

January 2022





Town of Goderich

Community Recreational Needs Assessment

January 18, 2022

Prepared by:



Acknowledgements

The Community Recreational Needs Assessment (CRNA) was shaped by hundreds of people. The Recreation Review Ad Hoc Committee wishes to thank the residents of Goderich, community and recreational stakeholders, and all others that contributed directly and indirectly throughout the planning process. The efforts of Town of Goderich Council, Staff and the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario are also gratefully acknowledged.

With the assistance of all involved in the CRNA, the Town of Goderich now has a clear 10-year plan in place so that it may continue providing quality recreation services in a spirit of collaboration with its community at large.

Town of Goderich Council

Mayor John Grace

Deputy Mayor Myles Murdock

Councillor Trevor Bazinet

Councillor Jim Donnelly

Councillor Matt Hoy

Councillor Stephen Tamming

Councillor Shawn Thomson

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Section 1:
**The Importance of
Recreation to Goderich**





The Vision for Recreation in Goderich

Goderich is a community that values recreation. Whether through waterfront activities, organized sports, visiting the local splash pad or playgrounds, or walking through the park, hundreds of people expressed that recreation keeps them physically active and connected to one another.

After hearing from residents and others that make use of Goderich's recreation facilities, a number of themes became evident. The strong spirit of collaboration, a need to include everybody, and pride in the services available for a small waterfront community were but some of the prominent topics of conversation that resulted in a Vision that tells the story of how recreation in Goderich will be viewed in the future.

"A Place Where Everybody Plays Together!"



Purpose of the CRNA

The Community Recreational Needs Assessment (“CRNA”) is a 10-year strategy to address needs for recreation facilities and programs in the Town of Goderich. Spanning the years 2022 to 2031, the CRNA contains a set of recommendations that direct ongoing investments in recreation facilities and guides the way in with the Town of Goderich delivers recreation services, including its role in working with community partners and volunteers.

The Town employs a unique operating model whereby it works with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario and its local operating division, the Goderich-Huron YMCA. The two partners developed an operating agreement in 2004 that resulted in the Maitland Recreation Centre being built and share financial costs in order to provide quality recreation facilities and programs to people living in Goderich and surrounding areas.

The CRNA is the first major analysis of recreation needs undertaken for Goderich in decades. Reasons for undertaking the CRNA include:

- changes in the Town's demographic composition that have occurred over the past 20 years;
- certain recreational facilities are aging and will require attention if they are to continue operating;
- the unique operating agreement with the YMCA is set to expire in 2023 and there is a need to review the role of each party in delivering recreational services moving forward;
- a need to respond to changes in trends and preferences of residents for recreation and sport; and
- ensuring that affordable and inclusive choices are available while municipal operations are being delivered in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

What is Recreation?

Recreation can mean different things to everyone. For some it means being physically active where and when they would like. For others it may mean playing sports, taking care of their garden, or socializing with family or friends.

The **Framework for Recreation in Canada** – a nationally and provincially adopted charter - defines recreation as follows.

“Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.”

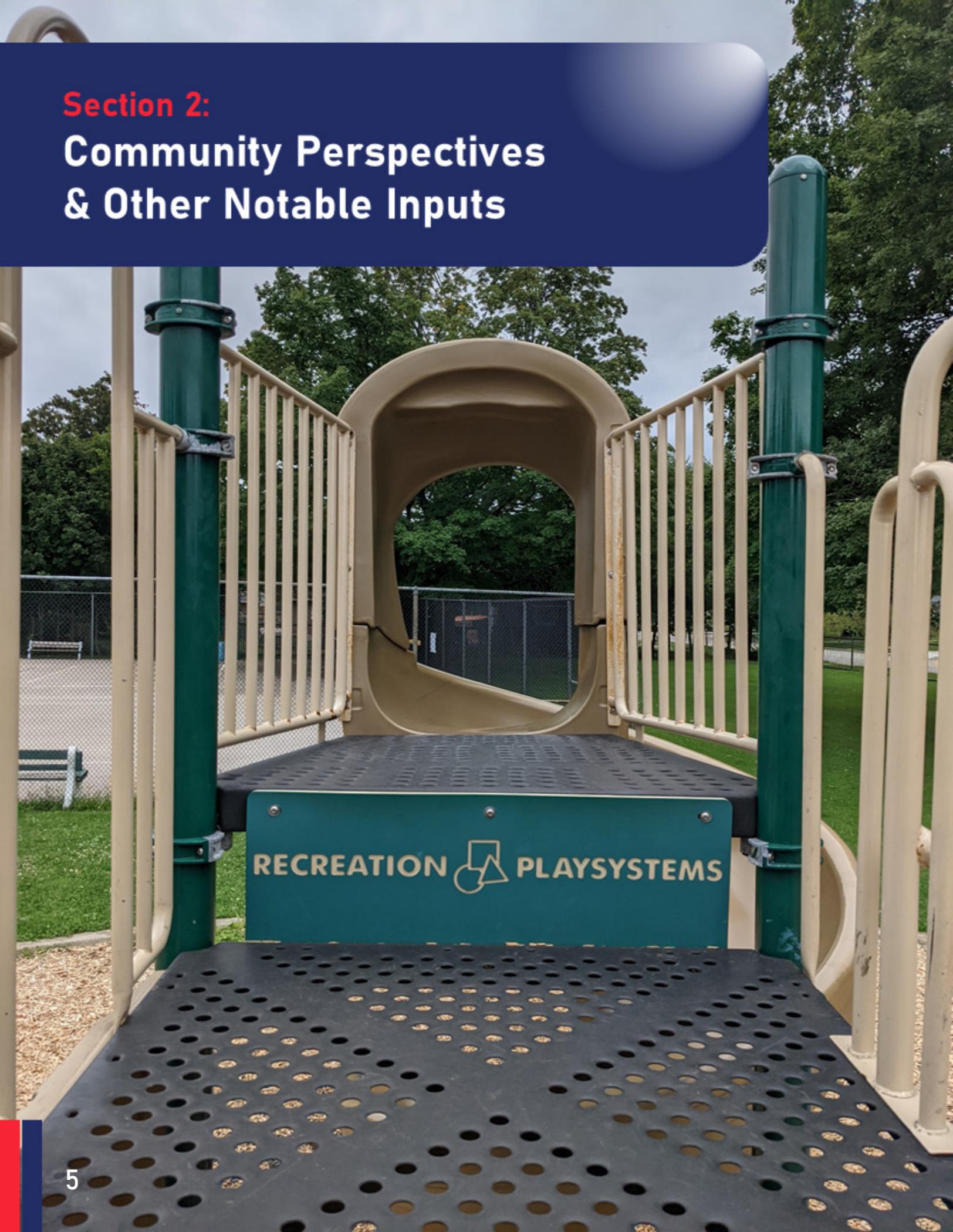
How the Plan Was Developed

The CRNA is an evidenced-based plan that makes use of quantitative and qualitative data. The Town of Goderich retained Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. and Tucker-Reid & Associates to prepare the CRNA with notable elements of the project methodology as follows.

