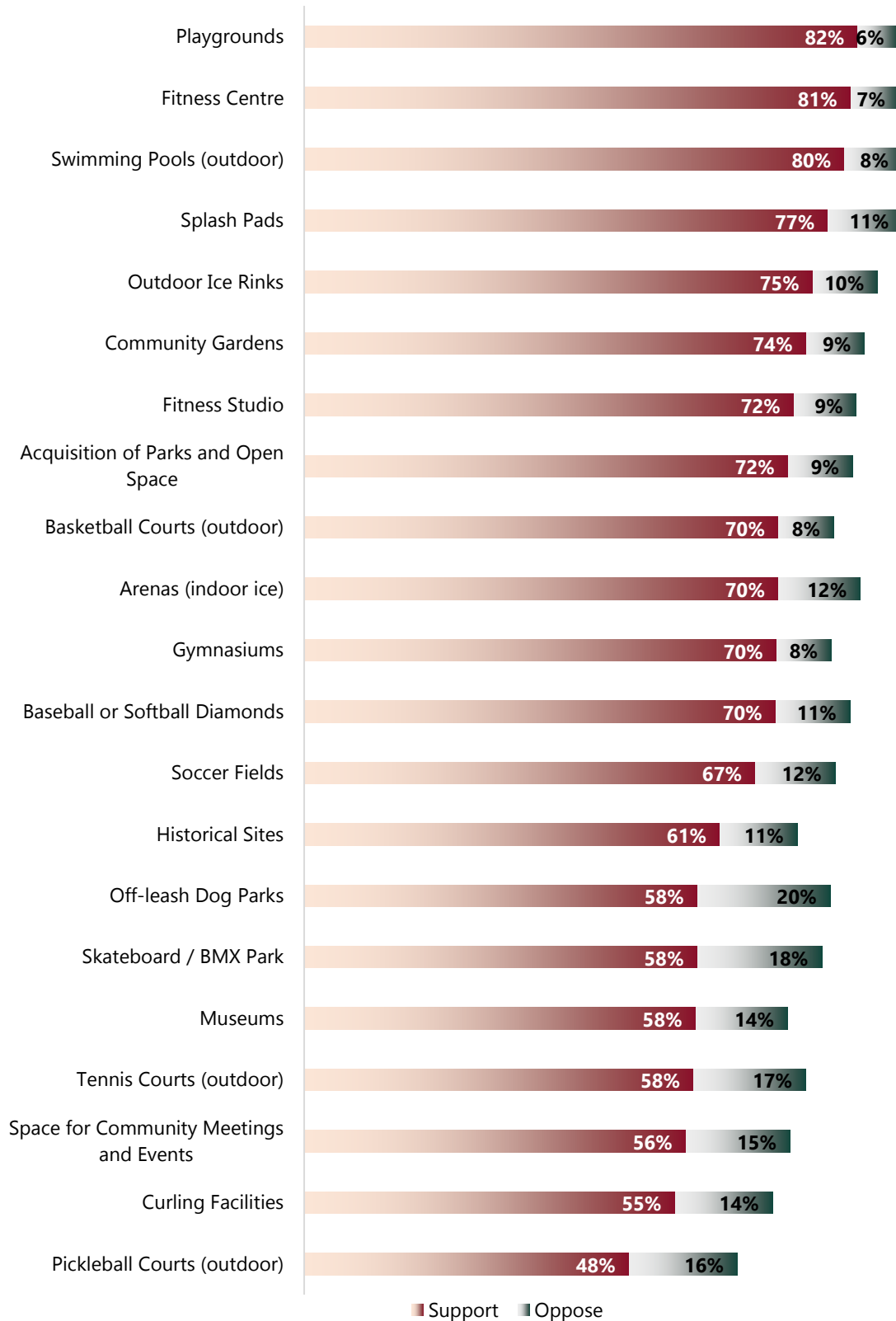
3.4.6 Support for Public Spending

Figure 12 illustrates support for spending additional public funds to build new or improve existing parks, recreation and cultural facilities. The top five facilities were playgrounds (82%), fitness centres (81%), outdoor swimming pools (80%), splash pads (77%) and outdoor ice rinks (75%). These results suggest that there is a high level of support for facilities that support unstructured and self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with the trends found within other communities.

While some facilities rank lower in support compared to others, it is recognized that some facility types only appeal to a subset of the population. Regardless of public support, the merits of investing in each of these facility types are part of the evaluation process in the Master Plan with consideration given to demographics, distribution/equity, trends, usage data, and public input.

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Figure 12: Support for Additional Investment for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities



3.4.7 Other Survey Responses

The survey provided an opportunity for respondents to provide additional input to be considered in the development of the Master Plan. Looking ahead, respondents identified how the COVID-19 pandemic may impact their participation in parks, recreation, and culture activities. While a number of respondents felt that the COVID-19 pandemic may not change their participation patterns, others felt that they may be more likely to engage in outdoor activities. Some indicated that they may participate in activities more often than before, once it is safe to do so, suggesting that there is a pent-up demand for parks, recreation and culture activities. Other respondents highlighted the need to ensure that it is safe before participating to a greater degree, with consideration given to new safety procedures. Others identified that they may participate more at home rather than using public spaces.

Other comments submitted by respondents included general improvements to parks, recreation and culture facilities in Southwest Middlesex. A number of comments related to the desire for trails, which suggests that it is a high priority in the community. Respondents expressed the desire for various parks and facility improvements in areas outside of Glencoe such as in Wardsville, Appin, Melbourne, and Middlemiss. Other comments received related to the development of a multi-use recreation facility and the need to improve communication about the parks, recreation and cultural opportunities that are available in the community. A variety of program suggestions were also suggested including cooking classes, first aid classes, food safety classes, crafts classes, etc.

I think that living in a smaller community, the COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged us to participate in more parks, recreation and culture activities locally.

Opportunities to participate in parks, recreation and culture activities will continue to be important after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondent Comments

The Municipality's Facebook page should be promoting all activities and sharing more information about the various activities/sports available to get more people involved.

Respondent Comment

3.5 Stakeholder Input

The Municipality has a number of dedicated community organizations that support the parks, recreation and culture programs and services available in Southwest Middlesex. These organizations were invited to attend one of two input sessions held on March 24 and 25, 2021 to discuss various aspects of Southwest Middlesex's parks, recreation and culture system. Participating stakeholders included service clubs, sports organizations, and other volunteer groups. Stakeholder sessions were attended by a total of 15 participants representing 11 organizations, including:

- Celebrate Community Committee
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Glencoe & District Historical Society
- Glencoe Agricultural Society
- Glencoe District Curling Club
- Glencoe District Lions Club
- Glencoe Minor Soccer Association
- Glencoe Swim Club
- Southwest Middlesex Acting Krew
- Southwest Minor Hockey Association
- Sundays at the Station

Due to COVID-19, both stakeholder focus group sessions were conducted virtually. This section collectively summarizes the key themes from the discussion sessions.

Participants were **very proud** of the parks, recreation and culture amenities found in Southwest Middlesex. References were made to the swimming pool, arena, curling rink, libraries, and outdoor parks throughout the Municipality, including conservation areas. The Glencoe Train Station was also noted as an important asset in the community providing a connection to the past and serving many social functions, including as an entertainment venue for residents and visitors. The willingness of organizations and volunteers to work together was also viewed as a strength of the community.

Moving forward, participants expressed the need to consider the parks, recreation and culture **opportunities beyond Glencoe**, such as in Wardsville, Appin, Melbourne and the surrounding rural areas. While it was indicated that opportunities need to be available for all residents, it was also recognized that Glencoe is located centrally within the municipality, is experiencing population and housing growth, and as a result, facilities, parks and related amenities continue to be needed in Glencoe support the needs of residents.

It was mentioned that parks, recreation and culture spaces in Southwest Middlesex are aging and in need of **updating and/or rejuvenation** to ensure that these spaces are reflective of the needs of current and future residents. Specific suggestions included renewing and updating indoor facilities such as the arena and other community spaces (including accessibility improvements) and re-purposing underutilized parks to more in-demand uses. **Gaps** in facilities and amenities that are not currently found in the Municipality were also suggested including trails, casual indoor spaces where residents can gather and socialize, and improving access to conservation areas. Groups were open to the Municipality providing more direct programs, provided that it does not duplicate what's currently provided. It was suggested that the Municipality could hire local businesses, recreation/culture professional, and others in the community to provide such direct programming.

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There was a consensus that the **COVID-19 pandemic** has impacted organizations in various ways. Generally speaking, membership and participation levels among groups have declined considerably since the beginning of the pandemic. However, it was felt that there is a pent-up demand for parks, recreation and culture activities that will assist with normalizing participation levels when it is safe to re-introduce programming. Participants have also observed increased use of outdoor spaces for activities such as walking and bird watching. With more residents working from home, it was suggested that there may be increased demand for activities that are close to home.

Organizations are appreciative of receiving **municipal support** to deliver vital programs and services and to ensure that groups are successful. Participants expressed that they have a good working relationship with the Municipality, although more could be done in this regard. Specific suggestions included leveraging the Municipality's resources to improve marketing, promotion and communication of the parks, recreation and culture opportunities that are available in the community, assisting with coordinating volunteers and training, and general liaising with community organizations to address concerns, questions or requests. The need for consistent service and support from municipal staff on an annual basis was also suggested. Part time staff and contract worker turn-over was also identified as an area for improvement (e.g., concern about loss working relationships, retaining historical facility and usage knowledge, etc.).

During the planning period, **key priorities** that should be considered included (in no particular order) the Municipality continuing to provide facilities and supporting volunteer organizations, creating a trail network to connect residents and key destinations, improving communication and awareness of what is available, and ensuring that parks, recreation and cultural opportunities respond to community needs.



3.6 Municipal Staff Workshop

A workshop was held on March 17, 2021 to provide an opportunity for Municipal frontline staff to share their valuable expertise as part of the planning process. The session was attended by nine individuals representing various positions related to parks, recreation and culture. Discussion topics were wide-ranging and key themes are highlighted below:

- Southwest Middlesex has **a lot to offer** with respect to parks, recreation and cultural opportunities including an arena, outdoor pool and splash pad, curling facility, and a parks system that includes two new arboreta.
- Opportunities for **park renewal** include improving physical accessibility (e.g., playground replacement), re-purposing underutilized sports fields, and developing trails. **Facility improvements** to the pool and arena were also suggested due to aging infrastructure, accessibility, and creating a welcoming image.
- The Municipality should play a **leadership** role in the provision of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities. This involves regular coordination with organizations, seeking and training volunteers, and providing programs where there are gaps. Providing a strong parks, recreation and culture system will also require an effective fee structure.
- The Municipality has been exploring opportunities to strengthen **organizational capacity** and general **departmental effectiveness** through the hiring a temporary recreation programmer, tapping into contract work to undertake grounds maintenance throughout the Municipality, exploring new technology such as online booking software, and potentially revisiting the user fee structure to ensure that it is effective.

3.7 Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were conducted with members of Council and key staff including the CAO, Director of Operations, Treasurer, and the Fire Chief to collect their initial input for consideration in the Master Plan. Due to the nature of the discussions, a summary of input is not presented in this report; however, the key themes that emerged from these interviews have been considered in the preparation of the Master Plan.

4.0 Parks, Trails and Open Space

4.1 Park Classification

A well-designed parks system offers social, environmental, health, and economic benefits, and they have the potential to bring people together. As outdoor spaces, parks provide an important connection to nature, which is required for our survival as well as personal, community, and societal enrichment.⁷

For the purposes of this Master Plan, **active parks** refer to lands owned and/or managed by the Municipality that are developed and maintained primarily for active or passive recreational use by the community. Active parks typically contain built recreational or community amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, etc.), as well as some open space and natural features. These lands are the focus of park dedication under the *Planning Act*.

Open spaces refer to lands with no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as provincially significant wetlands, environmentally significant and sensitive natural areas, watercourses, and floodplains. Due to the nature of these lands, they are used for passive uses only, although in some cases public use may be discouraged depending on the sensitivity of the area. While open spaces are not a direct focus of the Master Plan, their important contributions to supporting the parks system are recognized.

It is important to incorporate parks planning through the municipal land use decision-making process, which is largely guided by local Official Plans. The Municipality's Official Plan contains broad policies regarding the provision and development of parkland. A review of the Official Plan revealed the absence of a local park classification system, which is commonly used to assist communities in defining the functional hierarchy of a municipal parks and open space system. A classification system is essential in advancing the sustainable planning of active and passive forms of parkland by directing many aspects of park usage as defined through size, form, function and/or level of amenity. To guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces the Municipality should consider the park classification system in Table 7.



⁷ Parks Canada Agency. 2017. Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community.

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Table 7: Recommended Park Classification System

Park Type	Description	Size (Ha)
Community Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves the entire Municipality. • Contains a wide range of amenities, such as major sports fields, special event spaces, indoor facilities, etc. • Generally located along main roads, linked to bicycle and/or pedestrian networks, and containing sufficient off-street parking. • Select portions may also be naturalized/ open space. 	3.0 ha+
Neighbourhood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves a residential neighbourhood. • Designed for small scale recreation activities and may include a playground, courts, and generally no more than one sports field. • Centrally located within neighbourhood to optimize accessibility and visibility/safety. • May be served by on-street parking depending on size. 	0.5 ha to 3.0 ha
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipally owned lands that are predominantly naturalized or protected due to significant features. May also contain stormwater management ponds. • May be used for limited passive recreation such as walking or hiking. 	Varies

Recommendations – Park Classification

1. Utilize the park classification system contained in the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.



4.2 Park Supply and Distribution

Southwest Middlesex provides approximately 12.4 hectares (30.7 acres) of active parks across 13 sites. These parks contain a range of outdoor spaces, facilities and amenities including sports fields, playgrounds, seating, pavilions, passive spaces for informal gatherings or activities, and landscaping and floral gardens. The parkland system includes The Glencoe Fairgrounds, which are owned by the Glencoe Agricultural Society and maintained by the Municipality.

The Municipality’s parkland system is complemented by other outdoor space providers such as the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (Big Bend Conservation Area and Mosa Forest), St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (AW Campbell Conservation Area) and the Wardsville Golf Club.

Based on the current population estimate (6,000 residents), the Municipality is achieving an overall park service level of 2.1 hectares per 1,000 residents. A summary of parkland is contained in Table 8. This level of parkland provision is on the lower end of the range when compared to other municipalities in Ontario where service levels range between 2.0 and 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents, although service levels are influenced by a number of variables including historic levels of service, population size and density, distribution, availability of developable land and non-municipal providers, and other factors.

Table 8: Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Park Inventory

Park Name	Area (Ha)
Appin	
Appin Park	2.02
Glencoe	
Bob Martin Park	0.20
Elks Park	0.00
Glencoe Dog Park	1.21
Glencoe Parkette	0.01
Glencoe Pool and Splash Pad	0.01
Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds	3.24
Simpson Street Park	1.62
Strathburn Park Arboretum	0.40
Melbourne	
Clark Street Park	0.14
McArthur Park Arboretum	1.60
Middlemiss	
Middlemiss Park	0.40
Wardsville	
Little Kin Park	1.62
Total	12.4

Southwest Middlesex’s current parkland service level is

2.1 hectares per 1,000 residents

(excluding non-municipal parks managed by conservation authorities and others)

Note: Current population is estimated to be 6,000 persons.

In terms of parkland distribution, a geographic review of the Municipality’s park supply found that settlement areas in Southwest Middlesex are generally served by at least one park (Figure 5). The majority of residents within these settlement areas have access to some level of parkland within walking distance, although park gaps exist in the north area of Glencoe (north of Dundonald Road and Appin Road). Park

gaps also exist in Appin, Wardsville and Melbourne. Addressing these park gaps should be considered as opportunities become available.

Through this Master Plan process, the Municipality discovered that a portion of Little Kin Park was a burial ground associated with a former church. While an initiative is currently underway to identify the exact location of the burials, it is appropriate to remove this park from the Municipality's supply of "active parks" to limit its use to passive activities in order to respect the historical nature of the former burial lands. As a result, it is recommended that the Municipality seek a new location within Wardsville to ensure that residents within the village continue to have access to outdoor recreation space. At a minimum, the new park should be the same size as Little Kin Park (1.62 hectares) or larger, particularly given that there are currently no other active parks in Wardsville.

In terms of future population growth, Southwest Middlesex is forecasted to grow by 100 to 700 residents over the next ten years, resulting in a need for 1.7 hectares of active parkland. As a result, a total of approximately 3.3 hectares of active parkland would be needed to address growth related needs and to replace Little Kin Park in order to maintain the current service level of 2.1 hectares per 1,000 residents. It should be recognized that maintaining this level of service is highly dependent upon public access to the outdoor space at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site. As such, the Municipality will need to continue to work collectively with the Glencoe Agricultural Society to ensure that these lands remain publically accessible.

In order to achieve the Municipality's parkland needs, maximizing parkland dedication allowable through the *Planning Act* is recommended. Where necessary, the acquisition of parkland should be augmented by other strategies available to the Municipality to address parkland gap areas and to replace Little Kin Park in Wardsville, as identified in this Master Plan, such as land purchase or agreements with landholders.