- **A Recreation Review Ad Hoc Committee** was formed with citizens to oversee the CRNA and act as a sounding board throughout the planning process;
- **Promoting Awareness** of the CRNA through a dedicated webpage and email address, working with local media and stakeholder partners to spread the word, and advertising using the Town's typical means;
- **Feedback from the General Public** through a survey for any person wishing to provide input by making an online and print copy available, receiving written and emailed thoughts, and allowing the public to comment on the Draft CRNA prior to its finalization;
- **Engaged Recreational Stakeholders** including local sports and recreation groups, Town Council, and Town/YMCA Staff through focus groups, interviews and workshops;
- **Conducted Extensive Research** by analyzing unique local demographics, visiting local recreation facilities, and reviewing building condition reports, site and facility plans, municipal reports, and trends pertinent to the recreation sector;
- **Two Technical Reports** were prepared that contain the comprehensive analysis used to rationalize the recommendations presented in the CRNA; and
- **Presentations to the Recreation Review Ad Hoc Committee and Town Council** at key milestones throughout the planning process.



Section 2: Community Perspectives & Other Notable Inputs



RECREATION  PLAYSYSTEMS



Consultations with the Community

The CRNA made a concerted effort to engage residents of Goderich along with others that have an interest in the Town's recreation facilities. Attempts were made to connect with users and non-users of the recreation system to understand what people value and place priority upon with the aim of encouraging more people to participate in recreation more often.

Leading the community-focused planning process was the Recreation Review Ad Hoc Committee (RRAHC) that consisted of six citizen appointees, including the RRAHC Chair, and three Council representatives. Town and YMCA Staff provided background documentation in support of the CRNA but operated at arms-length throughout the planning process in order to ensure impartiality.



Recreation Review Ad Hoc Committee



Communications Plan



Virtual Community Open Houses



Community Portal (Web)



Community Survey & Feedback Forms



Town / YMCA Staff Workshops



Recreation Stakeholder & GDCI Student Summits

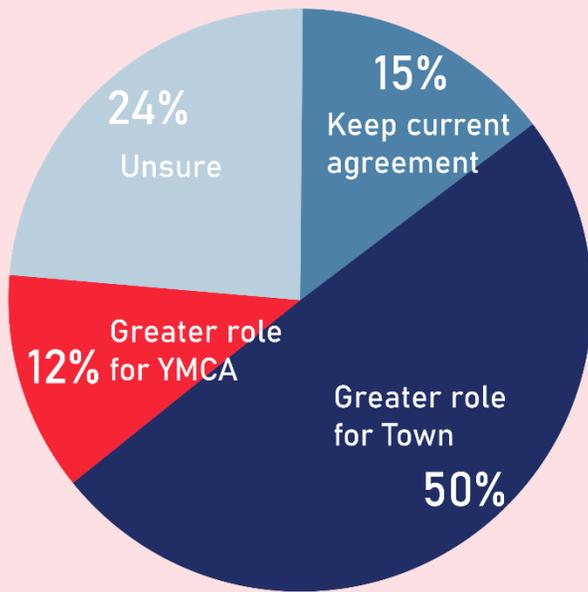


Council & Opinion Leader Interviews

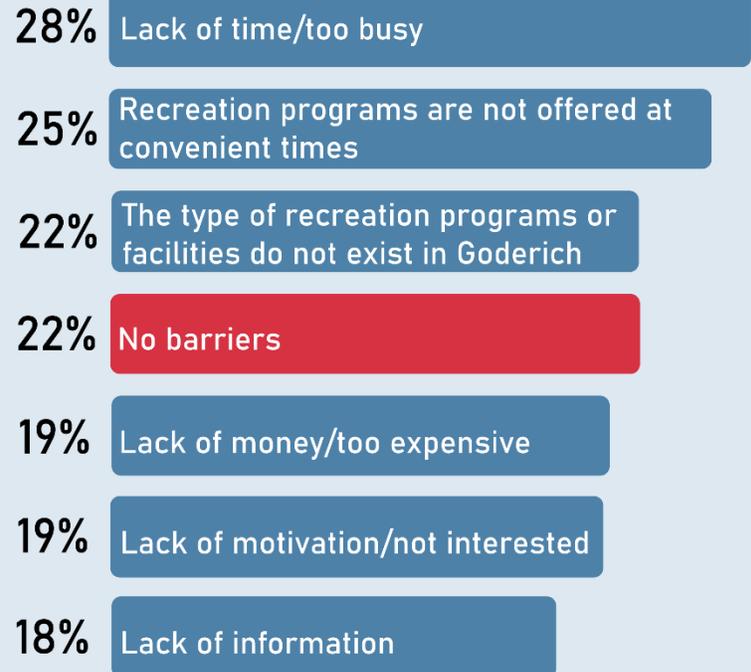
How We Engaged the Community

Community Survey

Future Role in Delivering Recreation



Barriers to Participation



Stakeholder Summits

Many high quality facilities, notably the Maitland Recreation Centre and Bannister Park.

Some sports groups reported that Goderich provides some of the best recreation facilities in the region.

There is a feeling that the YMCA excels at aquatic, fitness and general programming while the Town may be well suited for operating/maintaining sports fields and arenas.

Teen Stakeholder Summits

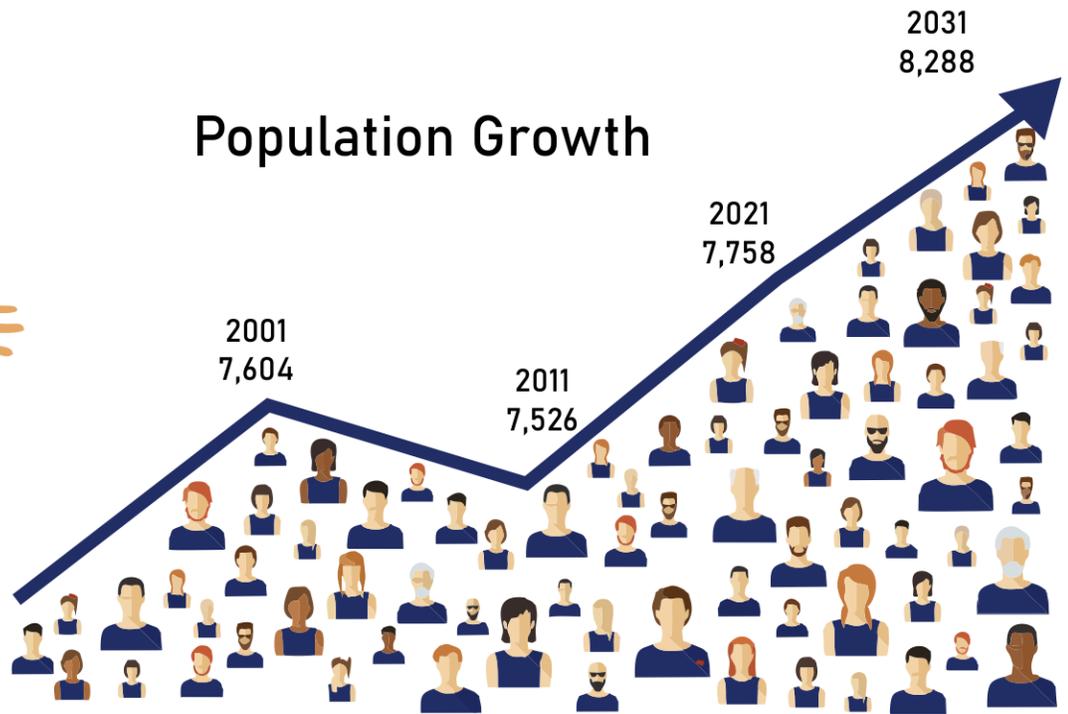
Requests were received for more drop-in activities and “organized scrimmages” without having to register to play sports. The Town should encourage more beachfront activities and access to the water through launches for paddle sports