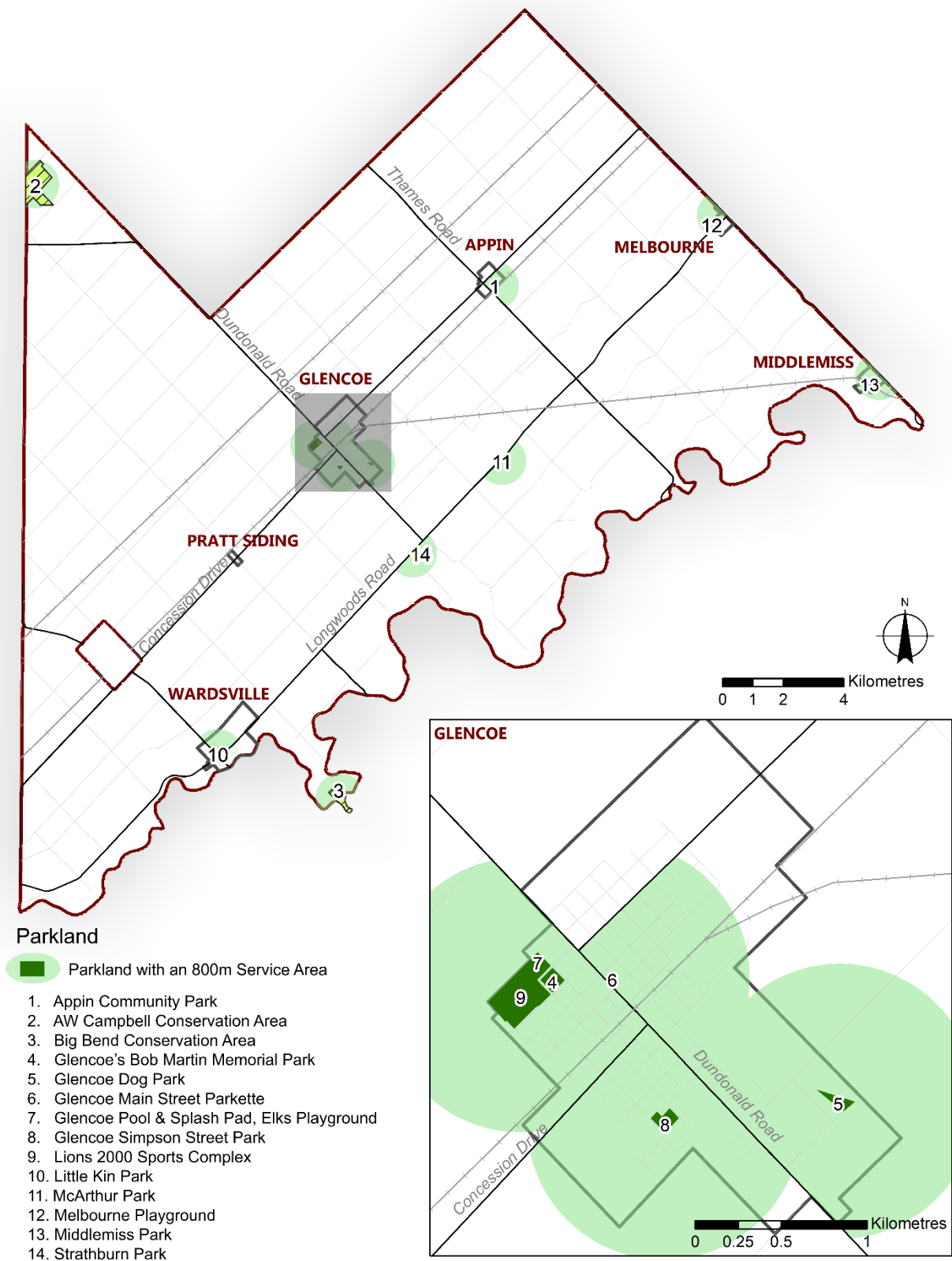
The focus on active parkland supply is not meant to diminish the importance of naturalized parkland as they provide significant ecological benefits, facilitate trail development, etc.; however, the Municipality will need to ensure that lands conveyed through the development process are unencumbered by natural constraints to accommodate the development of recreation facilities to address growth related needs. The acquisition of naturalized parkland (or hazardous lands) should be permitted over and above the parkland dedication requirements permitted through the *Planning Act*. This exclusion should also be extended to stormwater management ponds given its limited ability to accommodate active parkland facilities.

Recommendations – Park Supply and Distribution

2. Acquire approximately 3.3 hectares of active parkland over the next ten years to maintain the current service level of 2.1 hectares per 1,000 residents. This includes 1.7 hectares to address growth-related needs and 1.6 hectares in Wardsville to replace Little Kin Park. Emphasis should be placed on parkland conveyance or land acquisition within new plans of subdivision and in areas with park gaps such as the north end of Glencoe and in the villages of Appin, Wardsville and Melbourne.
3. Continue to work collectively with the Glencoe Agricultural Society to ensure that the outdoor space at the Project 2000 site (Glencoe Fairgrounds) remain publically accessible for parks and recreation activities, as well as special events.

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Figure 13: Distribution of Parkland



4.3 Parkland Policies

4.3.1 Parkland Dedication

The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Official Plan (Adopted in 2008) contains policies for parkland dedication, which must be consistent with the framework established in the Ontario *Planning Act*. Parkland dedication policies are contained in Section 3.4.5.2 for Glencoe and 4.4.3.3 in Wardsville. The Official Plan identifies that for residential development, 5% of land is to be conveyed to the Municipality for park or recreational purposes, while 2% of land is required for all other forms of development (e.g., commercial and industrial). For medium density residential development, the Official Plan identifies that parkland will be conveyed at an alternative rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units.

Section 3.4.5.2 (4.4.3.4) of the Official Plan indicates that where parkland is available or where more suitable park sites exist elsewhere, the Municipality may require cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication. This section articulates that the amount shall be consistent with the provisions of the *Planning Act*. Use of these funds are guided by the Municipality's Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Policy (By-law 2019/072).

Section 3.4.5.4 (and 4.4.3.5) outlines criteria for accepting parkland including:

- Proximity and access to existing recreation facilities and parks;
- Proximity and access to users;
- Size, shape, topography and drainage;
- Potential development and maintenance costs; and
- Potential for expansion.

While not noted in the Official Plan, parkland should also have adequate street frontage to provide for visibility and safety. Parkland dedication should focus on lands that are suitable for active park purposes as these lands are suitable for supporting a variety of active and passive activities. Thus, accepting woodlots and environmentally sensitive areas as parkland dedication should be discouraged, although the Municipality may assume these lands (over and above the required amount) for the purposes of protecting natural areas for passive recreation and educational uses.

Furthermore, sufficient park sizes should also be considered to facilitate meaningful park experiences. Consistent with the recommended parkland classification system, parkland conveyed to the Municipality should be greater than 0.5 hectares, unless there is a need to reconcile a gap area. The Municipality may wish to consider accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland in cases where the area is adequately supplied with parkland or the development proposal is too small to result in a meaningful park parcel.

In 2019, the Province passed Bill 108 (More Homes, More Choices Act), introducing changes to the *Planning Act* (among other pieces of legislation). Several provisions of this Act were subsequently repealed in 2020 through the passing of Bill 197 (COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act). Bill 197 allows for municipalities to continue to require parkland dedication provisions as per Sections 42 and 51.1 of the *Planning Act*. Additional provisions relating to a community benefits charge (CBC) have been enacted for medium to high density development, thus this change is unlikely to apply to Southwest Middlesex. Other recent changes to legislation include Bill 73, which was introduced in 2015 and modified the alternative

rate for cash-in-lieu to one hectare per 500 units, with this Master Plan serving as the parks plan required under the *Planning Act*.

4.3.2 Parkland Acquisition

Recognizing that the development process may not be sufficient to allow the Municipality to meet its active parkland target, additional methods for acquiring land for active park purposes will likely need to be considered, which is a best practice that is often considered in other municipalities. Generally speaking, strategies for acquiring land for active park purposes include:

- Land purchase;
- Donation or bequest;
- Expropriation
- Land lease or public access agreements (long-term)
- Land exchanges or swaps, as well as off-site conveyance of parkland;
- Establishment of a Parks Foundation (e.g., community, corporate or municipal donations towards parkland acquisition and improvement);
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use; and/or
- Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners.

The Municipality has already employed some of these techniques to supplement the parkland mechanisms permitted by the Planning Act.

It will be important for the Municipality to supplement the mechanisms permitted by the Planning Act with these parkland acquisition strategies described in this section in order to meet the parkland needs of residents over the planning period and to maximize public access to public parks and open spaces.

Recommendations – Parkland Policies

4. At the time that the Municipality's Official Plan is updated, policies should be parkland dedication policies should be strengthened, with consideration given to the following:
 - a. Reflect recently legislative changes such as the alternative rate for cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units (as opposed to the previous rate of one hectare per 300 units);
 - b. Accepting cash-in-lieu in cases where the area is adequately supplied with parkland or the development proposal is too small to result in a meaningful park parcel;
 - c. Only accept land as a part of parkland dedication if it is suitable for supporting a variety of active and passive park activities;
 - d. The development of parkland parcels smaller than 0.5 hectares in size should be discouraged, unless it is necessary to reconcile gap areas; and
 - e. Woodlots, environmentally sensitive areas and other natural features may be conveyed to the Municipality, over and above parkland dedication requirements, for the purposes of preservation and education and passive uses.

Recommendations – Parkland Policies

5. Where appropriate, employ alternative acquisition tools identified in this Master Plan (e.g., purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.) to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.

4.4 Parkland Design Considerations

Southwest Middlesex's parks contain variety of features that are indicative of evolving interests (e.g., splash pad, off-leash dog park, etc.). Thoughtful design and small-scale investments to parks that enhance unstructured use, comfort, accessibility, and functionality can attract greater informal gatherings within parks such as picnics, community gatherings, or simply meeting with friends and family, highlighting the importance of creating inviting public spaces.

Accessibility and inclusivity are important objectives of park design. Parks are a place for all, emphasizing the need to facilitate access for persons of all ages and abilities. Not all parks or areas within them are appropriate for universally accessible infrastructure (such as ecologically sensitive or naturalized areas); however, community-focused spaces should consider the ability for all residents to access them, in keeping with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. The Municipality can increase the likelihood of park users visiting regularly by making them more welcoming, comforting, inclusive and safe. Consultation with the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee may assist with this goal.



Comfort amenities benefit everyone and can position Southwest Middlesex's parks to be more inviting for everyday users. Best practices suggest that well-designed parks that invoke a feeling of comfort tend to be used frequently. Research suggests that there is a growing desire for comfort amenities such as paved pathways, seating and picnic tables, outdoor fitness stations, and more.

Shade in parks to protect park users from the elements is another common request. This can be provided through erecting shade shelters, recognizing that they can be costly due to initial construction costs and maintenance. Alternatively, trees can be planted as natural shade solution, although it may not be realized until they have reached a mature state.

Increasing a community's tree cover offers a number of benefits including supporting natural habitats, cleaning the air, reducing urban heat island effect and climate change impacts, as well as improving personal and community wellbeing. As a best practice, municipalities have been undertaking strategies to increase tree canopy cover to achieve these benefits through a number of means including working with community partners to deliver tree planting initiatives, increasing the number of trees within parks and open spaces, as well as along trails and boulevards, and encouraging land owners to plant more trees. Adopting policies to preserve and enhance tree canopy have also been implemented in other

communities. These initiatives should be explored in Southwest Middlesex to increase tree canopy cover, which is consistent with the Municipality's corporate goal to be more environmentally friendly.

Signage is also an essential park amenity that plays an important role in establishing a visual identity and communicating vital information such as the park name, address, amenities, rules and other key information. There are different signage types that serve varying purposes such as entrance sign, regulatory signs, wayfinding signs, and interpretive signs. By having a standardized signage template, Southwest Middlesex can promote awareness and civic pride, as well as avoid confusion regarding access and ownership.

The integration of arts and cultural features should also be considered in the development or redevelopment of parks and outdoor spaces, particularly those that host special events and festivals. This may include the consideration of stages, servicing (electricity, water, etc.), public art installations, portable infrastructure (such as fencing), and more.

Recommendations – Parkland Design Considerations

6. Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety and comfort within the Municipality's parks through compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, including consultation with the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee.
7. Consider and evaluate the provision of supporting amenities including, but not limited to, seating, shade, trails and pathways, washrooms, utilities, and other amenities to enhance the user experience within appropriate park types.
8. Investigate opportunities to increase tree canopy cover in Southwest Middlesex with consideration given to implementing a policy to preserve and enhance tree canopy cover, increase the number of trees within parks and open spaces, as well as trails and boulevards, establish a tree planting initiative (potentially with a community partner), encourage land owners to plant more trees (e.g., free tree day), or other strategies.
9. Conduct a review of parks, trails and facility signage with the goal of implementing a consistent and high-quality signage template across all parks and trails that enhances municipal and departmental branding, including replacement.

4.5 Parkland Renewal and Redevelopment Opportunities

Park experiences are influenced by park design, intended function, and the quality of facilities and amenities found within them. These factors are often informed by the era of original construction. A park built decades prior can impact positive feelings of history, sentiment, and pride; however, older parks may also be in need of rejuvenation if deterioration is apparent or if the intended function no longer responds to modern and/or local area interests and demographics have changed.

Park revitalization is an important part of attracting continued use over time. Rejuvenation efforts can be major in scale, ranging from complete park development to review of major amenities or adding new facility components to respond to evolving needs and trends, where space permits. The Master Plan process revealed opportunities to re-imagine select park spaces that are described below.

Strategic parkland redevelopment projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital investment. Timing of these projects should be based on the Municipality's discretion and influenced by needs through the consultation process, demand indicators and available funding. The ideas presented below are preliminary in concept and intended to inform future planning.

4.5.1 Project 2000/ Glencoe Fairgrounds

The Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site is a large complex with multiple owners and operators. The Municipality of Southwest Middlesex owns the arena, outdoor pool and splash pad (including the lands), while the Glencoe Agricultural Society owns curling club building (operated by the Glencoe & District Curling Club) and outdoor spaces, including the land where there are a variety of amenities including two

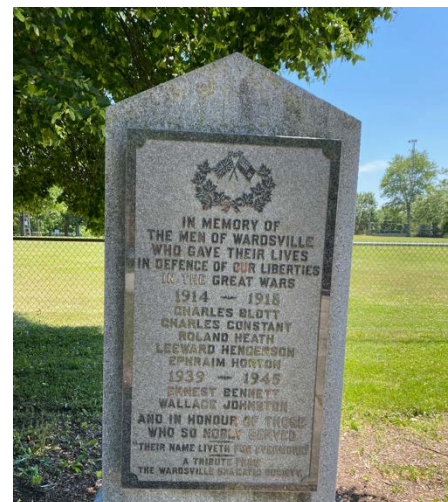


ball diamonds, skateboard park, soccer fields, and open space. The Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site plays a critical role in meeting the needs of residents from a recreational and broader community perspective and thus, it is recommended that the Municipality work closely with the Glencoe Agricultural Society, Glencoe & District Curling Club and others to strategically identify solutions to optimize the use of the site, with a view of enhancing the site as a significant community hub where residents and visitors can gather.

For example, the Municipality should engage the Glencoe Agricultural Society to explore the potential to establish a walking pathway around the property, as well as connections to on-site amenities. Another potential strategy is to investigate the possibility of renaming the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site to a new name that encapsulates all indoor and outdoor community and recreation assets and activities at this location to identify this space as a premiere gathering destination for the Municipality. The upcoming renovations to the Glencoe Arena can also assist in advancing the community hub vision.

4.5.2 Little Kin Park

Little Kin Park has recently been discovered to be a former burial ground associated with a former church where the park is currently located. Subject to determining the exact location of the burials, it is recommended that Little Kin Park be redeveloped for passive use in a manner that respects the former use of the site and to recognize its historical significance, with consideration given to walking pathways, seating, signage, landscaping, tree plantings, open greenspace and other low-maintenance amenities and features. Development over burials and active recreation amenities/activities must be avoided.



4.5.3 Simpson Park

Simpson Park currently contains a ball diamond and playground with supporting amenities including a pavilion, small parking area and washroom building (closed). As the Master Plan determined that the ball diamond is underutilized due to being an oversupply, an opportunity exists to re-imagine the park to respond to the needs of the community and reflect the intended function of this neighbourhood park, as well as to re-deploy the outdoor recreation activities that currently take place at the Glencoe District High School. A re-imagined Simpson Park should include two pickleball courts, one tennis court, a re-positioned playground and pavilion, greenspace, walking pathways, outdoor fitness equipment, and potentially a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey. The existing washroom building should be removed and not replaced.

4.5.4 Future Park in Wardsville

This Master Plan recommended the acquisition of a future park in Wardsville to replace the active uses at Little Kin Park to continue meeting the needs of residents in the village and surrounding area. As identified throughout this Master Plan, a number of outdoor recreation facilities has been identified for this future park including a full-size basketball court, playground, skateboard zone, and off-leash dog park. With input from the public, a park design exercise should be undertaken once land has been secured with consideration given to how the recommended outdoor facilities should be located on site. Other site amenities should also be considered including, but not limited to, open greenspace for passive and unstructured activities, internal walking pathways (and potentially outdoor fitness equipment), shade and seating and other suggestions identified by the public.

Recommendations – Parkland Renewal and Redevelopment Opportunities

10. Work collaboratively with the Glencoe Agricultural Society, Glencoe & District Curling Club and others to explore opportunities to further enhance the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site as a significant community hub. Consideration should be given to establishing a walking pathway around the perimeter of the site and to connect to on-site amenities. Opportunities to rename the site to one name that encapsulates all indoor and outdoor assets and activities at this location should also be considered to identify this space as a premiere gathering destination for the Municipality.
11. Acquire a new park site in Wardsville and prepare a park development plan that should include an off-leash dog park, full-size multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey, skateboard zone, playground, walking pathways and open greenspace.
12. Undertake a redevelopment plan for Little Kin Park for passive use in a manner that respect's the historical significance of the site as a former church and burial ground. The redevelopment plan should include walking pathways, seating, signage, landscaping, tree plantings, open greenspace and other low-maintenance amenities and features. Development over burials and active recreation amenities/activities must be avoided.
13. Re-imagine Simpson Park to enhance utilization of the park and to re-deploy outdoor recreation activities that currently take place at the Glencoe District High School. The re-imagined park should include two pickleball courts, one tennis court, a re-positioned playground and pavilion, greenspace, walking pathways, outdoor fitness equipment, and

Recommendations – Parkland Renewal and Redevelopment Opportunities

potentially a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey (subject to discussions with the Thames Valley District School Board). The existing washroom building should be removed and not replaced.

14. Park renewal, redevelopment and development projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to establish capital and operational assumptions.

4.6 Recreational Trails

4.6.1 Existing Trails Network

While the Municipality does not have any trails within its parks system, it maintains several sidewalks located within its settlement areas and hamlets. This pedestrian network is complemented by other non-municipal providers of outdoor space including the running track at Glencoe District High School and AW Campbell Conservation Area (St. Clair Region Conservation Authority), as well as the Big Bend Conservation Area and Mosa Forest (Lower Thames Valley Conservation Area).

Additionally, there are a number of historical points of interest found in Southwest Middlesex, which form part of the “Heritage Trail”, which is an initiative between Middlesex County and lower-tier municipalities, including Southwest Middlesex. While these historical points of interest are not connected by a formal trail network, they represent notable locations of historical significance and are denoted by information signage at each location.

Active transportation infrastructure such as recreational trails are one of the most highly desirable amenities in any municipality. They facilitate low-cost outdoor physical activity and can be used by residents of all ages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities across the Province experienced a strong uptake in trail usage, outdoor walking and cycling, highlighting the importance of connecting residents within the community. The popularity of walking and the desire for trails in Southwest Middlesex was reflected in the community survey for the Master Plan. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 78% of respondents participated in walking and hiking for leisure, which was the most popular activity. More than nine-out-of-ten respondents (92%) also felt that recreational trails are important, but less than one-in-four (38%) respondents were satisfied with them in the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex, suggesting that expectations are not being met. Consultation with community stakeholders also revealed that trail development should be a high priority in the Municipality.

4.6.2 Conceptual Trails Network

Through this Master Plan a conceptual trail network is advanced in Figure 14 that aims to promote trail development opportunities in Southwest Middlesex. This conceptual trail network is closely aligned with the proposed network contained within Middlesex County’s 2017 Cycling Strategy, which identifies designated paved shoulder and signed cycling routes along Concession Drive, Parkhouse Drive, Hagerty Road, Thames Road and Melbourne Road. An on-road cycling route through Glencoe and Wardsville were also identified, as well as a multi-use trail from Glencoe to the Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich through

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the former railway (privately owned). This network ensures that there are safe north-south and east-west linkages for active transportation that connects residents within settlement areas and to adjacent municipalities.

Building upon the existing proposed network, emphasis should be placed on connecting residents to key destinations in Southwest Middlesex such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, and other locations including the historical points of interest along the Middlesex County Heritage Trail and the conservation areas.

Within the short term, the Municipality should consider is establishing walking pathways within existing and future parks to identify designated circulation areas and ensure that Southwest Middlesex's parks are accessible, as well as the amenities within them. The Municipality has already begun establishing designated walking pathways within newer parks such as Strathburn Park and McArthur Park. One point of emphasis that should be considered is working with the Glencoe Agricultural Society and potentially others to establish a walking loop within the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site such as a perimeter trail or walkways to connect users with on-site amenities.

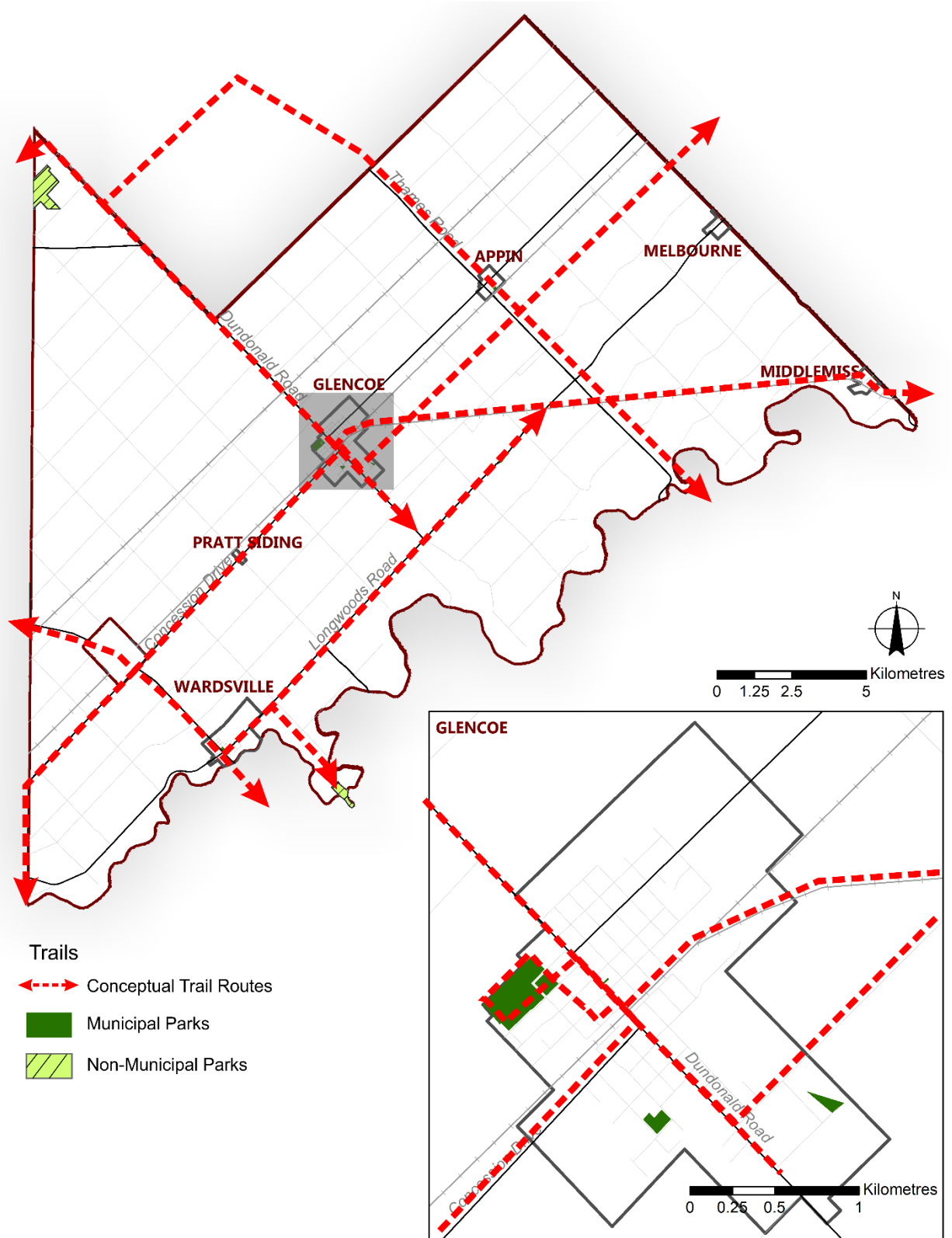
In certain instances, trails and walking routes already exist in an informal manner, such as routes within naturalized areas. To encourage physical activity and to respond to public demand for trails, efforts should be made to formalize these routes, which will require promotion and education, as well as increased maintenance. Longer-term trail opportunities may consist of routes located on non-municipal lands (e.g., former railway). In these cases, a variety of strategies should be considered including, but not limited to, easements, purchase/lease, dedication through plan of subdivision, etc.

The concept put forth in this Master Plan should be viewed as a point of departure for trail development, through which additional work should be initiated. The conceptual trail network does not go into the level of detail regarding property ownership, geography, ecological impacts, or trail design. Due to these and other factors, implementation of the conceptual trail network should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as opportunities become available. Given that the implementation of some trail routes may not be feasible, deviations may be necessary provided the general intent of linking residents to destinations and the broader trail system is maintained. Further, consultation with the public and key stakeholders during implementation is recommended to refine potential routes, identify potential amenities and address any concerns.



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Figure 14: Conceptual Trails Network



Recommendations – Recreational Trails

15. Work with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (AW Campbell Conservation Area) and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (Big Bend Conservation Area and Mosa Forest) to ensure continued public access to existing and future trail networks and to work collaboratively to create connections to future municipal trails and the active transportation network.
16. Strengthen active transportation opportunities with consideration given to the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan. Specifically, the following trail development opportunities should be considered:
 - a. Strengthening cycling routes in accordance with the Middlesex County 2017 Cycling Strategy; some of these routes may be suitable for walking and hiking;
 - b. Establishing walking pathways within existing and future parks to designate safe and accessible circulation areas and connections to on-site amenities – emphasis should be placed on working with the Glencoe Agricultural Society and potentially others to establish walking pathways within Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds; and
 - c. Connecting residents to key destinations such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, and other points of interest (e.g., conservation areas).
17. Utilize a range of strategies to secure access to non-municipal land for the purposes of trail development (e.g., easement, purchase/lease, dedication through plan of subdivision, etc.).



5.0 Facility Inventory

Table 9 summarizes the indoor and outdoor facilities that are owned and/or maintained by the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex. In addition to these facilities, residents also benefit from a number of facilities and amenities that are owned and/or maintained by others (note: residents may have limited access), such as schools, conservation areas, religious institutions, community organizations, adjacent municipalities and private providers. A summary of non-municipal facility and recreation providers is contained in Appendix B.

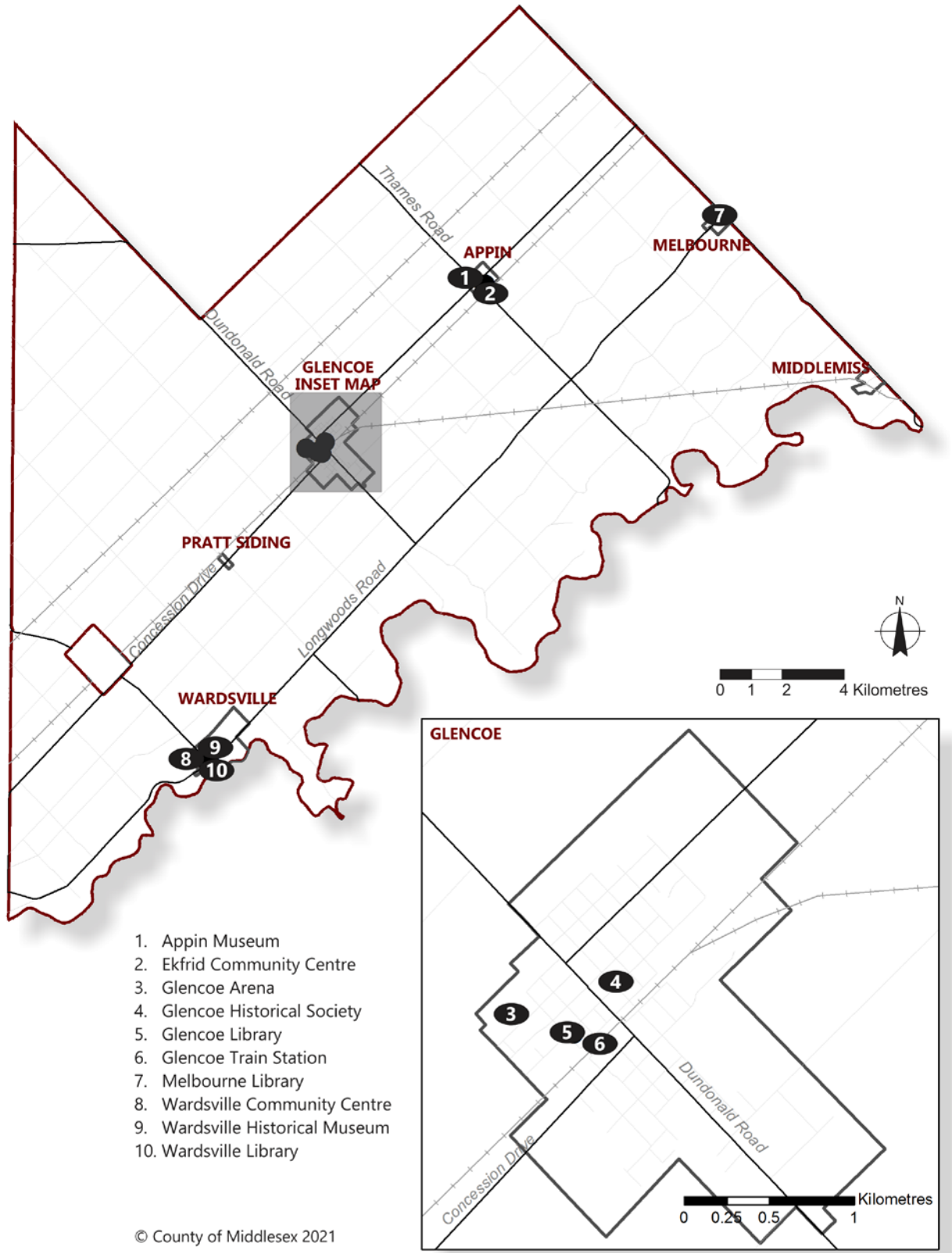
Table 9: Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Indoor and Outdoor Facilities

Facility Type	Supply	Location(s)	Current Service Level
Arenas	1	Glencoe Memorial Arena	1 : 6,000
Arts and Cultural Facilities	7	Appin Museum, Glencoe Historical Society, Glencoe Train Station (and Caboose), Glencoe Library, Melbourne Library, Wardsville Historical Museum, Wardsville Library	1 : 900
Outdoor Aquatics	1 pool and 1 splash pad	Glencoe Pool and Splash Pad	1 : 6,000
Rectangular Sports Fields	6	Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds	1 : 1,000
Ball Diamonds	4 Lit, 1 Unlit	Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds (2 lit), Simpson Street Park (1), Appin Ball Park (1 lit), Little Kin Park (1 lit)	1 ULE : 900
Outdoor Basketball Courts	1	Little Kin Park	1 : 6,000
Skateboard	1	Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds	1 : 6,000
Playgrounds	7	Appin Ball Park, Bob Martin Park, Elks Park, Wardsville Park, Melbourne Park, Middlemiss Park, Simpson Street Park	1 : 900
Off-Leash Dog Parks	1	CommonWealth Dog Park	1 : 6,000

Note: Unlit equivalents (ULE) are counted as 1.5 for every lit ball diamond to account for extended periods of play. Current service level based on a population estimate of 6,000 persons.

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Figure 15: Distribution of Municipal Facilities



1. Appin Museum
2. Ekfrid Community Centre
3. Glencoe Arena
4. Glencoe Historical Society
5. Glencoe Library
6. Glencoe Train Station
7. Melbourne Library
8. Wardsville Community Centre
9. Wardsville Historical Museum
10. Wardsville Library

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5.1 Arenas and Outdoor Skating Rinks

5.1.1 Arenas

The Municipality provides one ice pad at the Glencoe Arena. Built in 1972, the arena features one ice sheet (185'x85'), which is supported by six change rooms. The Municipality was recently successful in securing an ICIP grant for revitalizing/renovating the Glencoe Arena to extend the life of the facility and improve energy efficiency including replacing the arena floor, as well as mechanical and sound equipment. Accessibility retrofits to the washrooms and change rooms are also planned.



For decades, ice sports such as hockey and figure skating have been considered a cornerstone of Canadian pastime activities. Recent data from Hockey Canada, however, indicates that participation in minor hockey is steadily declining. Registration in Hockey Canada has declined since peaking in the 2008/09 season with nearly 210,000 affiliated minor players reported in Ontario for the 2018/19 season.⁸ This represents a 16% decline from the peak in 2008/09 and can be linked to several factors such as the high cost of hockey, concerns over safety, competing interests, aging populations, and competition from leagues/organizations that are not sanctioned by Hockey Canada.

Declining participation has resulted in surplus arena capacity in many communities, particularly during the weekends and shoulder hours that fall just outside of prime time. As a result, municipalities have implemented strategies to cope with these trends such as amending ice allocation policies, offering new programs and sport subsidies, or closing arenas at certain times of the day to reduce operating costs.

The community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 43% of respondents participated in ice activities such as hockey and figure skating. 70% of respondents also supported additional investment in arenas, which was identified as the 10th highest priority facility. Requests were also made for improving the existing arena to update and modernize the aging facility.

A review of a typical weekly ice schedule during the 2019/2020 skating season found that the arena is operating at a utilization rate of 62%. This level of use is low given that high performing arena profiles tend to operate at 90% to 95% capacity or more. The Glencoe Arena is well utilized during weekly prime time hours as the ice is booked at 87% capacity. It is recognized that three hours per week during the prime-time period is allocated to public skating. Weekend usage was lower with 33% utilization; half of this time was allocated to public skating. Glencoe's arena profile suggests that there is ample capacity to accommodate additional usage.

⁸ Hockey Canada Annual General Meeting Reports

With Southwest Middlesex's aging population, the softening demand for ice time experienced across the Province, and pandemic impacts on arena use, no additional arenas are anticipated to be required during the Master Plan period, particularly given that forecasted population growth is not sufficient to warrant an additional ice pad.

Instead, the Municipality should focus its efforts on strategies to optimize the use of the Glencoe Arena, particularly given its location at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site and the desire to position this location to be a community hub (see Recommendation #10). This may entail bolstering ice utilization during the skating season through strategies including engaging schools to use the arena as part of physical education and school team programs, implementing an online booking system where users and residents can view and book last-minute prime time ice in real time, and continuing to seek opportunities to attract adult and non-resident usage. Glencoe Arena may also be able to draw increased rentals from non-residents with the changing availability of regional ice. During the non-skating season, the Municipality should explore opportunities to enhance the use of the arena floor through community rentals and programming delivered by the Municipality or others (see Recommendation #47).

With no additional ice pads required, it is imperative for the Municipality to ensure its single ice pad and support spaces remains operationally-sound. As the Municipality was successful in receiving a grant to undertake improvements to update and modernize the arena facility, it is expected that these improvements will address concerns over the longevity of the facility, while creating a more welcoming space for users and visitors.

5.1.2 Outdoor Skating Rinks

During the consultation process, requests were received for an outdoor skating rink. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents in the community survey supported investment in an outdoor skating rink, which was the fifth highest priority. While outdoor skating has been a Canadian tradition, refrigerated rinks are costly and the ability to maintain natural outdoor ice has become increasingly difficult due to unpredictable winter weather and cumbersome maintenance.