Residents born outside of Canada

Population Growth



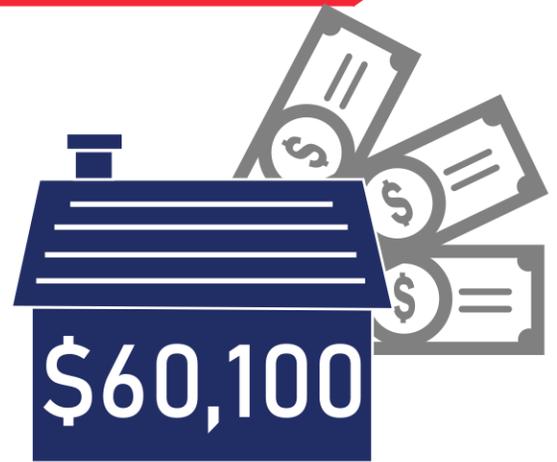
Demographic Snapshot



Residents living below the Low-Income Measure After Tax

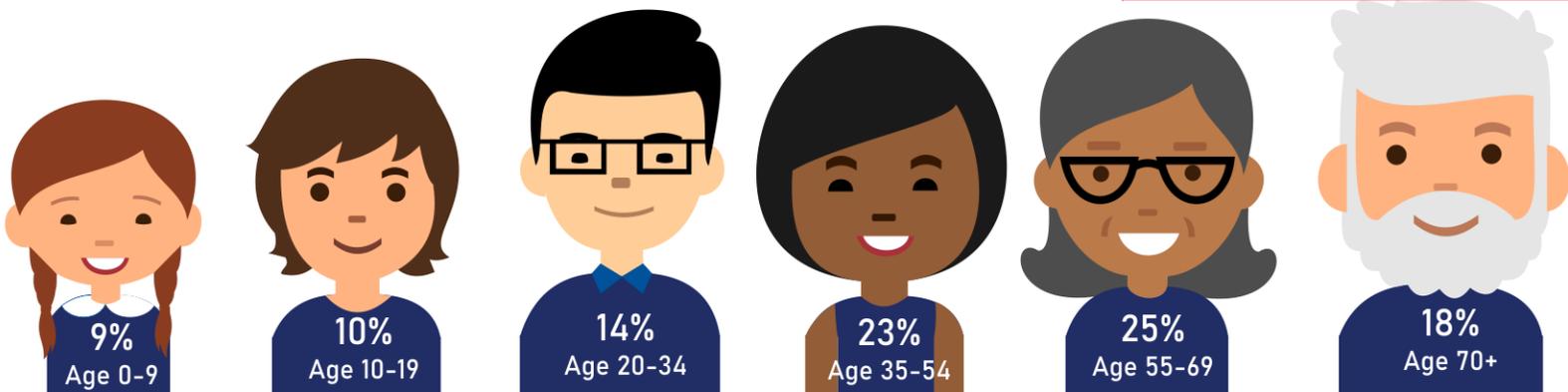
50.7

Median age of Goderich residents



Median household income

Age Structure



Notable Trends in Recreation

Demand for Non-Programmed Activities



Undesirable Levels of Physical Inactivity



Quality Multi-use Facilities and Community Hubs



Include Everyone in Recreation



Increase Female Participation in Sport and Recreation



Aging Infrastructure Can Require Renewal



Benefits from Sport Tourism



Section 3: CRNA Recommendations



Overview of the Analysis

After hearing from the community and undertaking an analysis of various recreation market conditions, a total of 41 Recommendations emerged through CRNA. Collectively, these Recommendations provide Town Council, Staff and community partners with a set of actions aimed to achieve the CRNA Vision of making Goderich “A Place Where **Everybody Plays Together**” through recreation.

Implementing the Recommendations will be a collective effort if the Town's historical practices are an indication. Town Council, with the support of municipal staff, will integrate Recommendations into annual work plans and budgets. Where there is a role for community partners, the Town will work with others to identify the need for action and ways that it can assist community-based providers in advancing the broad recreational mandate.

The pages that follow organize each of the CRNA's Recommendations into common themes. The timing associated with implementing each Recommendation is identified to assist the Town of Goderich and its partners formulate their “game plan” noting that there may be factors that change timing such as extremal grant programs, state of existing infrastructure and market conditions. Capital and operating costs are stated in 2021 dollars, where applicable, and should be considered as preliminary pending confirmation through further detailed studies and factoring post-pandemic escalation rates.

Governance & Roles in Goderich

The role of a municipality in delivering/enabling recreation services centres on proactive planning and efficient execution - always in concert with community and stakeholders/partners. There is a balance required in being nimble in responding to changes as the community evolves, ensuring full access especially for marginalized populations and providing/enabling a full range of services for all ages and abilities. Programs and services are provided with a view to being cost efficient, providing quality opportunities and in safe environments, typically resulting in high levels of public/member satisfaction and healthy outcomes.

In Goderich, Town Council has supported a contracted delivery approach since the mid-2000s in that an Operating Agreement has been developed with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario (YMCASWO) whereby:

- the YMCASWO manages indoor recreation facilities, sports fields and selected other outdoor services (e.g., lifeguarding at the Rotary Cove Beach) through its local division, the Goderich-Huron YMCA;
- the Goderich-Huron YMCA offers programs and member services to ensure a wide range of recreational activities within the community; and
- the Town of Goderich contributes to the fiscal viability and sustainability of the service delivery model.

The Operating Agreement between the Town and YMCA is in effect until 2023; the agreement allocates the responsibility and the accountability of the operations of the Maitland Recreation Complex and Memorial Arena, Bannister Park and John O'Keefe Diamond, Victoria Tennis Courts, GDCI squash courts, beach lifeguards, camps, and programs for all ages to the YMCA.