As a best practice, municipalities that provide outdoor skating rinks tend to partner with others such as a neighbourhood association or a dedicated group of volunteers who would be responsible for day-to-day maintenance of natural ice rinks, while the municipality would provide boards, access to water and space, which tend to be an open field, an existing multi-use court, or a dedicated concrete pad. Although this approach could be considered by the Municipality, the abundance of indoor ice available at the Glencoe Arena would be better to be optimized than to expend additional capital on an outdoor rink.

Recommendations – Arenas and Outdoor Skating Rinks

18. Position the Glencoe Arena as a year-round community hub for recreation and community activity to optimize use. This should include strategies to bolster ice use during the skating season such as working with user groups to improve ice allocation, encouraging weekend and morning ice time, engaging schools to improve daytime rentals, and attracting adult and non-resident usage. Use of the arena floor should be maximized through community rentals and programming (Municipal or others) (see Recommendation #47).

Recommendations – Arenas and Outdoor Skating Rinks

19. Explore the feasibility of creating or purchasing an online portal that users and/or the public can view and/or book last minute ice rentals (via the Municipality's website).
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5.2 Curling Facilities

Curling is typically not considered to be a core municipal service. Most curling facilities are provided and/or operated by the private or non-profit sector (such as in Southwest Middlesex). The curling facility in Southwest Middlesex is located at Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds, which has four curling sheets and a lounge. The facility is operated by the Glencoe & District Curling Club which has about 100 members.

Regional differences exist with respect to trends in curling. Some clubs have faced challenges with sustaining memberships (and folding completely), while others have been thriving. The strength of curling clubs is driven by many factors such as the lack of competing clubs in the region, growth of youth-focused leagues, and program offerings that have helped recruit new members and sustain long-term interest.

As a general rule of thumb, curling facilities can support approximately 100 to 125 members per curling sheet. On this basis, the existing facility's four curling sheets should be able to readily accommodate existing members and be able to accommodate growth over the next ten years. Given that the Municipality was recently successful in securing funding through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to replace the aging curling floor, it is expected that the facility will serve the community over the foreseeable future. With this in mind, it will be vital for the Municipality to work with the Glencoe & District Curling Club to ensure that the organization continues to be sustainable over the long-term. As a best practice, successful curling organizations should develop strategies to attract new participants such as grassroots initiatives such as youth-curling programs to develop long-term members and interest in the sport, work with school boards to encourage physical education and school team usage, and create a welcoming environment to attract new members.

Recommendations – Curling Facilities

20. Work with the Glencoe & District Curling Club to support initiatives that raise the profile of the sport in Southwest Middlesex and area to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization.
-

5.3 Gymsnasiums, Halls and Multi-Purpose Spaces

5.3.1 Gymnasiums

While the Municipality does not provide a gymnasium, it has an agreement with the Thames Valley District School Board to utilize the Glencoe District High School gymnasium outside of school hours.

Gymnasiums facilitate a variety of indoor sports and recreation opportunities that require a hard surface and large open space. Gymnasiums support both registration-based and drop-in activities such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, general fitness, and other active programs. While a variety of other activities may take place in these facilities such as special events and large social gatherings, non-sport related rentals are generally discouraged to ensure that gymnasiums are used for high-demand recreation users to maintain floor finishes.

The consultation process yielded limited input regarding gymnasium space. 70% of community survey respondents supported investment in municipal gymnasium space, which ranked 11th out of 21 facility types.

Gymnasiums are typically incorporated into the development of new community facilities as complementary spaces that can accommodate cross-programming opportunities. However, the provision of municipal gymnasiums can be influenced by the degree of access to school space. The Municipality is fortunate to have an agreement to utilize the Glencoe District High School gymnasium. The municipal use of the school gymnasium has been limited given that the Municipality does not provide any direct programming.

The preferred strategy moving forward is to seek opportunities to maximize the use of the Glencoe District High School gymnasium, relying on the Municipality's new Recreation Program Coordinator to work in collaboration with community partners to deliver a variety of gym-based programs. It is recognized that the Municipality has already been exploring use of the Glencoe Arena floor to support active indoor activities, which should continue to be supported such as temporary pickleball courts, summer camp program, etc.

5.3.2 Halls and Multi-Purpose Spaces

Seven halls and multi-purpose spaces are available for rent throughout the Municipality. These rooms accommodate a variety of uses including meetings, birthdays, social gatherings and other events. Amenities vary by location and may include kitchens, seating, tables, storage and more. Community spaces are also available at Glencoe District High School and at each library branch, which are owned by the Municipality but operated/booked by the Middlesex County Library. The Municipality also pays an annual fee to provide public access to the Masonic Hall in Wardsville. Additional spaces may be available through other providers in the Municipality such as at religious institutions, the Royal Canadian Legion and others.



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Halls and multi-purpose spaces are typically incorporated within facility designs as complementary spaces to other facility components such as at the Glencoe Arena. Co-locating these spaces within a community centre achieves benefits that include cross-programming opportunities and efficiencies in construction, maintenance and management. To appeal to a variety of uses, these spaces are flexibly designed and tend to include durable floor types, storage, counter space and kitchens (where appropriate). By contrast, stand-alone halls and multi-purpose spaces were constructed as small single-purpose facilities. This practice is generally discouraged in current facility planning exercises due to programming limitations and operational costs.

Halls and multi-purpose spaces generally have low-to-moderate levels of utilization, which is normal as these spaces are not typically viewed as revenue generators, but affordable and accessible public amenities that contribute to the quality of life in Southwest Middlesex. A scan of municipal community spaces in Southwest Middlesex revealed that Wardsville is a gap area, which is currently only serviced by a privately-owned rental space where public access is facilitated through the Municipality.

Recognizing that there are existing and aging infrastructure in Wardsville, particularly the Wardsville Fire Station and Wardsville Library, an opportunity exists to create a new community hub in Wardsville to replace these assets and ensure that there is a place for residents in this area to gather, socialize and participate in community functions. Centralizing facilities at one location achieves benefits associated with multi-use facilities, particularly with respect to increasing cross-programming opportunities, which would support the Municipality's desire to increase community programs, as well as support potential library program needs and space for fire training. Thus it is recommended that the Municipality develop a new community hub in Wardsville that potentially includes a new fire station, library, community meeting space (e.g., multi-purpose hall and meeting room). Once this new facility is in place, the Municipality should evaluate the future of its aging Wardsville facilities and public access agreement with Masonic Hall. The new facility should be co-located with the new park in Wardsville, which is recommended in this Master Plan.

With respect to existing space, the Municipality should continue to promote the use of existing hall and multi-purpose spaces to optimize use by community organizations, individual rentals and direct delivering programming where gaps exist. Renovations and updates to these spaces may be required to maintain or improve their functionality, accessibility and desirability for rentals and gatherings. For example, renovations to the Glencoe Arena should feature comfortable and casual spaces such as a lobby to encourage informal gatherings. It is also recognized that parking lot improvements are planned for the Ekfrid Community Centre in Appin. Future improvements should consider input from regular users such as the Southwest Middlesex Acting Krew and others in the community to ensure it continues to meet the needs of residents in Appin, Melbourne, Middlemiss and the surrounding area. More costly capital projects should have regard for cost benefit analyses to ensure that prudent investments are made. The Municipality should explore the potential to divest aging facilities that are not viable to repair and/or renovate.

Recommendations – Gymnasiums, Halls and Multi-Purpose Space

21. Focus gymnasium-based activities, including municipally-led programs and rentals, at the Glencoe Arena (floor during non-ice months) and community access to the Glencoe District High School.

Recommendations – Gymsnasiums, Halls and Multi-Purpose Space

22. Create a community hub in Wardsville, which could potentially include a new fire station and library, community space (e.g., multi-purpose hall and meeting room) and supporting amenities. Community spaces should be flexibly designed to accommodate a variety of uses, with consideration given to durable flooring types, storage, counter space, and kitchens. The community hub should be co-located with the future park in Wardsville. Once this new facility is in place, evaluate the future of aging public facilities in Wardsville and the public access agreement to the Masonic Hall.
23. Promote the availability of existing halls and multi-purpose spaces to the community for the wide range of recreation, cultural, and social activities that they are capable of accommodating. Renovations and improvements to existing spaces should be undertaken as necessary to maintain their functionality, accessibility and desirability for rentals and gatherings. For example, updates to the Glencoe Arena should feature comfortable and casual spaces such as a lobby to encourage informal gatherings. Future improvements to the Ekfrid Community Centre should be suitable for frequent facility users, particularly when it comes to flooring types and supporting amenities, as well as residents in Appin and surrounding areas (e.g., Melbourne and Middlemiss). More costly capital projects should have regard for cost benefit analyses to ensure prudent financial investments are made. The Municipality should explore divesting aging facilities that are not viable to repair and/or renovate.

5.4 Fitness Spaces

While the Municipality does not operate fitness centres or studios, community spaces may be utilized to deliver community-led group fitness opportunities. As with many communities large and small, local fitness providers offer active living programs in private studios. Equipment-based fitness centres (e.g., Goodlife, etc.) can be found within driving distance such as in Strathroy-Caradoc.

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

The popularity of fitness opportunities was heard through the consultation process. Fitness centres and programs were common requests from respondents who completed the community survey. Four-out-of-five respondents supported investment in a fitness centre, which was the second highest priority facility that was identified; 72% of respondents also supported investment in fitness studios.

Smaller municipalities typically do not have a sufficient market to construct and operate equipment-based fitness centres to justify the cost. On this basis, entry into full-service fitness is not recommended. The recommended strategy is to encourage the use of existing indoor and outdoor public spaces for group fitness activities and promoting existing private sector providers.

Recommendations – Fitness Spaces

24. Encourage the use of existing indoor and outdoor public spaces for group fitness activities and promote existing private sector providers.
-

5.5 Arts and Cultural Facilities

Nurturing local arts and cultural activities can be considered an “investment” toward long-term rewards. For example, arts education helps in child-development and has many positive social impacts. While delivery is typically community-based, municipalities are seeking strategic approaches to support local organizations. A strong arts and cultural community can also enhance the local economy through the incubation, attraction, and retention of creative talents and innovative industries.

The Municipality owns and operates a number of arts and cultural facilities across Southwest Middlesex. These facilities are places where residents, visitors and tourists can learn about the Municipality’s rich agricultural history, participate in activities and attend special events, and access resources. Municipal arts and cultural resources include the Glencoe Train Station, the museums in Appin and Wardsville, Glencoe Historical Society, and libraries in Glencoe, Wardsville and Melbourne. Some of these facilities are operated in partnership with other organizations such as the Middlesex County Library. The Municipality’s parks and recreation spaces may also accommodate arts and cultural events and festivals such as Tartan Days utilize a variety of public and private indoor and outdoor spaces.

To optimize the use of the Municipality’s facilities, it will be important to ensure that assets are designed in a manner to accommodate arts and cultural opportunities, and that they have the capacity to allow these opportunities to grow into the future. This would include ensure that there are appropriate kitchens, lighting, storage and other ancillaries that are typically desired among arts and cultural organizations for indoor facilities. The Municipality should also strategically evaluate its parks to identify how they can be improved from an arts and cultural perspective, with consideration given to permanent or temporary stages/amphitheatres, public art installations, cenotaphs, etc. Ensuring that the appropriate servicing exists (e.g., water and electricity) can also assist with making spaces more appealing for arts and cultural groups to utilize public spaces.



A particular emphasis should be placed on elevating the profile of the Glencoe Train Station. It is a prominent feature in the Municipality that is presently used for historical appreciation, arts and cultural events and activities, as well as a picturesque backdrop for photographers. Opportunities exist to position this space as a community hub for arts and culture in Southwest Middlesex. This may entail undertaking upgrades to better support and attract facility users and events (e.g., stage, pavilion, etc.), delivering arts and cultural programs, rotating curated exhibits of local historical artifacts, attracting/relocating arts and cultural organizations to utilize the Glencoe Train Station and general promotion of the facility (potentially in coordination with the Glencoe Historical Society or others). Other public parks and facilities in the Municipality should continue to support arts and cultural activities, as appropriate.

With respect to the Municipality's museums in Appin and Wardsville, they are underutilized as they are not staffed or accessible to the public. The Wardsville Museum building also has a number of facility constraints given that it's over 100 years old such as the lack of water servicing. Due to the low use these museums receive, future reinvestment is not recommended. It is recognized that there has recently been discussions regarding a community-led initiative to establish a County service to archive historical artifacts. It is recommended that this initiative be supported by the Municipality and if successful, artifacts from the Appin and Wardsville Museums should be transferred to the community organization.

Recommendations – Arts and Cultural Facilities

25. Engage arts and cultural organizations to ensure that municipal parks and facilities are designed in a manner that supports related events and activities including consideration given to infrastructure and amenities.
 26. Elevate the profile of the Glencoe Train Station to function as a community hub for arts and culture activity in Southwest Middlesex. This may entail undertaking upgrades to better support and attract users and events (e.g., stage, pavilion, servicing, etc.), delivering arts and cultural programs, rotating curated exhibits of historical artifacts, attracting/relocating arts and cultural organizations to utilize the Glencoe Train Station and general promotion of the facility (potentially in coordination with the Glencoe Historical Society or others). Other public parks and facilities in the Municipality should continue to support arts and cultural activities, as appropriate.
 27. Support the community-led initiative to establish a County service to archive historical artifacts. If successful artifacts from the Wardsville and Appin Museums should be transferred to the community organization.
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5.6 Outdoor Aquatics

5.6.1 Outdoor Pools

The Glencoe Pool (25-metre, five lanes) provides seasonal recreational swimming, swim and aqua-fit lessons, and swim team activities. The Municipality has reinforced its commitment to offer an outdoor pool in Southwest Middlesex through planned improvements to replace aging mechanical equipment. Pools are among the most sought after public facilities due to their ability to accommodate a wide range of programs and the fact that they can be used by all ages and abilities. Learning to swim is an essential life skill that all residents can benefit from.

The consultation process revealed that the Glencoe Pool is highly valued in the community. The community survey revealed that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 39% of respondents participated in recreational swimming and 28% participated in instructional swimming. Four-out-of-five (80%) of respondents supported additional investment in outdoor pools, which was the third highest facility priority.

The outdoor pool is an important recreation asset for the community and the Municipality has developed a strong understanding of pool operations and the costs involved. The Municipality has reinforced its commitment to offer swimming opportunities in Southwest Middlesex at the existing location through planned investments to upgrade various pool components and undertake accessibility improvements to enhance the user experience and extend its lifespan. With this in mind, the Glencoe Pool is expected to be sufficient to meet the needs of residents over the planning period.



5.6.2 Splash Pads

Adjacent to the outdoor pool is a splash pad that features an array of engaging spray features. Splash pads are highly desirable amenities for young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot summer day. Splash pads have proven to be more cost effective than outdoor pools and they are easier to be integrated into most parks. Splash pads can be developed in a wide variety of stimulating designs with apparatuses that provide an enhanced aquatic experience for residents and visitors.



The community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 44% of respondents used a splash pad, which was the fifth most popular facility type. More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents also supported additional investment in splash pads, which was the fourth most supported facility type, suggesting that this is a priority among respondents.

It is common for rural communities (such as Southwest Middlesex) to provide one splash pad in its primary settlement area. Small scale spray features may be considered in other settlement area if they are not within a reasonable driving distance of a splash pad. A visual scan of existing splash pads in the region suggests that residents living outside of Glencoe including Appin, Wardsville, Melbourne, Middlemiss and rural areas are generally within a ten-minute drive of existing splash pads Mount Brydges, Dutton/Dunwich, and Newbury. As a result, no additional splash pads are recommended.

As a best practice, splash pads tend to be operational between late May and early September, although this tends to vary annually depending upon the weather. In Southwest Middlesex, the splash pad's water infrastructure is tied to the Glencoe Pool. As a result, the Municipality's splash pad is only operational when the outdoor pool is functional. This is not ideal due to warmer weather being experienced during the shoulder seasons where residents may be looking to cool down. With this in mind, the Municipality should investigate establishing a self-sustaining water supply system for the splash pad. A cost-benefit analysis should be included as a part of this investigation to determine its feasibility.

Recommendations – Outdoor Aquatics

28. Investigate establishing a self-sustaining water supply system for the splash pad to extend its operating window. A cost-benefit analysis should form part of this investigation to determine feasibility.

5.7 Rectangular Fields

The Municipality offers six unlit rectangular fields, which are all located at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site. These fields vary in size and can be reconfigured according to age and level of play. The flexibility in field sizes allow the soccer organization to program the fields for simultaneous games and practices for younger age divisions, making them effective in addressing field needs. Rectangular fields are also located at school sites, although they are not used by the soccer group.

The Glencoe Minor Soccer Association is the primary user who indicated that participation has been growing over the past number of years. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, participation peaked at 300 participants. Typically, fields are provided at a rate of one per 80 to 90 participants, the Municipality is currently providing a strong level of service. The group believes that short-term participation may soften due to the pandemic; however, the organization expects that participation levels will return to historical levels over the medium to long-term. This would suggest that the existing field supply is sufficient to meet soccer needs over the planning period. During the interim, it is recommended that the Municipality work closely with the Glencoe Minor Soccer Association (and other soccer users) to monitor participation levels post-COVID and adjust the field supply to ensure that they are being used efficiently. Based upon participation and utilization data, the current number of rectangular fields is in excess of needs suggesting that one or more fields could be taken off-line each season (potentially to rest the fields) and reduce the level of maintenance (and associated cost).

Recommendations – Rectangular Fields

29. Work closely rectangular field users to monitor participation levels post-COVID and adjust the field supply as necessary to ensure that they are being used efficiently with an expectation that one or more fields could be taken off-line each season (potentially to rest the fields) and reduce the level of maintenance (and associated cost).

5.8 Ball Diamonds

There are five ball diamonds across Southwest Middlesex including four lit diamonds and one unlit diamond. An equivalency factor of 1.5 unlit diamonds is applied to lit diamonds to recognize the fact that they provide extended periods of play during the evenings. As a result, the Municipality provides an adjusted supply of seven unlit equivalent ball diamonds. Excluded from this inventory are school-owned ball diamonds.