Local Governance

The Operating Agreement also includes pertaining a Board of Management of Recreation Services that provides guidance with respect to facility operations. During many of the discussions with the Board of Management and members of Council, concerns were raised as to the true role and responsibilities of the Board of Management. The point was made that the Board is not delegated authority as per typical Boards of Management in a municipal setting, yet they are called a

Board of Management. The key difference is that Boards of Management and Advisory Committees is that the former typically have:

- hiring capabilities;
- full budget responsibility and accountability;
- the ability to develop and approve policy for the services within their purview; as well as
- the ability to enter into agreements and contracts.

The above-noted responsibilities would be incompatible with the YMCA's responsibilities and Town Council's role. The current role of the Board of Management is more aligned with that of an Advisory Committee and would be best aligned by working in concert with the YMCA to implement the CRNA's Recommendations offered as part of this.

Future Role of the Town

Through CRNA consultations with the public, stakeholders, municipal and YMCA representatives, and elected officials, it became apparent that there were diverse points of view as to the Town's future role in recreation services. These perspectives ultimately could be assigned to three options to guide the governance/operational model moving forward:

1. Status Quo - A similar agreement would receive approval for an extension for another 5 years with no to minor changes.
2. Town of Goderich Operates / Delivers ALL Recreation Services - The Town takes over the full operations of all services included in the Operating Agreement and in implementing the recommendations in CRNA.
3. A Refined Shared Services Model - The Town extends the contract with the YMCA with refinements to the Operating Agreement including (but not necessarily limited to): clearer expectations; a 5-year list of community priorities; refined governance model; legislative compliance and Quality Assurance expectations; policy reviews; and performance metrics that must be addressed. Further, the Town would assume responsibility for asset management including the development of a long-term capital budget through condition assessments as well as the development of a preventative maintenance system to extend the lifespan of equipment and facilities. The YMCA would continue to clean and maintain facilities.

The CRNA recommends that the Town approve “A Refined Shared Services Model” where responsibilities are shared as to the delivery of recreation services. The Town already has an Asset Management Plan and a staff resources in place to minimize the incidence of unexpected major repairs through preventative maintenance and taking a disciplined approach to capital planning. The Town would continue to have reserve funds in place to address major repairs and replacements as per the lifespan of equipment and facilities. This approach would reduce duplication of efforts and create an efficiency.

The YMCA of Southwestern Ontario would have continued responsibility for recreation services and would develop a five-year implementation plan based on the findings of the Community Recreation Needs Assessment. The updated Operating Agreement should include specific deliverables including quality assurance models in the delivery of services, emphasis on community plans dealing with recreation priorities, legislative compliance, and performance metrics.

The name of the Board of Management of Recreation Services would be changed to the “Goderich Recreation Services Advisory Committee” to reflect the true nature of its work. The role of the committee would be to work with the Goderich-Huron YMCA to engage community to implement the recommendations outlined in the CRNA. The future make-up of the committee would reflect the residents that it serves including youth, older adults and adults, a gender balance, residents with the skills and competencies needed to implement the CRNA. Skillsets of Committee members should span areas including (but not limited to) planning, communications, marketing, finance, recreation, sport background and fund development skills.

Continued communications between the Town’s Senior Management Team (finance, operations, and the CAO) and the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario will be critical in the success of this model. Quarterly meetings should be held to address the service level agreement, budget status, maintenance requirements, communications, and performance metrics.

The CRNA recommends that the Town approve “**A Refined Shared Services Model**” that continues to share responsibilities between the Town and the YMCA, albeit in a slightly different way.

This approach would reduce duplication of efforts and create an efficiency for residents and ratepayers.

Recommendations	Timing
Undertake a facilitated session(s) of the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, Town of Goderich, and the Board of Management to refresh and firmly articulate the most effective culture, values, and behaviours to develop a charter of engagement between the parties.	2022
Rename the Board of Management to the Recreation Services Advisory Committee to implement the recommendations housed in the CRNA.	2022
Streamline and reduce duplicated responsibilities and reporting relationships between the Town of Goderich, the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario Board of Directors, and the Board of Management of Recreation Services.	2022
Transfer the role of Asset Management of the facilities from the Goderich-Huron YMCA to Town of Goderich staff.	2023
Continue the ongoing communications between the Goderich-Huron YMCA staff and the senior Town of Goderich staff, possibly to quarterly meetings apart from day-to-day operational discussions as they arise.	2022 to 2031
Estimated Cost implications	
Capital: Not Applicable	
Operating: Staff Time to lead discussions and restructure governance with the YMCA and Board of Management	

Ice Sports & Skating

The Town of Goderich historically operated 2 single pads at the Maitland Recreation Centre and Goderich Memorial Arena. Following decommissioning of Goderich Memorial Arena due to health and safety concerns, 1 ice pad remains. Including the Maitland Recreation Centre, there are 13 actively operating ice pads found in arenas throughout Huron County. In Ontario's smaller urban and rural centres, ice pads are typically provided at rate of 1 per 7,000 to 10,000 population though service levels across Huron County are higher due to legacy arenas acquired through amalgamation. The service level in Goderich amounts to 1 ice pad per 7,758 persons (excluding Goderich Memorial Arena) while the 6 ice pads found locally and in neighbouring municipalities results in 1 ice pad per 4,775 persons.

There were an estimated 300 children and youth ice sport participants affiliated with minor hockey, ringette and figure skating pre-pandemic programs in 2019. Other major users of ice time include the Goderich Flyers Junior C Club and a number of adult pickup leagues.

High performing arena systems historically booked a minimum of 90% of available prime times; in the last season that both the Goderich Memorial Arena and Maitland Recreation Centre were operating (2017/18), the prime time utilization rate of 61%. With the removal of ice from Memorial Arena pressures have been intensified at the Maitland Recreation Centre with the last pre-pandemic season booking virtually all weekday times between 5:00pm and 10:00pm but no rentals scheduled between 4:00pm-5:00pm, very few weekday rentals after 10:00pm, and no regularly scheduled weekend rentals prior to 8:00am.

In consideration of utilization rates and application of arena market factors such as player registrations, the CRNA finds that one ice pad will be sufficient to service needs to the year 2031. Further compounding uncertainty around the arena system is the long-term impact of COVID-19 on registrations along with the continued aging of the Town's population base and those living surrounding area at faster rate than other parts of the province, as well as the significant supply and capacity of ice pads within the regional context.

In addition, volunteers maintain the John Cove Memorial Outdoor Rinks at Victoria Park for the enjoyment of Goderich and area residents. Given local popularity of skating and the Town's focus on tourism, there is merit in exploring a refrigerated skating rink or trail that serves as a destination for residents and visitors, and contributes to four-season tourism objectives by generating spending at nearby businesses during the tourist off-season. Although refrigerated systems cost more to build and operate, they are easier to maintain compared to natural rinks and costs can be offset by economic multipliers if strategically located in commercial or mixed-used districts such as the Goderich downtown, waterfront or a prominent open space such as Victoria Park. A business plan should quantify the annual operation cost based on the design employed prior to proceeding with construction.