Baseball (and its various forms) appeal to youth and adults. Participation in the sport tends to be cyclical and is often influenced by performance of the Toronto Blue Jays. While user group participation data is not available, the Municipality reports that the ball diamonds at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site (2 lit) and Appin Park (1) are generally used daily throughout the week, and capital plans are in place to undertake improvements such as replacing aging backstops. Future improvements to these ball diamonds should be strategic and appropriate for the intended use and function of the park, with consultation with ball diamond user groups. For example, a site visit to Appin Park revealed the presence of a washroom building. These types of amenities are not typically provided within this type of park due to factors related to maintenance, cost, and safety. According to the Municipality's Asset Management Plan, it is approximately 50 years old and will reach the end of its life expectancy within ten years, at which

point it should be decommissioned and divested as a municipal asset. A portable washroom may be considered as a potential replacement.

The ball diamond at Simpson Park (1) is underutilized and the Little Kin Park (1 lit) location has not been used for some time. Given this oversupply, opportunities exist to re-purpose these diamonds in order to address other facility needs. The redevelopment of these ball diamonds should be supported by a park-specific planning exercises, with consideration given to the recommendations contained in this Master Plan and in consultation with the public. Through this process, supporting ball diamond amenities such as lighting (Little Kin Park) and washroom building (Simpson Park) should be removed and not replaced.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

30. Ball diamond renewal projects at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site and Appin Park should be guided by consultation with ball diamond user groups to ensure that improvements are reflective of user needs, enhance the overall playing experience and are suitable for the park type. As a part of future renewal processes at Appin Park, the washroom building should be removed at the end of its life expectancy and potentially replaced with a portable washroom (at the discretion of the Municipality).
31. Re-purposing of the ball diamonds at Little Kin Park and Simpson Park (and removal of supporting amenities such as lighting and washroom buildings) should be guided by park-specific planning exercises, with consideration given to the facility needs identified in this Master Plan and public input (see Recommendation #12 and #13).

5.9 Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts

The Municipality does not provide any outdoor tennis or pickleball courts. Three lit tennis courts are located at the Glencoe District High School, which are available for use to the public outside of school hours.



Tennis has been experiencing a resurgence across Ontario over the past several years due to the success of Canadian professionals on the international stage and the growing segment of aging baby boomers who are seeking to remain active later in life who are returning to the sport. This demographic is also driving the growth of pickleball, which is widely recognized as the fastest growing sport in Canada. Compared to tennis, pickleball is a lower intensity sport that can be played indoors or outdoors. The popularity of pickleball continues to spread across Ontario and its prominence is highlighted by being played at the Ontario Senior Games.

The community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 14% and 4% of respondents played tennis and pickleball, respectively. 58% and 48% of respondents also supported additional public investment in tennis and pickleball, respectively.

Municipal courts are typically evaluated based on a per capita basis at a rate of one court per 4,000 to 5,000 residents. Based on this target, the three tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School should be

more than sufficient to meet needs over the planning period; however, its location may not be optimal as the property is owned by the school board and the tennis courts are only accessible to the public outside of school hours. For these reasons, residents may not be fully comfortable with using these courts, particularly as they are not located in a highly visible location within the community.

With this in mind, the potential to relocate these tennis courts was considered. An opportunity exists to establish new courts at Simpson Park as a part of a redevelopment process to replace an underutilized ball diamond. Based on the typical per capita rate, one tennis court should be adequate to meet needs. The Municipality should work with the Thames Valley District School Board to explore the feasibility of converting the existing tennis courts at Glencoe District High School to a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey (see Recommendation #34).

While there is no industry standard for pickleball courts, municipalities have begun introducing them as a level of service to respond to demand. With public requests for this facility type and the Municipality's aging population, it is logical to establish pickleball courts as a new level of service in Southwest Middlesex. As a social activity, a minimum of two pickleball courts should be constructed, preferably at Simpson Park given that it is a natural complement to a tennis court.

Recommendations – Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts

32. Establish one tennis court and two pickleball courts at Simpson Park to replace the three tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School (see Recommendation #34).

5.10 Outdoor Basketball Courts

The Municipality provides one small basketball shooting pad at Little Kin Park in Wardsville. Residents also have access to non-municipal outdoor basketball hoops such as those found at schools such as Ekcoe Central Public School and St. Charles Elementary School in Glencoe and at Mosa Central Public School in Pratt Siding.

While outdoor hard surface pads are primarily used for basketball, some can be utilized as multi-purpose courts that accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities. Basketball continues to be a popular pastime activity in many communities due to its national appeal, particularly given the success of the Toronto Raptors. It is relatively affordable compared to other sports, easy to learn, and can be played individually or in small groups.



As a best practice, municipalities target a service level of one basketball court per 800 youth between the ages of 10 and 19. This metric would suggest that the Municipality's existing basketball court location is sufficient to meet needs; however, geographic distribution also needs to be considered given that this age group is limited in the distance that they can travel. The community survey also found that there is a desire for more youth activities, particularly given that satisfaction levels for youth opportunities is low.

The Municipality should target to provide multi-use courts in a number of locations across Southwest Middlesex, particularly in parks where there are other youth-oriented activities. Subject to adequate park

space, preference should be given to full-size courts with paint markings to support basketball and other activities such as ball hockey. Potential locations include Appin Park, Middlemiss Park, and at a future park in Wardsville. Engaging the Thames Valley District School Board is also encouraged to explore the feasibility of converting the three tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School to a multi-use court, which may be more appropriate for both students and community users. This may form a part of a larger discussion regarding shared use of facilities between the Municipality and the school board (see Recommendation #44)

Recommendations – Outdoor Basketball Courts

33. Construct full-size multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey in Appin Park, Middlemiss Park, and at a future park in Wardsville.
34. Engage the Thames Valley District School Board to explore the feasibility of converting the tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School to multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey. Should the school board have no interest in participating, a basketball court should be established at Simpson Park.

5.11 Skateboard Parks

A skateboard park is located at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds. The permanent structure was constructed from concrete and features railings, ramps, and elevation changes that are suitable for skateboarding and other wheeled action sports such as BMX bikes, scooters and rollerblades.

For many youth, wheeled action sports such as skateboarding can become an outlet for self-expression and an opportunity to find a sense of belonging. Skateboarding is also becoming increasingly popular with adults, many of whom participated in the sport when they were younger or wish to do so with their children. Now considered to be a core recreation activity, skateboard parks are commonly found in municipalities across Canada as they provide a safe space for users to engage in outdoor physical activity, while gathering and socializing with others who share common interests.



The community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 10% of responding households participated in skateboarding (or related wheeled-action sports). 58% of respondents also supported investment in skateboard parks, which was the 16th highest facility priority. While this may suggest that skateboarding is not a priority in Southwest Middlesex, residents expressed the desire for more recreational opportunities for youth in the community.

While one skateboard park would be sufficient to serve the overall population of Southwest Middlesex, geographic distribution of residents in the Municipality must also be considered given the market that skateboard parks serve. On this basis, the creation of “skate zones” should be created at a future park in Wardsville and Appin Park to serve the needs of youth in these areas. “Skate zones” are smaller in scale compared to the skateboard park currently located at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site and incorporate introductory-level skate components (e.g., ramps, curbs, rails, etc.) to serve users in an introductory manner. They may be co-located adjacent to multi-use courts given that these facilities are geared towards the same target market. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to inform the design process.

Recommendations – Skateboard Parks

35. Construct a skate zone at a future park in Wardsville and Appin Park to strengthen the geographic distribution of skateboard opportunities. Skate zones should feature introductory-level skate components (e.g., ramps, curbs, rails, etc.) and may be co-located adjacent to multi-use courts as they serve the same target market. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to inform the design process.

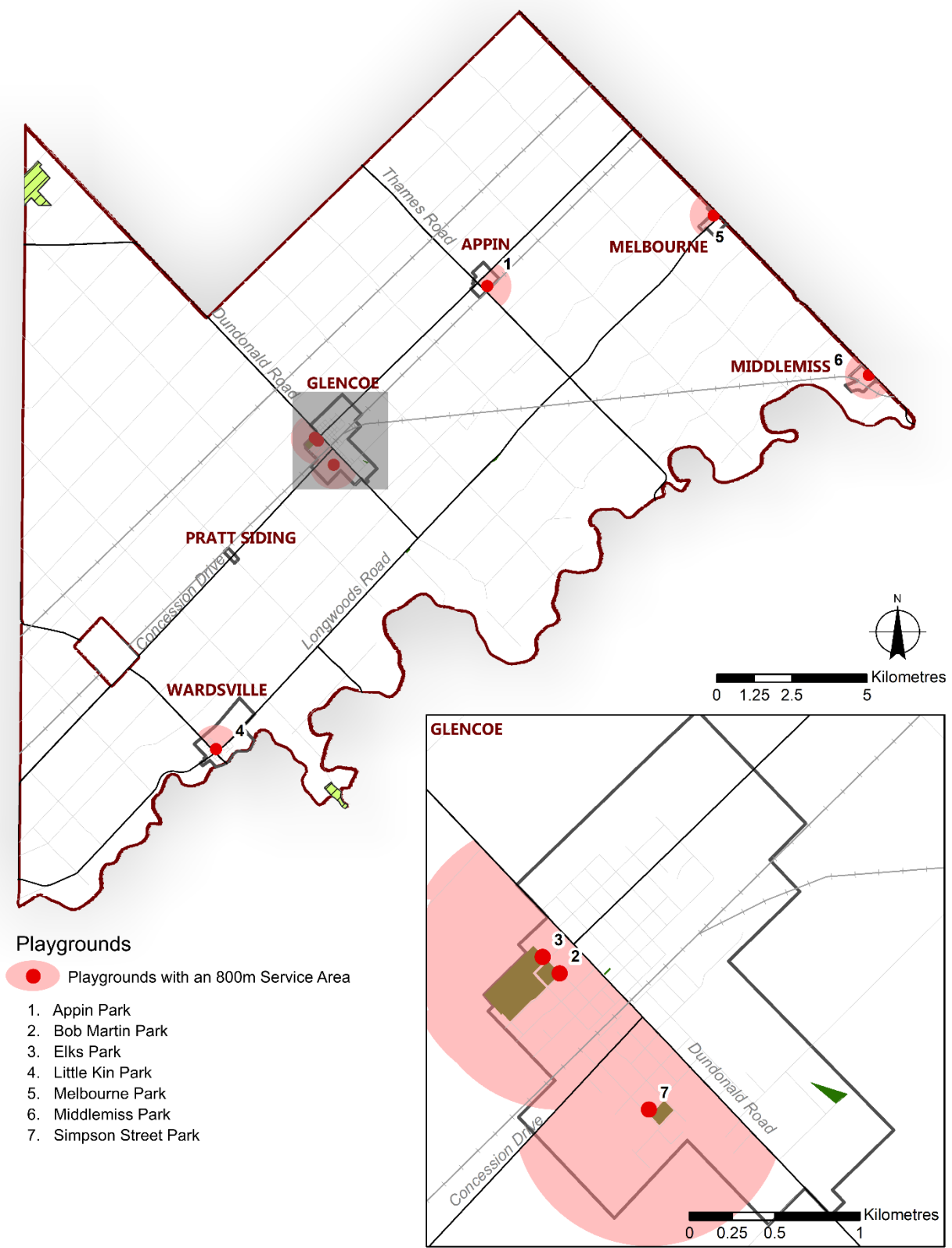
5.12 Playgrounds

The Municipality provides seven playground locations at parks across Southwest Middlesex, which range in size, design and variety. Southwest Middlesex made recent investments in its playgrounds which included replacing ground cover at a number of sites to meet accessibility requirements. A new playground is anticipated to be installed in spring 2021 at Middlemiss Park, as well as future playground replacements at Appin Park and Bob Martin Park. The distribution of playgrounds is bolstered by play sites found at public schools in Glencoe and Pratt Siding.

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. While traditional playground equipment general consists of swings, slides, and an array of climbing structures, modern play structures are designed to offer more creative and unique play experiences and often integrates accessible features.

Playgrounds were found to be popular amenities in Southwest Middlesex. The community survey found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 53% of responding households have used a playground, which was the fourth most popular activity. Four-out-of-five respondents also supported additional investment in improving or building new playgrounds, which was the highest priority among all facility types. This suggests that the availability of high-quality playgrounds is important to the community.

Figure 16: Distribution of Playgrounds



A best practice is to provide playgrounds within a ten-minute walk (or 800-metres) of built-up residential areas. Typically, for larger settlement areas such as Glencoe, access to a playground should be provided without having to cross major pedestrian barriers such as arterial roads, highways, railways, and waterbodies. The majority of the Municipality's residential areas are served with at least one playground, including the planned playground in Middlemiss (Figure 16). A gap area was identified on the east side of Glencoe, although it is recognized that schools in this area offer playgrounds. Smaller villages and four corner settlement areas such as Wardsville and Appin have a park with a playground located in one quadrant that tends to serve all residents within a larger geographic area. Recognizing that Little Kin Park in Wardsville was recently determined to be a former burial site, it is recommended that a replacement playground be located at a future park within the village to continue serving local residents.

As a part of the Municipality's playground provision strategy, it will be vital to ensure that play structures are safe, inclusive of all users and consistent with Provincial legislation. Developing a playground replacement program to prioritize and ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds once they reach the end of their lifespan (typically 15 to 20 years) would be appropriate. Through this replacement process, consideration should also be given to on-site relocation to ensure they are optimally positioned within the park. For example, opportunities may exist to relocate the playground at Simpson Park as a part of the broader park redevelopment process.

Some communities are developing natural and adventure playgrounds. These playgrounds encourage the use of existing landscapes and natural materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders to allow users to use their imagination. These playgrounds are designed to appear more precarious, which aligns with the concept of "risky play" to encourage children to take more risks through climbing, exploring, and moving vigorously. There is merit in considering the addition of some natural/adventure playground features when existing playgrounds are redeveloped or new playgrounds are provided.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

36. Construct a playground at a future park in Wardsville to serve as a replacement for the playground currently located at Little Kin Park.
37. Establish a playground replacement strategy to prioritize and ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds. New and redeveloped playgrounds should be located in appropriate areas of parks and incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Consideration should be given to mixing the creative playground equipment with natural/adventure play components that incorporates the existing landscape and natural materials such as wood, logs, boulders, and ropes that encourage challenging play experiences.

5.13 Off-Leash Dog Parks

Funded through a donation from Commonwealth Financial, the Commonwealth Dog Park offers a large, fenced enclosure for dogs and dog owners. With municipal by-laws regulating the use of leashes, dog parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize with their dogs in a controlled area. That said, dog parks should not be viewed strictly for pets as observations at established dog parks suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, particularly for residents living in isolation.



The consultation process found that dog walking is in fact a popular activity in Southwest Middlesex. The community survey revealed that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 42% of respondents participated in on or off-leash dog walking, which was the seventh most popular activity. 58% of respondents also felt that additional investment in off-leash dog parks should be a priority.

Use of Southwest Middlesex's recently completed off-leash dog park has not yet been measured due to the pandemic; however, remaining donations that are available has allowed the Municipality to investigate opportunities to establish a second off-leash dog park, which is planned to be located at Little Kin Park in Wardsville. Establishing a second off-leash dog park is supported by this Master Plan in an effort to strengthen the distribution of off-leash dog parks in Southwest Middlesex; however, the preferred location at Little Kin Park needs to be reconsidered given that it was recently discovered that the lands were formerly a burial ground and as a result, a more suitable location in Wardsville is required. With limited alternative locations, the off-leash dog park should be located at the future park in Wardsville.

The recommended off-leash dog park should reflect the design template utilized for the Commonwealth Dog Park in Glencoe with designated sections for large and small dogs. The Municipality's off-leash dog parks should also feature amenities that bolster the user experience such as shade, seating and water access. Additionally, the Municipality is encouraged to explore strategies to raise awareness of its off-leash dog park locations such as the use of signage, utilizing the Municipality's website and social media to promote its use, establishing trail and/or sidewalk connections or other strategies to be determined by staff.

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Park

38. Establish an off-leash dog park at the future park in Wardsville, using a similar design template as the Commonwealth Dog Park in Glencoe. Off-leash dog parks should also feature supporting amenities including shade, seating and water access. Opportunities to raise awareness of off-leash dog parks should also be considered through use of signage, using the Municipality's website and social media and establishing trail and/or sidewalk connections.

5.14 Other Recreational Needs

Southwest Middlesex may be pressed for additional indoor and outdoor facilities that are not currently considered to be core municipal services or that are not of sufficient in demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the Master Plan at this time. However, the Municipality must be prepared to respond appropriately to requests pending future market characteristics related to population growth, emergence of new sports, future recreational trends and preferences, and other demands that may arise for existing activities or facilities.

When requests are brought forward for investment in new, non-traditional, emerging and other non-core municipal services, the Municipality should evaluate the need for these activities on a case-by-case basis. Through this process, consideration should be given to (but not limited to):

- Local, regional and provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- Examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- Local demand for the activity or facility;
- The ability of existing municipal facilities to accommodate the new activity;
- The feasibility for the Municipality to provide the activity/facility as a core service, and be able to do so in a cost-effective manner; and
- The willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the activity/facility if provided with appropriate municipal supports.

Recommendations – Other Recreational Needs

39. Requests for activities/facilities that are not currently a part of the Municipality's core municipal services should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, after considering the Municipality's role in providing the service in relation to quantified market demand, cost-effectiveness of the service, willingness of community partners to deliver the service, and other factors deemed relevant.



6.0 Service Delivery System

6.1 Facilities & Recreation Department

Recreation facilities and services are delivered by the Facilities & Recreation Department. The mission for the Department is to foster community health and wellness to encourage a vibrant and growing population.⁹ The Department primarily focuses on the provision and maintenance of facilities, parks, open space and floral gardens, with some involvement in the direct delivery of programs. The Department generally serves as a community liaison that engages and supports community-based organizations to provide various programs and services.

The Department has a staff complement that consists of facility operators, and staff for aquatics and cafeteria; landscaping and cleaning are contracted services. A departmental restructuring was completed in 2020, which resulted in the removal of three staff positions including the Facilities & Recreation Manager, Assistant Supervisor, and one operator. This change was necessary in order to achieve municipal cost savings, due in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizational structure of the Facilities & Recreation Department is illustrated in Figure 17.

The restructuring process also resulted in the addition of a Recreation Program Coordinator to address a programming gap in the community. The role of this position is to plan, develop, facilitate and promote municipally-run programs in the community. The Coordinator is also responsible for seeking out volunteers and instructors to deliver programs as well as promotional efforts to raise awareness about activities that are available, such as assisting with updating the Municipality's website and strengthening the social media presence.

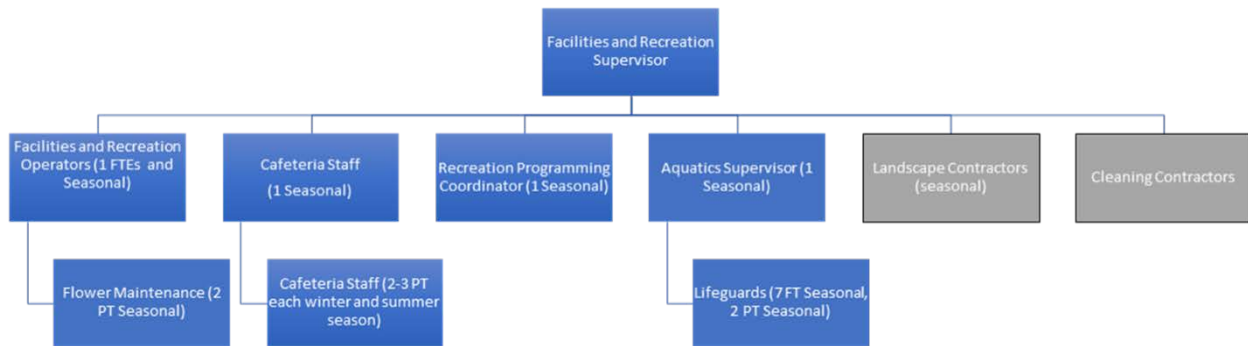
The Recreation Program Coordinator is a contract position that will expire in September 2021. Consideration should be given to extending this position given that this is a new service delivery area for the Municipality and that successful programs take time to be established. As this position was created during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is expected that restrictions on gatherings and using public spaces may still be in place to some degree over the coming months, participation levels may not be accurately reflected until restrictions have been lifted.

In addition, it is anticipated that during and post pandemic many parks, recreation and culture organizations (public, private, volunteer-based, etc.) will struggle financially and logistically to provide a level of service in keeping with pre-pandemic times. To address this serious issue, it is recommended that the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex develop and implement a Parks, Recreation and Culture Pandemic Recovery Plan. This recovery plan should be developed in consultation with the organizations involved in the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural services to identify impacts of the pandemic on service delivery, to determine opportunities to address these impacts, and to collaboratively develop a recovery plan that is realistic and feasible. The Recreation Program Coordinator position could play a role within the Facilities & Recreation Department in assisting with developing and implementing a Parks, Recreation and Culture Pandemic Recovery Plan for the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex.

⁹ Municipality of Southwest Middlesex. 2020 Facilities & Recreation Department Business Plan.

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Figure 17: Facilities & Recreation Department Organizational Structure



In order to ensure that municipal services and decisions are applied in a fair, consistent and transparent manner, the Facilities & Recreation Department is guided by a number of departmental and/or corporate-wide policies, including:

- Alcohol Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Can I Play, Too? Subsidy Program
- Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Policy
- Fees & Services Discounts/Council Grant Policy
- Swimming Pool Policies
- User Fees

Facilities and recreation staff also carry out daily duties in accordance with the Municipality's standard operating guidelines for various tasks including, but not limited to, maintaining indoor and outdoor equipment, facility operations and general facility safety protocols. As the Municipality grows, it may be necessary to amend existing policies and procedures or create new ones to address new situations (e.g., volunteer policy, cancellation policy, etc.). It will be prudent for the Municipality to undertake a review and update of its existing policies and procedures to ensure that they are reflective of current conditions, community needs and expectations, particularly as the Municipality is progressing towards delivering municipal programs and higher levels of facility usage can be anticipated. As a part of this process the Municipality should improve the tracking/collection of accurate user group registration data from organizations that utilize public facilities to better position staff resources in terms of operations and maintenance, as well as to track participation trends and assist with informing future facility needs.

To augment public access to community space in Southwest Middlesex, the Municipality has an agreement with the Thames Valley District School Board that allows the Municipality to facilitate public access to indoor and outdoor school spaces, while students may utilize recreation spaces in Southwest Middlesex, free of charge. This agreement has largely been underutilized since it was established in 2008 and tremendous potential exists to work collaboratively to bolster the use of these community amenities. A key point of departure would be to engage the Thames Valley District School Board to revisit and renew its reciprocal agreement to ensure that it is up to date, reflects usage practices, confirms ownership and identifies the assets that form part of the agreement, clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each party, establishes procedures to schedule facilities and hours of access, and more. By updating this agreement, access to space can be optimized, which will be crucial to increase facility utilization year-round, create community hubs at key locations, and expand municipal and community-based recreation programs.

Recommendations – Facilities & Recreation Department

40. Consider an extension to the contract position of the Recreation Program Coordinator to provide an opportunity to establish successful recreation programs given that accurate participation levels may not be reflected until restrictions on gatherings and use of public spaces (as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic) have been lifted and there has been sufficient time to better understand and respond to changes in activity patterns.
41. Develop and implement a Parks, Recreation and Culture Pandemic Recovery Plan by working with other community service delivery providers (public, private, volunteer-based, etc.) to create a plan to address issues directly related to the pandemic to improve post-pandemic success and sustainability.
42. Undertake a review and update of existing departmental policies and procedures to identify gaps and opportunities to ensure that they are reflective of current conditions, community needs and expectations with respect to parks, recreation and cultural services.
43. Collect annual user group registration data to assist with tracking participation trends, informing future facility needs and positioning staff resources to optimize maintenance and facility operations.
44. Engage the Thames Valley District School Board to renew its reciprocal agreement to ensure that it is up to date, reflects usage practices, clarifies ownership and identifies assets that form part of the agreement, clarifies roles and responsibilities of each party, establishes procedures to schedule facilities and hours of access, and more.

6.2 Southwest Middlesex Recreation Committee

To assist the Municipality in making informed recreation decisions, the Southwest Middlesex Recreation Committee (SMRC) is a key resource. According to the SMRC terms of reference, the purpose of this group is:

To assist the Municipality in promoting and continuing to develop communities that are appealing places to live, work and play. This will consist of providing advice on parks, recreation and community-related activities, in identifying capital requirements and providing input with regards to recreation programs and services within the Facilities & Recreation department.

The terms of reference identifies a number of responsibilities of the SMRC which includes, but are not limited to:

- Assisting in raising public awareness of the Municipality's recreation facilities, parks and programs to increase usage;
- Provide information on community events and programs that are being considered and/or planned;
- Support the goals, objectives and strategic directions outlined in the Strategic Plan and the Asset Management Plan;

- Assist in defining community needs responding to trends in the area of recreation; and
- Act as an advocate, liaison and coordinator on recreation matters with the community.

6.3 The Municipality's Role in Parks, Recreation and Culture

The Municipality has historically operated an indirect service delivery model by concentrating on providing public indoor and outdoor space for community organizations to deliver programs and services. However, the Municipality does directly provide a limited range of drop-in programs where it may not be practical or feasible for community groups to do so.



This is a common service delivery model that is found in communities that are similar to Southwest Middlesex. As the Municipality continues to grow and as interests evolve, it will

be important to build upon successes to ensure that parks, recreation and cultural opportunities are responsive to residents. For Southwest Middlesex, this means a continued emphasis on providing high quality spaces that are adequately supported by staff and financial resources, while support and/or collaborating with community partners to deliver high quality programs and services (e.g., through the new Recreation Program Coordinator position).

With this mindset, the following objectives should guide the Facilities & Recreation Department forward over the planning period:

- Understand the growth of the Municipality and plan for any increase/decrease in service provision based on demographic changes, income levels, social issues, activity interests, and more.
- Communicate the importance of being engaged in active lifestyles as a lifelong pursuit.
- Ensure that the infrastructure and amenities are in a state of good repair and offer multi-purpose uses, where possible.
- Through the new Recreation Program Coordinator position, continue to work with community volunteer organizations and partners to promote a full range of activities that are inclusive and accessible of all residents, regardless of age, income, ability, orientation and background.
- Promote and communicate the available opportunities and the benefits of participating through a variety of mediums.
- Understand the participation rates by age group and set targets to increase participation.
- Comply with legislative requirements, incorporate quality assurance measures while respecting industry standards.
- Planning and coordinating special events with community organizations.
- Train and support a capable staff team.

- Support and recognize the importance of volunteerism in parks, recreation and culture services.
- Communicate and exchange knowledge with partners and community organizations.
- Work collectively with partners and community organizations in addressing needed improvements.
- Measure the efficiencies and effectiveness of public parks, recreation and culture assets and strive to maximize the use of public facilities.

Recommendations – The Municipality’s Role in Parks, Recreation and Culture

45. The Municipality should continue to focus on providing and maximizing the use of public indoor and outdoor space by accommodating a wide range of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities, while working in collaboration with and supporting community partners and volunteers (e.g., in developing their internal capacity, achieving long-term sustainability, and enhancing their ability to deliver programs and services in Southwest Middlesex).

6.4 Professional Development and Training

Consumers of parks, recreation and culture services are more demanding than ever before. As a result, the Municipality is faced with enhanced expectations for high quality customer service as its population continues to grow and evolve, particularly as new residents come from urbanized areas who seek small community charm, but desire the same level of customer service, programming, and facilities that they have become accustomed to.

A well-managed, quality-focused staffing complement within the Facilities & Recreation Department is one of the fundamental components of an effective service delivery system. Top performing municipal departments acknowledge this by allocating sufficient resources to ensure that their staff are well trained to fulfill the service expectations of their customers. The way in which a customer is treated by staff is often perceived to be just as important as the quality of the facility, program, or service that they are using. Consequently, progressive organizations are placing greater emphasis on their ability to meet the expectations of their users, while also realizing that the consistent delivery of quality customer service is a planned activity that must be carefully managed and effectively coordinated.

At present, the Municipality ensures that its staff members are trained according to appropriate regulations to fulfill certain roles and responsibilities. A staff development and training plan is recommended to ensure that the Municipality’s facilities and services are delivered by a qualified and high performing staff team. Building upon this, staff succession planning should be integrated to preserve knowledge and expertise as the staffing team changes.

The Municipality should continually explore and invest in professional development opportunities ranging from inclusivity training, HIGH FIVE training for program staff, on-the-job training, seminars, conferences, etc. to ensure that staff are armed with the appropriate skills, tools, and resources to deliver a high-quality parks, recreation and cultural experience. This may include cross-training staff, training for mechanical equipment and pool operations, etc. Financial resources required for professional training and development should be incorporated through the annual budgeting process, as necessary.

Recommendations – Professional Development and Training

46. Support staff in professional development through a staff development and training plan, which may include but not be limited to, inclusivity training, HIGH FIVE training, on-the-job training, seminars, conferences, cross-training, training for mechanical equipment and pool operations and other opportunities to ensure that they have the appropriate skills, tools, expertise and resources to deliver a high-quality parks, recreation and cultural experience. Succession planning should also be integrated to preserve knowledge and expertise as the staffing team changes.

6.5 Programs and Activities

The Municipality currently provides a limited range of direct recreation programs, which are augmented by a wide variety of community-based opportunities that are offered by the Middlesex County Library, Middlesex-London Health Unit, YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, VON Canada, schools, sports organizations, service clubs and other community organizations, as well as the private sector and programs found in adjacent municipalities.

The Municipality's core focus of programming includes public skating and swimming, which are akin to activities that are typically offered in municipalities. The addition of a Recreation Program Coordinator demonstrates the Municipality's commitment to ensure that residents are engaged in a variety of parks, recreation, arts, and culture activities and developing new opportunities to maximize the use of municipal facilities.

Through the Recreation Program Coordinator position, the Municipality recently completed a recreation program survey to better understand what programs residents want to see offered in the community and what time of day they would like to participate in programs. The results revealed that fitness programs had the strongest level of interest, followed by aquatic programs, art programs and sports. Activities for adults had the highest level of interest, followed by children and youth. These findings are generally consistent with broader program and participation trends, as well as the results from the community survey conducted for this Master Plan.

To deliver these programs, the Municipality is in the process of seeking program instructors in the community. While specific programs are contingent upon securing qualified instructors, activities that are being contemplated include, group fitness, tennis and pickleball, ball hockey, volleyball, cooking, arts and crafts, dance and more. The Municipality envisions that programs will be delivered within public spaces throughout Southwest Middlesex to ensure that there is a strong geographic distribution of activities and that all residents have an opportunity to participate.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the Municipality continue to explore new program opportunities that appeal to all ages and abilities. Consideration should be given to the program suggestions expressed through this consultation process and through input provided through separate community engagement processes. Given the variety of municipal spaces that are currently available, the Municipality is encouraged to test a variety of program types to gauge interest and implement permanent programs where demand is demonstrated.

Emphasis should be placed on providing complementary programs that are provided by the non-municipal sector and efforts should be made to work in collaboration with and support community groups in developing and providing community-based programs. This approach offers benefits in sharing roles, responsibilities, and resources, while minimizing program duplication and competition for a finite number of participants.

Recommendations – Programs and Activities

47. Either alone or in partnership with local organizations, explore opportunities to optimize the use of municipal and community facilities (e.g., schools) year-round through parks, recreation and culture programs across the Municipality, with consideration given to the program suggestions expressed through this Master Plan and through separate consultation processes. New programs should be provided on a trial basis to evaluate program participation to identify activities that should be implemented on a regular basis. Program duplication should be discouraged.

6.6 Inclusion and Accessibility

Municipal departments that provide parks, recreation and culture services are facing increased pressures to provide opportunities that are inclusive and accessible for all segments of the community, particularly those populations that face above-average levels of marginalization and vulnerability. Populations that commonly experience barriers to participation include persons with disabilities, households experiencing low-income, and the LGBTQ+ community.

While there is no local level data, applying the national disability rate of 22%¹⁰ suggests that there may be approximately 1,400 residents living with some form of disability in Southwest Middlesex. In this regard, Southwest Middlesex has been dedicated to making its facilities and services more accessible, wherever possible through its Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Policy, as well as investments to remove physical barriers from its facilities, including the Glencoe Arena.

Research has demonstrated that participation in leisure activities is correlated to income levels. Southwest Middlesex has made efforts to minimize financial barriers to participation in parks, recreation and culture opportunities through its “Can I Play, Too?” program, which supplements other programs including Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Play it Forward, as well as no/low fee opportunities. These initiatives are important to engage residents who may not be able to afford to participate.

While there is no quantifiable data for the LGBTQ+ community in Southwest Middlesex, a survey found that between 3% and 5% of Canadians identify as LGBTQ+.¹¹ The LGBTQ community often faces barriers to participation in community programs due to being exclusion and bullying; however, their participation is critical as LGBTQ+ advocacy groups often attribute exclusionary attitudes with mental health issues, homelessness, suicide, and harmful practices in their communities. Middlesex County’s first pride

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>

¹¹ Forum Research Inc. 2012. One twentieth of Canadians claim to be LGBT. Retrieved from <https://www.forumresearch.com>

celebration was hosted in Strathroy in 2020 in order to connect local LGBTQ+ residents in the community and create a safe and welcoming space, particularly for youth.

To make parks, recreation and culture opportunities inclusive of residents, the Municipality should engage on an on-going basis representatives and/or residents from these groups to understand their needs, existing barriers, and identify solutions. This goal of this is to ensure that all residents have an equal opportunity to be active, connected and welcomed in the community. As a part of this process, relevant policies and procedures should be reviewed, updated or established to reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.

Recommendations – Inclusion and Accessibility

48. Engage on an on-going basis representatives of persons with disabilities, households experiencing low-income, LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized groups to understand and respond to their parks, recreation and cultural needs, to recognize barriers, and to identify solutions so that parks, recreation and culture services are inclusive of all residents.
49. Policies and/or procedures relevant to parks, recreation and culture in Southwest Middlesex should reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.

6.7 User Fees and Rental Rates

Southwest Middlesex imposes facility rental rates and user fees in order to recover a portion of the cost of providing certain services. The Municipality's rate structure is similar compared to other communities where fees are established based on the type of facility, renter, and time of day (prime or non-prime time). When establishing rates and fees, transparency is vital to ensure that they are fair and to achieve this, the Municipality must determine the true cost of providing its programs and services.

Municipalities may use an approach known as Activity-Based Costing which is a method used to identify the direct and indirect cost of providing a service. For example, the cost of renting an hour of ice would include staff time to book and prepare the ice, among other factors. Once these costs are understood, appropriate cost recovery levels need to be identified for each revenue stream (e.g., ice rentals, room rentals, programs, etc.). The Municipality can then adjust rates and fees as necessary to move towards achieving the desired level of cost recovery. Many municipalities increase their rates and fees on an inflationary basis to accommodate increases in the cost to provide programs and services.

The Municipality should regularly review its rates and fees for parks, recreation and culture services to ensure that they are appropriate to achieve a desired level of cost recovery, while being fair and affordable for the community in order to maximize facility use. A regional look at adjacent municipalities should also be considered to understand how Southwest Middlesex compares with others and the potential impacts of changes to the current fee system.

Recommendations – User Fees and Rental Rates

50. A regular review of the Municipality's rates and fees for parks, recreation and culture services should be undertaken to ensure that they are fair and affordable to maximize the use of

Recommendations – User Fees and Rental Rates

facilities. Consideration should be given to direct and indirect cost to provide services, desired level of cost recovery and regional comparators.