Recommendations

Timing

Maintain a supply of one ice pad. The need for any change to the current supply of one ice pad should be reconfirmed though a 5-year review of arena needs based on market factors including (but not limited to):

2026
(5-Year Arena Review)

- a review of post-COVID-19 implications on local/regional arena participation and utilization rates as they pertain to short-term arena demand;
- the rate and timing of population growth (with emphasis on growth in the 5 to 19 age group);
- changes to ice sport participation rates;
- additions, enhancements or removals of ice pads from the regional arena supply;
- national, provincial and regional ice pad participation trends; and
- changes to user group programming requirements and capabilities.

Carry out an independent energy audit to identify energy efficiency enhancements to meet municipal sustainability objectives and reduce operational expenditures.

2022

Update the Ice Time Allocation Policy to include principles relating to equity and inclusion (at a minimum), confirms priority assigned to categories of user groups, and establishes a defensible formulae that assigns ice time based on quantifiable market factors such as player registrations by age/division. The updated Policy should be developed in consultation with local arena users and should be an approved Policy of Town Council for the arena operator to implement.

2023

Maintain/enhance affiliation with ORFA to ensure the implementation of best practices related to arena operations.

2022 to 2031

Review existing demand/revenues for summer ice along with the cost to operate the ice plant in the warmer months, and develop an operational model to support the efficient, fiscally sustainable delivery of this service.

2023

Explore the feasibility of providing an outdoor refrigerated or synthetic ice skating rink through a site selection and business plan that determines an appropriate location and potential to align with the Town's civic placemaking projects.

2027
(Construction)

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: \$800,000 (refrigerated rink/trail cost to be confirmed)

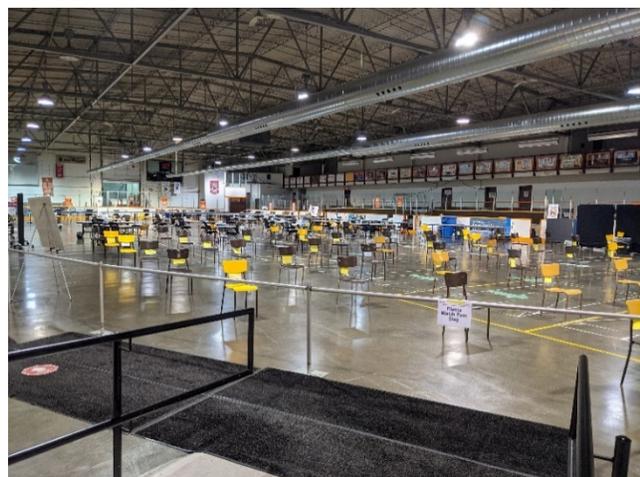
Operating: Staff Time to update Ice Allocation Policy and analyze summer ice

Redefining Goderich Memorial Arena

Goderich Memorial Arena was constructed in 1949 and operated as an arena until 2018 after which its aging ammonia-based ice plant was decommissioned due to safety concerns. The dry floor has remained in use for floor-based sports such as ball hockey, pickleball as well as YMCA day camps while the upstairs hall is the largest gathering space owned by the Town. Several structural and mechanical assessments of Goderich Memorial Arena have been carried out in recent years that result in the Town estimating over \$7 million¹ required by 2033 if recommissioning it for ice sports and carrying out other building upgrades (noting the forecast does not include major expansions, reconfigurations or accessibility improvements meaning the investment would result in a similar user experience as found today).

With a second ice pad not deemed to be needed in Goderich, there is no requirement for the Town to replace the Goderich Memorial Arena ice plant or slab and thus the CRNA recommends that the Goderich Memorial Arena be repurposed to another use. It is evident that a number of residents have an affinity and cherished memories at the arena; given the historical significance of Goderich Memorial Arena to the community, a future without ice is worth considering and thus the Town should explore the building's potential for adaptive re-use or be completely redeveloped.

The CRNA has not found sufficient need for additional indoor recreational facilities, except for perhaps a large multi-purpose meeting space or hall and youth space; certain municipalities have repurposed older arenas to other uses such as arts and cultural space, community space, etc. which should be explored as part of a broader community consultation and architectural conceptual design process be undertaken to determine a future vision for the Goderich Memorial Arena as a non-recreational facility, along with the cost implications of repurposing/redeveloping the building.



¹ Town of Goderich. Memo to Mayor Grace and Members of Council re: Memorial Arena (Appendix I E). Dated September 2, 2020



Recommendations

Timing

In the absence of a recreational need for Goderich Memorial Arena, undertake a community consultation and architectural conceptual design process to determine a future vision for the Goderich Memorial Arena along with the cost implications of repurposing/redeveloping the building. As part of this process, the following components should be explored as supplementary spaces:

2022

- an improved hall capable of accommodating larger community events and/or meeting rooms; and
- dedicated youth centre or room (*alternatively may be considered at the Maitland Recreation Centre – also see “Encouraging Age-Friendly Recreation Opportunities” section of the CRNA*)

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: \$40,000 for Future Study

Operating: Not Applicable

Investing in Outdoor Recreation

The Town's investments in improving existing parks and outdoor spaces has been appreciated by residents. Stakeholders point to the recent redevelopment of Bannister Park as something that has benefited field sport users and the public at large. Stakeholder groups indicate that their programs are generally stable to growing, and that future growth could result in the need to provide additional facilities to keep pace. A new pickleball court has just been constructed at Columbus Park and the Victoria Park tennis courts are slated for renewal in 2022, further reinforcing the Town's commitment to quality outdoor recreation.

Goderich Minor Soccer – who books the majority of rectangular field time for their 450 players – indicates that they could envision a need for a fourth field in Goderich. The Town's service level is slightly below other comparators and assuming that minor soccer recovers to pre-pandemic participation rates, future growth in the 5 to 19 year old age group is such that there is merit in Goderich Minor Soccer's observation that an additional field could be required within the next 10 years. There is also a high quality field hockey program operating in Goderich that could benefit from additional time on a quality playing field without having to compete for access with soccer players.

Teen Summit participants indicated a desire for an improved basketball court as the existing court at Columbus Park has an aging single hoop and backboard with no line markings. The recently constructed pickleball courts at Columbus Park (built with the efforts of local service clubs) provide another compelling reason to upgrade the basketball court to complete the hard surface sport court revitalization there. Furthermore, a distributional analysis illustrates a gap in north Goderich for basketball courts due to the fact that children and teens – who are the primary users of such facilities – should have access to basketball courts within a reasonable walking/biking distance of their home or school.



Recommendations	Timing
Rejuvenate the Columbus Park basketball court by remediating its playing surface, adding multi-use line markings for both basketball and ball hockey, as well as installing a second net.	2022
Provide one additional soccer field by either constructing it as part of a future park acquired in response to future residential development or through a cost-sharing agreement with the Avon Maitland District School Board to upgrade the field at Goderich District Collegiate Institute.	2026
Develop a new multi-use court that can accommodate basketball and ball hockey (at minimum) in the north end of Goderich, potentially situated on parkland dedicated through future residential developments.	2031
Estimated Cost implications	
Capital: \$365,000	
Operating: Sports field maintenance implications to be determined pending outcomes of new agreement with the YMCA and/or school board	



Ensuring Inclusion in Recreation

A compelling theme that arose through CRNA consultations was that recreation should be available to any person wishing to participate. In acknowledging that certain people may face barriers due to their level of income, gender or gender identity, age, language spoken, and disability, all recreation service providers have a role to play to ensure choices are available to engage people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. While each community service provider approaches inclusion in a unique way, there was agreement that no person should be turned away and all groups do their best to find ways to include people in their programs.