6.8 Promoting Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities

The success of municipal and community-led parks, recreation and culture opportunities is influenced by the level of community awareness. As such, marketing opportunities to residents and visitors must be developed in a manner that reaches target audiences. This is particularly important given that a lack of information is often noted as a barrier to participation. In fact, the community survey reported that 42% of respondents indicated that they could not participate in parks, recreation and culture opportunities as often as they would like due to the lack of information or being unaware of opportunities that are available, which was the third most common participation barrier. Consultation with community stakeholders also revealed that there is a desire for the Municipality to assist with promoting their programs and services.

Parks, recreation and culture opportunities in Southwest Middlesex are primarily promoted through traditional means including posters, bulletin boards and word of mouth. Limited information is available on the Municipality's website, although social media resources are used regularly. Efforts should be made to bolster the promotion of parks, recreation and culture opportunities in Southwest Middlesex using a variety of methods to maximize public engagement and awareness. It is recognized that the Municipality is in the process of developing a bi-annual Recreation Guide to promote programs that are available in the community. This Recreation Guide should include a comprehensive list of community organizations, including contact information and the services that they provide. A calendar (or list) of special events should also be incorporated. Consideration may be given to developing the guide with other municipal departments as a part of a broader community guide.

Optimizing the use of the Municipality's digital resources should also be explored as the Southwest Middlesex website and social media tend to be the first stop for many tech-savvy residents seeking information. Information similar to that contained in the Recreation Guide should be made available online including, but not limited to, a list of parks, recreation and culture services provided by the Municipality and community groups such as facilities, parks, programs, events, and more.

Recommendations – Promoting Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities

51. Complete the Recreation Guide to promote municipal and community-led parks, recreation and culture opportunities including facilities, parks, programs, events, and other services, as well as a central containing contact information for local community organizations. Consideration may be given to developing the guide with other municipal departments as a part of a broader community guide.
 52. Optimize the use of the Municipality's digital resources to promote parks, recreation and culture opportunities. The information displayed online should be consistent with the information included in the Municipality's Recreation Guide.
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6.9 Volunteerism

The Municipality is limited by staff and financial resources that are available. As a result, Southwest Middlesex cannot meet all parks, recreation and cultural needs of residents without the assistance of dedicated community service providers. Fortunately, many community organizations in the Municipality are leading the charge to ensure that there are a variety of opportunities to get involved. If provided with the appropriate supports, the community-based delivery model has a greater ability to provide quality services and generate internal growth and stability.

The community volunteers are essential to the operation of many parks, recreation and culture opportunities, particularly with delivering programs, services, and events.

As a result, it is important for both the Municipality and its community groups to maintain a strong profile of volunteers. While volunteerism in Southwest Middlesex is strong among some organizations, other organizations are challenged with recruiting and retaining enough volunteers. Trends suggest that volunteerism is also declining among younger generations due to a host of factors (e.g., increasingly busy lifestyles).

Efforts to recruit volunteers are being pursued through word of mouth, social media, and advertising. This should be augmented by other strategies such as establishing a dedicated volunteer section on the Municipality's website and hosting a broad volunteer recruitment fair to bring community groups together to promote their organizations and volunteer opportunities. The amalgamation of community groups may also be necessary to maximize available volunteers and community resources.

It is imperative that volunteers are appropriately trained and qualified as some positions require certain skills or knowledge, such as coaching. From a community development perspective, the Municipality may intercept this challenge by assisting groups with appropriate volunteer training. This may involve organizing workshop sessions with group representatives to disseminate resources to assist groups with training, coaching, recruitment, retention, succession, and more. If necessary, the Municipality may also leverage the external expertise of professional training consultants to facilitate these sessions.

Recognizing the hard work and dedication of volunteers is crucial to ensure that they feel appreciated. Acknowledging their efforts provides volunteers with positive re-enforcement and encourages them to continue offering their time in future opportunities. It is recommended that the Municipality develop an event, such as a reception and award ceremony, to recognize the contributions of volunteers in the community.



Recommendations – Volunteerism

53. Explore strategies to promote volunteer opportunities such as establishing a dedicated section on the Municipality's website, volunteer recruitment fair, and/or other strategies to be identified by the Municipality.
54. To bolster capacity and effectiveness of volunteer organizations, coordinate workshops with community group representatives to disseminate resources to assist groups with training, coaching, recruitment, retention, and more. If necessary, the Municipality may also leverage the external expertise of professional training consultants to facilitate these sessions.
55. Establish a recognition program to recognize the important contributions of volunteer organizations in the community, such as hosting a reception and awards ceremony.



7.0 Implementation

7.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

By setting priorities, creating a phased plan for implementation, and working with community stakeholders and partners to achieve more, Southwest Middlesex can ensure that the intent of this Master Plan and its key recommendations are achieved over the next ten years.

On March 17, 2020, the Government of Ontario enacted a declaration of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. As a result of this declaration, public facilities including parks and recreation facilities were ordered to close, recreation programs were cancelled, and social gatherings were prohibited. This unprecedented event transformed social interaction, while reinforcing the importance of certain unstructured parks and recreation activities such as walking and hiking outdoors. **The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly impact how the recommendations contained in the Master Plan are implemented over the next ten years, underpinning the need to be flexible in adapting to evolving environments.**

The Municipality should regularly review and assess – and periodically revise – the recommendations of this Facilities & Recreation Master Plan. This will ensure that the directions remain reflective of current realities and responsive to the changing community needs. This will require monitoring of activity patterns, conducting annual reviews of the Master Plan’s achievements, determining which recommendations have or have not been implemented, tracking satisfaction levels of residents and undertaking a detailed five to ten-year update to the Plan.

Additional tasks are required to enable active implementation of the Master Plan, including the monitoring of participation levels, facility usage and regular dialogue with the community. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of other internal and external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

Reviewing the Master Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of parks and recreation services, Council and the public. An appropriate time for this is prior to the annual budgeting process. The following steps may be used to conduct an **annual review** of the Master Plan (a full Master Plan update should be undertaken in five to ten years):

- 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, partnerships, etc.);
- Identify issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, related Municipal initiatives, etc.);
- Review of the Master Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- Preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- Communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the coming year; and

- Budget requests/revisions as necessary.

The Municipality has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the primary reasons for undertaking a Master Plan; understanding needs and priorities. Although Southwest Middlesex may experience challenges in providing the appropriate financial and human resources to achieve the Master Plan's recommendations, the Municipality should make every reasonable effort to implement these strategies through appropriate and acceptable means. The full implementation of this Master Plan will require the use of municipal taxation, fundraising and/or collaboration with community partners.

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

56. Post the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan on the Municipality's website as a resource for the community, Council and staff.
57. Develop annual work plans to guide strategic implementation of the Master Plan, with key priorities identified on a year-to-year basis.
58. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.
59. Undertake a full update of the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan in five to ten years (2026-2031).
60. Augment the Municipality's funding practices with external sources to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan. This may require working with community partners, exploring grant opportunities as they become available, and other funding sources to be identified by the Municipality.

7.2 Priority of Recommendations

The priority of the recommendation contained 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 is financially achievable by the Municipality at the present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Master Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the priority. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects.

The recommendations identified in this Master Plan are not intended to be a definitive list, as additional capital repairs, operating expenditures and other initiatives outside the scope of this Master Plan may be identified and prioritized on a case-specific basis. By approving this Master Plan as a guiding document, the Municipality is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather, this Master Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Municipality's budget development exercise. **It is expected that the Municipality will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the budget process.** In addition to funding availability, factors that might affect priorities year to year may include:

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

Priority is often, but not always, synonymous with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the recommendation should be implemented. Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process and with consideration of public input, trend and demographic analysis, capacity and demand, etc. Generally, municipalities seek to make efficient use of resources through initiatives that have the broadest community benefit and serve the widest range of needs.

Within the tables that follow, the priority of recommendations is organized into the following categories:

High Priority: Immediate attention is strongly suggested in the short-term.

Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.

Ongoing: A best practice that that the Municipality should implement (or continue to implement) over the planning period in order to maintain high quality parks, recreation and cultural opportunities in Southwest Middlesex.

Due to the uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, the general timing of implementing recommendations has not been identified. Through the preparation of annual work plans and coordination with the Recreation Committee, the Municipality will be required to identify the timing of recommendations that they believe will be realistically achievable. Emphasis should be given to recommendations identified as a high priority, followed by medium and low priorities.

Parks, Trails and Open Spaces	Priority
Parkland Classification	
<p>1. Utilize the park classification system contained in the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level, and the amenities that they provide.</p>	HIGH
Parkland Supply and Distribution	
<p>2. Acquire approximately 3.3 hectares of active parkland over the next ten years to maintain the current service level of 2.1 hectares per 1,000 residents. This includes 1.7 hectares to address growth-related needs and 1.6 hectares in Wardsville to replace Little Kin Park. Emphasis should be placed on parkland conveyance or land acquisition within new plans of subdivision and in areas with park gaps such as the north end of Glencoe and in the villages of Appin, Wardsville and Melbourne.</p>	HIGH
<p>3. Continue to work collectively with the Glencoe Agricultural Society to ensure that the outdoor space at the Project 2000 site (Glencoe Fairgrounds) remain publically accessible for parks and recreation activities, as well as special events.</p>	ONGOING
Parkland Policies	
<p>4. At the time that the Municipality's Official Plan is updated, policies should be parkland dedication policies should be strengthened, with consideration given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reflect recently legislative changes such as the alternative rate for cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units (as opposed to the previous rate of one hectare per 300 units); b. Accepting cash-in-lieu in cases where the area is adequately supplied with parkland or the development proposal is too small to result in in a meaningful park parcel; c. Only accept land as a part of parkland dedication if it is suitable for supporting a variety of active and passive park activities; d. The development of parkland parcels smaller than 0.5 hectares in size should be discouraged, unless it is necessary to reconcile gap areas; and e. Woodlots, environmentally sensitive areas and other natural features may be conveyed to the Municipality, over and above parkland dedication requirements, for the purposes of preservation and education and passive uses. 	MEDIUM
<p>5. Where appropriate, employ alternative acquisition tools identified in this Master Plan (e.g., purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.) to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.</p>	ONGOING

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Parks, Trails and Open Spaces	Priority
Parkland Design Considerations	
6. Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety and comfort within the Municipality's parks through compliance with the <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> , including consultation with the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee.	HIGH
7. Consider and evaluate the provision of supporting amenities including, but not limited to, seating, shade, trails and pathways, washrooms, utilities, and other amenities to enhance the user experience within appropriate park types.	MEDIUM
8. Investigate opportunities to increase tree canopy cover in Southwest Middlesex with consideration given to implementing a policy to preserve and enhance tree canopy cover, increase the number of trees within parks and open spaces, as well as trails and boulevards, establish a tree planting initiative (potentially with a community partner), encourage land owners to plant more trees (e.g., free tree day), or other strategies.	ONGOING
9. Conduct a review of parks, trails and facility signage with the goal of implementing a consistent and high-quality signage template across all parks and trails that enhances municipal and departmental branding, including replacement.	MEDIUM
Parkland Renewal and Redevelopment Opportunities	
10. Work collaboratively with the Glencoe Agricultural Society, Glencoe & District Curling Club and others to explore opportunities to further enhance the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site as a significant community hub. Consideration should be given to establishing a walking pathway around the perimeter of the site and to connect to on-site amenities. Opportunities to rename the site to one name that encapsulates all indoor and outdoor assets and activities at this location should also be considered to identify this space as a premiere gathering destination for the Municipality.	HIGH
11. Acquire a new park site in Wardsville and prepare a park development plan that should include an off-leash dog park, full-size multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey, skateboard zone, playground, walking pathways and open greenspace.	HIGH
12. Undertake a redevelopment plan for Little Kin Park for passive use in a manner that respects the historical significance of the site as a former church and burial ground. The redevelopment plan should include walking pathways, seating, signage, landscaping, tree plantings, open greenspace and other low-maintenance amenities and features. Development over burials and active recreation amenities/activities must be avoided.	HIGH

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Parks, Trails and Open Spaces	Priority
<p>13. Re-imagine Simpson Park to enhance utilization of the park and to re-deploy outdoor recreation activities that currently take place at the Glencoe District High School. The re-imagined park should include two pickleball courts, one tennis court, a re-positioned playground and pavilion, greenspace, walking pathways, outdoor fitness equipment, and potentially a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey (subject to discussions with the Thames Valley District School Board). The existing washroom building should be removed and not replaced.</p>	<p align="center">MEDIUM</p>
<p>14. Park renewal, redevelopment and development projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific concepts, facility fit diagrams and business planning to establish capital and operational assumptions.</p>	<p align="center">ONGOING</p>
Recreational Trails	
<p>15. Work with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (AW Campbell Conservation Area) and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (Big Bend Conservation Area and Mosa Forest) to ensure continued public access to existing and future trail networks and to work collaboratively to create connections to future municipal trails and the active transportation network.</p>	<p align="center">ONGOING</p>
<p>16. Strengthen active transportation opportunities with consideration given to the conceptual trail network contained in this Master Plan. Specifically, the following trail development opportunities should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthening cycling routes in accordance with the Middlesex County 2017 Cycling Strategy; some of these routes may be suitable for walking and hiking; b. Establishing walking pathways within existing and future parks to designate safe and accessible circulation areas and connections to on-site amenities – emphasis should be placed on working with the Glencoe Agricultural Society and potentially others to establish walking pathways within Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds; and c. Connecting residents to key destinations such as parks, recreation facilities, schools, commercial areas, and other points of interest (e.g., conservation areas). 	<p align="center">HIGH</p>
<p>17. Utilize a range of strategies to secure access to non-municipal land for the purposes of trail development (e.g., easement, purchase/lease, dedication through plan of subdivision, etc.).</p>	<p align="center">ONGOING</p>

Facility Inventory	Priority
Arenas and Outdoor Skating Rinks	
<p>18. Position the Glencoe Arena as a year-round community hub for recreation and community activity to optimize use. This should include strategies to bolster ice use during the skating season such as working with user groups to improve ice allocation, encouraging weekend and morning ice time, engaging schools to improve daytime rentals, and attracting adult and non-resident usage. Use of the arena floor should be maximized through community rentals and programming (Municipal or others) (see Recommendation #47).</p>	HIGH
<p>19. Explore the feasibility of creating or purchasing an online portal that users and/or the public can view and/or book last minute ice rentals (via the Municipality’s website).</p>	HIGH
Curling Facilities	
<p>20. Work with the Glencoe & District Curling Club to support initiatives that raise the profile of the sport in Southwest Middlesex and area to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization.</p>	ONGOING
Gymnasiums, Halls and Multi-Purpose Spaces	
<p>21. Focus gymnasium-based activities, including municipally-led programs and rentals, at the Glencoe Arena (floor during non-ice months) and community access to the Glencoe District High School.</p>	MEDIUM
<p>22. Create a community hub in Wardsville, which could potentially include a new fire station and library, community space (e.g., multi-purpose hall and meeting room) and supporting amenities. Community spaces should be flexibly designed to accommodate a variety of uses, with consideration given to durable flooring types, storage, counter space, and kitchens. The community hub should be co-located with the future park in Wardsville. Once this new facility is in place, evaluate the future of aging public facilities in Wardsville and the public access agreement to the Masonic Hall.</p>	HIGH
<p>23. Promote the availability of existing halls and multi-purpose spaces to the community for the wide range of recreation, cultural, and social activities that they are capable of accommodating. Renovations and improvements to existing spaces should be undertaken as necessary to maintain their functionality, accessibility and desirability for rentals and gatherings. For example, updates to the Glencoe Arena should feature comfortable and casual spaces such as a lobby to encourage informal gatherings. Future improvements to the Ekfrid Community Centre should be suitable for frequent facility users, particularly when it comes to flooring types and supporting amenities, as well as residents in Appin and surrounding areas (e.g., Melbourne and Middlemiss). More costly capital projects should have regard for cost benefit analyses to ensure prudent</p>	ONGOING

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Facility Inventory	Priority
financial investments are made. The Municipality should explore divesting aging facilities that are not viable to repair and/or renovate.	
Fitness Spaces	
24. Encourage the use of existing indoor and outdoor public spaces for group fitness activities and promote existing private sector providers.	ONGOING
Arts and Cultural Facilities	
25. Engage arts and cultural organizations to ensure that municipal parks and facilities are designed in a manner that supports related events and activities including consideration given to infrastructure and amenities.	MEDIUM
26. Elevate the profile of the Glencoe Train Station to function as a community hub for arts and culture activity in Southwest Middlesex. This may entail undertaking upgrades to better support and attract users and events (e.g., stage, pavilion, servicing, etc.), delivering arts and cultural programs, rotating curated exhibits of historical artifacts, attracting/relocating arts and cultural organizations to utilize the Glencoe Train Station and general promotion of the facility (potentially in coordination with the Glencoe Historical Society or others). Other public parks and facilities in the Municipality should continue to support arts and cultural activities, as appropriate.	HIGH
27. Support the community-led initiative to establish a County service to archive historical artifacts. If successful artifacts from the Wardsville and Appin Museums should be transferred to the community organization.	HIGH
Outdoor Aquatics	
28. Investigate establishing a self-sustaining water supply system for the splash pad to extend its operating window. A cost-benefit analysis should form part of this investigation to determine feasibility.	HIGH
Rectangular Fields	
29. Work closely rectangular field users to monitor participation levels post-COVID and adjust the field supply as necessary to ensure that they are being used efficiently with an expectation that one or more fields could be taken off-line each season (potentially to rest the fields) and reduce the level of maintenance (and associated cost).	ONGOING
Ball Diamonds	
30. Ball diamond renewal projects at the Project 2000 / Glencoe Fairgrounds site and Appin Park should be guided by consultation with ball diamond user groups to ensure that improvements are reflective of user needs, enhance the	ONGOING