Bringing people together and making them feel welcomed in the community goes beyond simply building, designing and programming space. Certain residents, particularly those from marginalized communities, are less likely to participate because of service-related barriers that pertain to organizational policies and practices, diversity and training of staff that work with such populations, etc.

Therefore, the Town has a role to advocate for inclusion for any resident that wishes to make use of a Town-owned facility, even if the programming within its facilities and parks are delivered by a community partner or renter.



Recommendations	Timing
Develop an Access and Inclusion Policy to outline what the Goderich-Huron YMCA will do to reach out and include all underrepresented populations in Goderich.	2022
<p>As part of a renewed operating agreement with the Goderich-Huron YMCA, work towards enhance access for non-members living in Goderich by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the average cost to provide the services used by non-YMCA members paying a day rate (including use of the walking track). Compare the options to increase the number of day rate users by lowering the fee (where there is capacity) versus the implications of keeping the day rate at the current rate. • Exploring ways to offer a reduced rate to access specialized and/or selected fitness services. 	2022
Engage community input in developing a fair-minded Recreation Facilities Allocation Policy. The revised Policy should allocate facilities and public spaces in a manner that considers an allocation per level of play, gender equity, distribution of space giving priority to children and youth, and considering emerging sports.	2023
Identify under-represented people and groups in the Town’s sport and recreation system and develop ways and means of being more inclusive by engaging these voices. Efforts at a minimum should include persons experiencing low income, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, the LGBTQI2S community, women and girls, and any other identified underrepresented populations.	2023
Work with Indigenous Peoples and groups to recognize the value of recreation and sport in addressing the respective recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Report.	2022 to 2031 (and beyond)
Utilize the training models and audit tools available through the Canadian Women in Sport to assess if greater efforts are needed to increase participation of girls and women in sport and recreation opportunities. This is especially critical to meet the Federal government’s goal to attain gender equity in sport and recreation by 2035.	2022 to 2031
New and replacement playground projects should include barrier-free components to enable opportunities for play among children and caregivers with disabilities.	2022 to 2031

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: \$70,000 allocated for playground components

Operating: Staff Time to develop inclusion policies, identify under-represented populations and work with partners to increase their participation

Continuing to Work with Partners & Volunteers

Goderich is a place where residents, businesses, service clubs and the community as a whole come together to make things happen. In today's day and age where busy lifestyles and other commitments can get in the way of giving back, Goderich remains a shining example of people working as a collective to provide meaningful facilities and programs.

Volunteers are the backbone of Goderich's recreation system, delivering sports programs and assisting with other vital services such as Victoria Park outdoor ice rink and special events. This spirit needs to be nurtured if the Town is to avoid volunteer burnout in light of province-wide trends that show increasing regulation and administrative requirements are taxing many groups. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this and has put many volunteer-run organizations throughout Ontario at risk of folding. In cases where volunteer involvement wanes, residents will look to the Town to assume of these responsibilities, leading to higher costs and difficult decisions.

Similarly, partnerships have always played an important role in the provision of recreation facilities and services within Goderich, resulting in enhanced service without added operational costs. The Town has established a wide range of formal and informal relationships with organizations serving the youth, senior, sport, healthcare, education, environmental, and service club sectors, to name a few. Continuing with this approach is imperative in a climate of increasing costs and declining resources, and is part of the rationale to continue working with the Goderich-Huron YMCA through an updated operating agreement. The ability to work together around shared goals has produced outstanding results and delivered value to Goderich taxpayers.

Through its policies and programs, the Town shows a clear commitment to working with community partners and volunteers. Successful partnerships are derived from common objectives (e.g., environmental conservation, community improvement, physical activity, etc.), maximizing the strengths of each party, and mitigating risks (e.g., costs, liability, etc.). There continues to be a growing need for community volunteer support and management resources (e.g., recruitment, screening, training, recognition, etc.) from the Town and its partners.



Recommendations	Timing
Engage the Avon Maitland District School Board and Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board to discuss potential opportunities to increase the availability and affordability of publicly accessible gymnasium times, possibly through reciprocal agreements or cost-sharing agreements at the time when school renovation or redevelopment projects occur.	2022
Assess the makeup of the Volunteer Corps to determine if greater outreach and recruitment efforts are needed in capturing all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.	2023
Work with like-minded community partners to address what each is doing to increase physical activity levels in Goderich as measured by frequency, duration, and intensity. The Town and its partners should develop evidenced-based ways of informing, educating, and encouraging residents to become more active and meet the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines.	2022 to 2031
Encourage agencies and providers that deliver health and social services to make greater use of the Town's recreational infrastructure to provide a holistic, integrated set of services aimed at enhancing the physical, mental and social health of the community.	2022 to 2031

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: Not Applicable
Operating: Staff Time to engage partners and volunteers

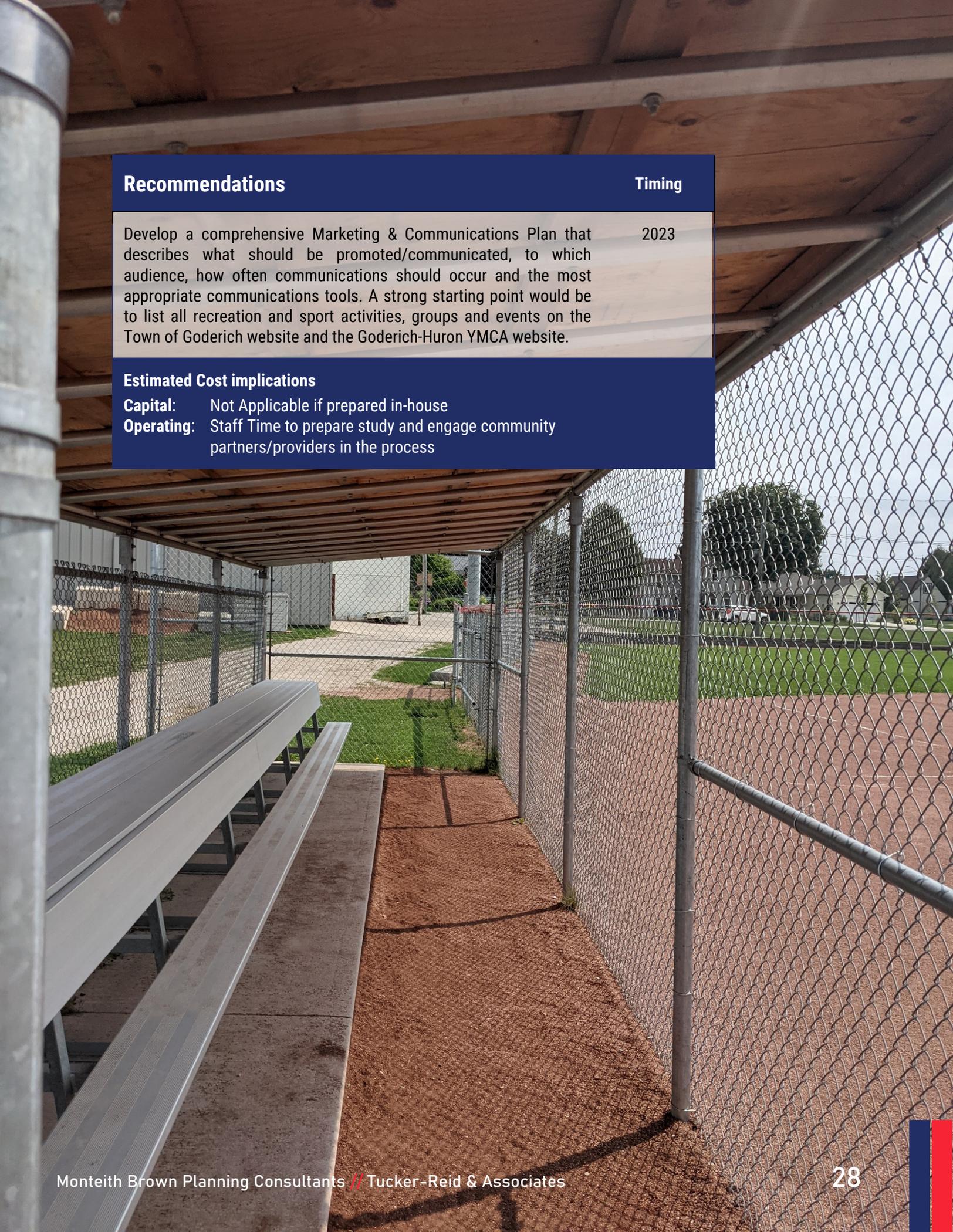
Making People Aware of What Exists

Survey and Stakeholder Summit participants indicated that it is often difficult to find information about recreation in Goderich, likely a result of multiple community agencies and service providers being tasked with delivering programs in the Town.

Recreation groups do not feel that there is a single, centralized source of information that coordinates the various offerings that existing throughout Goderich. This can lead to difficulties educating people about recreation offerings in Town but also results in certain community groups unknowingly duplicating services and unintentionally competing with each other as they are not fully connected with each other. Furthermore, the Teen Summit participants indicated that they access information in a much different way than more traditional means of advertising, relying more upon social media and digital communication, information provided through schools, and word of mouth which are tools that are currently less common in Goderich.

Although the Town successfully enables its community to deliver services, there is a role for it to help ensure that residents and visitors can easily access information about recreation. As such, the Town's marketing effectiveness should be improved through both the coordination and dissemination of information. The Town should initiate a Marketing & Communications that explores ways to effectively reach various target markets (residents, tourists, different age groups, etc.) through print and digital formats, and opportunities to facilitate better communication among all recreation service providers operating locally.





Recommendations

Timing

Develop a comprehensive Marketing & Communications Plan that describes what should be promoted/communicated, to which audience, how often communications should occur and the most appropriate communications tools. A strong starting point would be to list all recreation and sport activities, groups and events on the Town of Goderich website and the Goderich-Huron YMCA website.

2023

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: Not Applicable if prepared in-house

Operating: Staff Time to prepare study and engage community partners/providers in the process

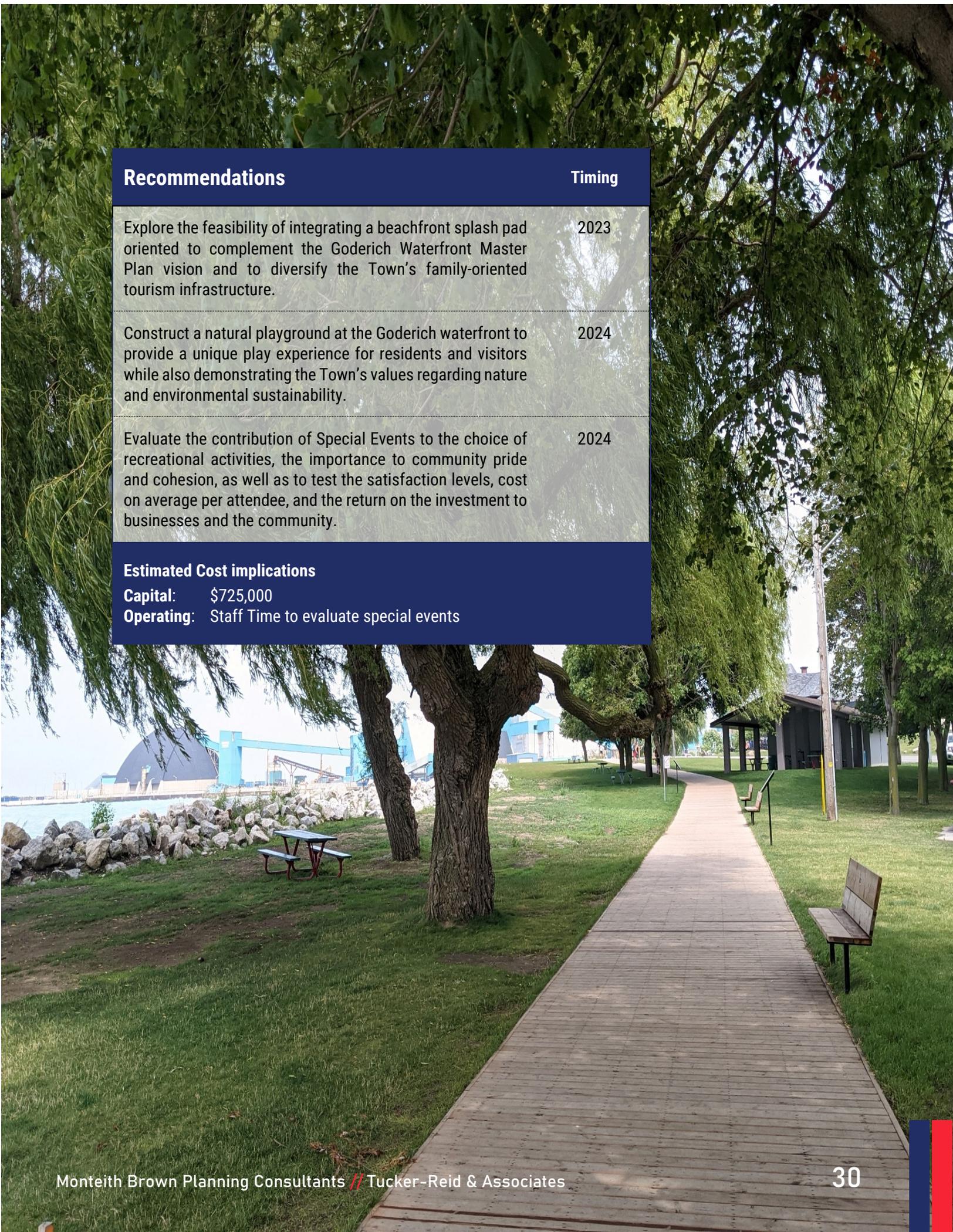
Supporting Local Tourism through Recreation

The recreation system is an important economic development tool as it encourages spending within the community among both residents and visitors. The Town of Goderich positioned itself as a regional tourist destination with strategic investments in its downtown, waterfront and other areas. Recreational infrastructure is commonly associated with sport tourism as well-designed facilities and vibrant communities are attractive to tournament organizers and participants, while the provision of special events and festivals through outdoor recreational spaces - such as parks or waterfront areas - is an integral component of cultural tourism.