Facility Inventory	Priority
<p>overall playing experience and are suitable for the park type. As a part of future renewal processes at Appin Park, the washroom building should be removed at the end of its life expectancy and potentially replaced with a portable washroom (at the discretion of the Municipality).</p>	
<p>31. Re-purposing of the ball diamonds at Little Kin Park and Simpson Park (and removal of supporting amenities such as lighting and washroom buildings) should be guided by park-specific planning exercises, with consideration given to the facility needs identified in this Master Plan and public input (see Recommendation #12 and #13).</p>	HIGH
<p>Outdoor Tennis and Pickleball Courts</p>	
<p>32. Establish one tennis court and two pickleball courts at Simpson Park to replace the three tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School (see Recommendation #34).</p>	MEDIUM
<p>Outdoor Basketball Courts</p>	
<p>33. Construct full-size multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey in Appin Park, Middlemiss Park, and at a future park in Wardsville.</p>	MEDIUM
<p>34. Engage the Thames Valley District School Board to explore the feasibility of converting the tennis courts at the Glencoe District High School to multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey. Should the school board have no interest in participating, a basketball court should be established at Simpson Park.</p>	MEDIUM
<p>Skateboard Parks</p>	
<p>35. Construct a skate zone at a future park in Wardsville and Appin Park to strengthen the geographic distribution of skateboard opportunities. Skate zones should feature introductory-level skate components (e.g., ramps, curbs, rails, etc.) and may be co-located adjacent to multi-use courts as they serve the same target market. Consultation with local youth is encouraged to inform the design process.</p>	MEDIUM
<p>Playgrounds</p>	
<p>36. Construct a playground at a future park in Wardsville to serve as a replacement for the playground currently located at Little Kin Park.</p>	HIGH
<p>37. Establish a playground replacement strategy to prioritize and ensure the timely replacement and renewal of aging playgrounds. New and redeveloped playgrounds should be located in appropriate areas of parks and incorporate inclusive features such as barrier-free components and firm and stable surfaces. Consideration should be given to mixing the creative playground equipment with natural/adventure play components that incorporates the existing</p>	MEDIUM

Facility Inventory	Priority
landscape and natural materials such as wood, logs, boulders, and ropes that encourage challenging play experiences.	
Off-Leash Dog Parks	
38. Establish an off-leash dog park at the future park in Wardsville, using a similar design template as the Commonwealth Dog Park in Glencoe. Off-leash dog parks should also feature supporting amenities including shade, seating and water access. Opportunities to raise awareness of off-leash dog parks should also be considered through use of signage, using the Municipality’s website and social media and establishing trail and/or sidewalk connections.	MEDIUM
Other Recreational Needs	
39. Requests for activities/facilities that are not currently a part of the Municipality’s core municipal services should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, after considering the Municipality’s role in providing the service in relation to quantified market demand, cost-effectiveness of the service, willingness of community partners to deliver the service, and other factors deemed relevant.	ONGOING
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Service Delivery System	Priority
Facilities & Recreation Department	
40. Consider an extension to the contract position of the Recreation Program Coordinator to provide an opportunity to establish successful recreation programs given that accurate participation levels may not be reflected until restrictions on gatherings and use of public spaces (as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic) have been lifted and there has been sufficient time to better understand and respond to changes in activity patterns.	HIGH
41. Develop and implement a Parks, Recreation and Culture Pandemic Recovery Plan by working with other community service delivery providers (public, private, volunteer-based, etc.) to create a plan to address issues directly related to the pandemic to improve post-pandemic success and sustainability.	HIGH
42. Undertake a review and update of existing departmental policies and procedures to identify gaps and opportunities to ensure that they are reflective of current conditions, community needs and expectations with respect to parks, recreation and cultural services.	MEDIUM
43. Collect annual user group registration data to assist with tracking participation trends, informing future facility needs and positioning staff resources to optimize maintenance and facility operations.	ONGOING

Service Delivery System	Priority
<p>44. Engage the Thames Valley District School Board to renew its reciprocal agreement to ensure that it is up to date, reflects usage practices, clarifies ownership and identifies assets that form part of the agreement, clarifies roles and responsibilities of each party, establishes procedures to schedule facilities and hours of access, and more.</p>	HIGH
The Municipality’s Role in Parks, Recreation and Culture	
<p>45. The Municipality should continue to focus on providing and maximizing the use of public indoor and outdoor space by accommodating a wide range of parks, recreation and cultural opportunities, while working in collaboration with and supporting community partners and volunteers (e.g., in developing their internal capacity, achieving long-term sustainability, and enhancing their ability to deliver programs and services in Southwest Middlesex).</p>	ONGOING
Professional Development and Training	
<p>46. Support staff in professional development through a staff development and training plan, which may include but not be limited to, inclusivity training, HIGH FIVE training, on-the-job training, seminars, conferences, cross-training, training for mechanical equipment and pool operations and other opportunities to ensure that they have the appropriate skills, tools, expertise and resources to deliver a high-quality parks, recreation and cultural experience. Succession planning should also be integrated to preserve knowledge and expertise as the staffing team changes.</p>	ONGOING
Programs and Activities	
<p>47. Either alone or in partnership with local organizations, explore opportunities to optimize the use of municipal and community facilities (e.g., schools) year-round through parks, recreation and culture programs across the Municipality, with consideration given to the program suggestions expressed through this Master Plan and through separate consultation processes. New programs should be provided on a trial basis to evaluate program participation to identify activities that should be implemented on a regular basis. Program duplication should be discouraged.</p>	MEDIUM
Inclusion and Accessibility	
<p>48. Engage on an on-going basis representatives of persons with disabilities, households experiencing low-income, LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized groups to understand and respond to their parks, recreation and cultural needs, to recognize barriers, and to identify solutions so that parks, recreation and culture services are inclusive of all residents.</p>	HIGH

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Service Delivery System	Priority
49. Policies and/or procedures relevant to parks, recreation and culture in Southwest Middlesex should reinforce inclusivity of all residents, regardless of ability, income, orientation or background.	HIGH
User Fees and Rental Rates	
50. A regular review of the Municipality's rates and fees for parks, recreation and culture services should be undertaken to ensure that they are fair and affordable to maximize the use of facilities. Consideration should be given to direct and indirect cost to provide services, desired level of cost recovery and regional comparators.	ONGOING
Promoting Parks, Recreation and Culture Opportunities	
51. Complete the Recreation Guide to promote municipal and community-led parks, recreation and culture opportunities including facilities, parks, programs, events, and other services, as well as a central containing contact information for local community organizations. Consideration may be given to developing the guide with other municipal departments as a part of a broader community guide.	HIGH
52. Optimize the use of the Municipality's digital resources to promote parks, recreation and culture opportunities. The information displayed online should be consistent with the information included in the Municipality's Recreation Guide.	ONGOING
Volunteerism	
53. Explore strategies to promote volunteer opportunities such as establishing a dedicated section on the Municipality's website, volunteer recruitment fair, and/or other strategies to be identified by the Municipality.	MEDIUM
54. To bolster capacity and effectiveness of volunteer organizations, coordinate workshops with community group representatives to disseminate resources to assist groups with training, coaching, recruitment, retention, and more. If necessary, the Municipality may also leverage the external expertise of professional training consultants to facilitate these sessions.	MEDIUM
55. Establish a recognition program to recognize the important contributions of volunteer organizations in the community, such as hosting a reception and awards ceremony.	MEDIUM

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan

Implementation	Priority
Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan	
56. Post the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan on the Municipality's website as a resource for the community, Council and staff.	HIGH
57. Develop annual work plans to guide strategic implementation of the Master Plan, with key priorities identified on a year-to-year basis.	ONGOING
58. Develop and implement a system for regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, such as the collection of participation/registration data and annual reports to Council and/or the community.	ONGOING
59. Undertake a full update of the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan in five to ten years (2026-2031).	MEDIUM
60. Augment the Municipality's funding practices with external sources to implement the recommendations of the Master Plan. This may require working with community partners, exploring grant opportunities as they become available, and other funding sources to be identified by the Municipality.	ONGOING

Appendix A: Online Community Survey Summary

Municipality of Southwest Middlesex Facilities & Recreation Master Plan Community Survey

Q1. How physically active has your household been during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before? This includes leisure-time activities, such as participation in organized or in unorganized sports, physical activities, and play.

Answer Choices	#	%
More physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic	46	20%
No change/the same level of physical activity	81	35%
Less physically active than before the COVID-19 pandemic	102	45%
Answered	229	
Skipped / Don't Know	5	

Q2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or anyone in your household participated in any of the following (parks, recreation and culture) activities? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participated, either at home or in public.

Answer Choices	#	%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	180	78%
Going to Special Events (e.g., festivals, fairs, etc.)	146	63%
Enjoying Parks and Open Spaces	128	56%
Use of Playground Equipment	123	53%
Use of Splash Pad	102	44%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating or Ice Skating	100	43%
Dog Walking (on or off-leash)	96	42%
Going to Theatres (e.g., musical performances, etc.)	96	42%
Aerobics, Yoga, Fitness or Weight-training	91	40%
Swimming (recreational)	90	39%
Soccer	79	34%
Golf	77	33%
Going to Museums or Historical Sites	75	33%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	67	29%
Swimming (instructional or aquafit)	65	28%
Baseball or Softball	65	28%
Jogging or Running for Fitness	52	23%
Organized Children & Youth Programs (e.g., day camps)	41	18%
Curling	34	15%
Tennis	33	14%
Volleyball	22	10%
Wheeled Action Sports (e.g., skateboarding or BMX)	22	10%
Basketball	21	9%
Pickleball	9	4%
Organized Seniors' Programs	4	2%
Other (please specify)	15	7%
Answered	230	
Skipped / Don't Know	4	

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Appendix A: Online Community Survey Summary

Q3. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were you and members of your household able to participate in parks, recreation and culture activities as often as you would like?

Answer Choices	#	%
Yes	159	74%
No	57	26%
Answered	216	
Skipped / Don't Know	18	

Q4. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, why were you NOT able to participate in parks, recreation and culture activities as often as you would like?

Answer Choices	#	%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	35	54%
Lack of desired programs or facilities	32	49%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	27	42%
Program not offered at convenient time	24	37%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	10	15%
Lack of money / Too expensive	6	9%
Health problems / Disability / Age	6	9%
Lack of child care	6	9%
Lack of motivation / Not interested	4	6%
Language / Cultural barrier	0	0%
Other	6	9%
Answered	65	
Skipped / Don't Know	169	

Q5. Generally, what percentage of your household's parks, recreation and culture needs are met within Southwest Middlesex?

Answer Choices	#	%
All (100%)	11	5%
Most (67-99%)	46	21%
About Half (34-66%)	85	38%
Some (1-33%)	69	31%
None (0%)	12	5%
Answered	223	
Skipped / Don't Know	11	

Q6. What factors lead you (and your household) to seek parks, recreation and culture activities outside of Southwest Middlesex?

Answer Choices	#	%
Facility / Program is not available in the area	132	71%
Facility / Program not available at the preferred time	85	46%
Quality of facility / Program is superior	57	31%
Tournaments / Special events / Travel teams	49	26%
"Connected" to the other community /		
Used to live there	38	20%
Less expensive elsewhere	24	13%
Closer to home, work or school	20	11%
Other (please specify)	9	5%
Answered	186	
Skipped	48	

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Appendix A: Online Community Survey Summary

Q7. If applicable, list up to two (2) parks and recreation activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in Southwest Middlesex that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top 10 Requested Parks and Recreation Activities/Programs	#	%
Walking / Hiking Trail	30	14%
Indoor Pool / Swimming	22	10%
Fitness Programs (e.g., Yoga, Tai Chi, Aerobics, Prenatal)	18	8%
Fitness Centre	13	6%
Indoor Skating	11	5%
Volleyball	9	4%
Indoor Track	9	4%
Park	9	4%
Cycling Trail	7	3%
Baseball/Softball	6	3%

Q8. If applicable, list up to two (2) arts and cultural activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in Southwest Middlesex that were NOT available prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Top 10 Requested Arts and Cultural Activities/Programs	#	%
Creative or Fine Art Program (painting, cooking, etc.)	29	28%
Special Events and Gatherings	21	20%
Live Theatre (e.g., concert, music, etc.)	19	18%
Art Gallery / Shows	7	7%
Farmers Market	7	7%
History / Culture Program	5	5%
Performing Art Program (music, drama, etc.)	5	5%
Museum	2	2%
Movie Theatre	2	2%
Indigenous Programs	2	2%

Q9. In general, how important are the following items to your household?

	Not at all Important / Somewhat Unimportant		Neither Important nor Unimportant		Very Important / Somewhat Important		Total		Don't Know / Don't Use
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Recreational trails and pathways	6	3%	8	5%	161	92%	175	100%	2
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds	10	6%	6	3%	158	91%	174	100%	3
Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas and community spaces	11	6%	7	4%	156	90%	174	100%	4
Open space parks for unstructured use	16	9%	18	10%	138	80%	172	100%	3
Arts and cultural spaces such as museums	19	11%	31	18%	119	70%	169	100%	6

Q10. What is your level of satisfaction with the following parks, recreation and culture facilities in Southwest Middlesex?

	Not at all Satisfied / Somewhat Dissatisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Very Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied		Total		Don't Know / Don't Use
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Recreational trails and pathways	76	48%	23	14%	60	38%	159	100%	16
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds	31	19%	20	12%	116	69%	167	100%	7
Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas and community spaces	57	34%	21	13%	90	54%	168	100%	8
Open space parks for unstructured use	38	24%	47	29%	76	47%	161	100%	13
Arts and cultural spaces such as museums	58	41%	47	33%	38	27%	143	100%	31

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Appendix A: Online Community Survey Summary

Q13. For the items listed below, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the Municipality's ability to provide appropriate parks, recreation and culture services.

	Greatly Below Expectations / Below Expectations		Matched Expectations		Greatly Exceeds Expectations / Exceeds		Total		Don't Know / Don't Use
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Affordability of parks, recreation and culture programs.	51	37%	67	49%	20	14%	138	100%	19
Location of parks, recreation and culture amenities.	45	29%	89	58%	20	13%	154	100%	4
Maintenance of parks, recreation and culture amenities.	52	34%	74	48%	29	19%	155	100%	3
Value of tax dollars spent towards facilities and recreation.	78	55%	51	36%	13	9%	142	100%	16
Inclusion and accessibility of all residents.	72	55%	46	35%	12	9%	130	100%	26

Q14. Looking ahead, what lasting impacts – if any – might the COVID-19 pandemic have on your participation in parks and recreation activities?

The comments provided have not been summarized but the input will be considered as the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan is developed

Q15. Please provide us with any additional comments.

The comments provided have not been summarized but the input will be considered as the Facilities & Recreation Master Plan is developed

Q16. What is the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories?

Number of Persons

Answer Choices	#	%	2016 Census
under 10 years	113	21%	12%
10 - 19 years	82	15%	11%
20 - 39 years	161	30%	15%
40 - 59 years	127	24%	26%
60 - 74 years	45	8%	24%
75 years and over	7	1%	13%
Total Number of Persons	535		
Total Answered	157		
Persons Per Household	3.4		

Q17. In what year were you born? (Optional)

Average Age of Respondent 41 Years

Q18. Are you a resident of the Municipality of Southwest Middlesex?

Answer Choices	#	%
Yes	157	98%
No	3	2%
Answered	160	
Skipped / Don't Know	74	

Appendix B: Summary of Non-Municipal Community Organizations in Southwest Middlesex

Community Program, Service and Event Providers

- 4H
- Appin Busy Bees
- Appin Cemetery
- Appin Historical Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Catholic Women's Institute
- Celebrate Community Committee
- Commonwealth Dog Park Committee
- Communities in Bloom
- Covenanted Baptist Cemetery
- Eddie Cemetery
- EKCOE School Breakfast Club
- Four Counties Hospital
- GDHS Alumni & Friends
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Glencoe & District Historical Society
- Glencoe Agricultural Society
- Glencoe District Lioness Club
- Glencoe District Lions Club
- Glencoe Horticultural Society
- Glencoe Masonic Lodge
- Heritage Fiddlers
- Lorne Masonic Lodge
- Melbourne IOOF Lodge
- Melbourne Lodge
- Mosa Women's Institute
- Murray Cemetery
- New Horizons Seniors Club
- North American Martyrs Cemetery
- Oakland Cemetery Board
- Re: Generation Centre
- Reg Lovell Branch #219
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 219
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 510
- Simpson Cemetery
- St. Vincent DePaul Society
- Volunteer Firefighters
- VON Middlesex-Elgin
- Wardsville Masonic Lodge
- Women Who Care – Glencoe

Recreation, Culture and Sports Organizations

- 2884 RCACC Engineers Cadet Corps Glencoe
- Babcock Community Care Centre
- Battle Hill National Historic Site
- Beattie Manor Retirement Residence (members only)
- Ekfrid Museum
- Glencoe & District Curling Club
- Glencoe Figure Skating Club
- Glencoe Minor Baseball Association
- Glencoe Minor Soccer Association
- Glencoe Swim Club
- Healthy Aging Exercise Program
- Heritage Fiddlers
- Made on Earth Art Gallery
- Middlesex County Library
- Nyingle Jujitsu Sangha
- Quad County Support Services
- Recreational Pickle Ball (seasonal)
- Silver Dover Estates Family Camp Ground
- Southwest Middlesex Acting Krew
- Southwest Minor Hockey Association
- Studio77 Hair & Yoga Studio
- Sundays at the Station
- The Art Room
- The Yoga Cottage
- YMCA of Southwestern Ontario (summer camps)

Religious Institutions

- Appin Presbyterian Church
- Appin United Church
- Burns Mosa Presbyterian Church
- Faith Pentecostal Assembly
- Glencoe Presbyterian Church
- St. Charles Garnier Church
- St. John's Anglican Church
- St. John's Presbyterian Church
- Trinity United Church

Schools

- Mosa Central Public School
- Ekcoe Central Public School

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Community Program, Service and Event Providers

- St. Charles Elementary School
- Glencoe District High School