Perhaps less known is the fact that recreational tourism transcends sports and special events. Communities are competing with each other to be “destinations” for day trips or weekend visits that encourage visitors to enjoy built characteristics, food and retail experiences, and immerse in the “sense of place.” Visitors do not always seek organized sports or events but also look to experience a unique park or other civic setting to relax.

The Town has committed significant resources to regenerate its downtown and Courthouse Square guided by urban design and landscape planning activities, as well as transforming its waterfront by implementing many initiatives identified in its Waterfront Master Plan. The CRNA, while primarily focused on ensuring recreational needs of residents are being met, can also be used to support recreational tourism in its many forms.





Recommendations

Timing

Explore the feasibility of integrating a beachfront splash pad oriented to complement the Goderich Waterfront Master Plan vision and to diversify the Town’s family-oriented tourism infrastructure.

2023

Construct a natural playground at the Goderich waterfront to provide a unique play experience for residents and visitors while also demonstrating the Town’s values regarding nature and environmental sustainability.

2024

Evaluate the contribution of Special Events to the choice of recreational activities, the importance to community pride and cohesion, as well as to test the satisfaction levels, cost on average per attendee, and the return on the investment to businesses and the community.

2024

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: \$725,000

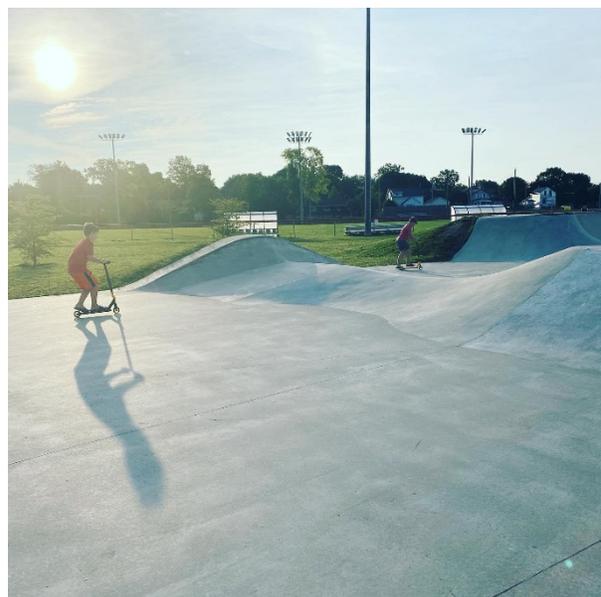
Operating: Staff Time to evaluate special events

Encouraging Age-Friendly Recreation Opportunities

Age-Friendly Communities and Youth-Friendly Communities have become more terminology in municipal settings. There are designation programs and criteria in place that help municipalities deliver built infrastructure and residents services that recognize that different age groups have different needs and face different barriers. For residents to be physically active and socially connected through “all ages and stages” it is important that the Town and its partners support evidence-based philosophies ranging from Early Childhood Development, Positive Youth Development, Active Aging and everything in between.

The Town and Goderich-Huron YMCA do not operate youth or seniors’ centres, instead focusing programs for these age groups within the Maitland Recreation Centre, Goderich Memorial Arena and certain parks. The Mackay Centre for Seniors building is owned by the Town of Goderich but is independently operated by a non-profit organization that offers social, recreational and volunteer opportunities for older adults (55 years+) in Goderich and surrounding area. Based on 2016 Census data, there were nearly 3,300 older adults living in Goderich, accounted for 45% of all residents, and growing at a faster rate than many parts of Huron County and the rest of Ontario.

With local youth and teens reliant on general recreational space in community centres and parks, along with some community-based programs such as at places of worship, there would appear to be a gap at least in terms of indoor space. Local youth and older adults are seeking more time at the Maitland Recreation Centre gym and that facility is presently relegated to YMCA members as there are likely a number of teens and seniors where the \$13 daily drop-in rate or the monthly membership fee could pose a barrier. Between the Mackay Centre and the YMCA, the number of opportunities for older adults is well positioned over the next 10 years; however, the Mackay Centre building was originally constructed in 1927 which presents functional challenges and discussions with the Mackay Centre indicate that barrier-free accessibility within the building remains a concern particularly with gaining access to their second floor.



Recommendations	Timing
Explore opportunities to create a dedicated youth centre or room within the Maitland Recreation Centre or as part of a future use for the Goderich Memorial Arena, as well as possible service adjustments intended to increase non-member youth accessibility to Goderich-Huron YMCA programming.	2022
Engage the Goderich-Huron YMCA to explore opportunities to increase the availability of gymnasium times dedicated to youth/teen programs at the Maitland Recreation Centre and/or local schools.	2022
Conduct an Accessibility Audit of the Mackay Centre for Seniors to investigate opportunities to improve barrier-free accessibility within the space.	2022
Determine the approximate penetration rate of each age cohort (i.e., pre-school, children, youth, adult, and older adult) in recreation and sport in Goderich, including within the Goderich-Huron YMCA's programs and memberships as well as through registrations of other sport and recreation providers. Address areas where there are lower rates of penetration.	2022 to 2031
Work with organizations supporting older adults, including but not limited to the Goderich-Huron YMCA and the Mackay Centre for Seniors, to ensure that there is a wide range of choice of activities, that older adults can be self-governing in their activities, and to implement the quality assurance criteria of the Active Aging model developed by Parks and Recreation Ontario.	2022 to 2031
Work with youth-serving organizations within the Town of Goderich to implement the criteria of Youth Friendly Communities through the Playworks Collective to enhance recreational opportunities for youth in Goderich.	2022 to 2031
Estimated Cost implications	
Capital: To be determined	
Operating: Staff Time to evaluate opportunities and engage with partners	

Sustainability & Accountability in Recreation Services

The Town values sustainability, both in terms of the environment and its financial position. It has worked with the YMCA to enhance energy efficiency at the Maitland Recreation Centre and other municipal facilities by retrofitting lighting to LED systems and finding ways to enhance water conservation through design and operations as some examples.

The Town's willingness to enable and empower community partners while pursuing an operating agreement with the YMCA that was considered ahead of its time, the fiscal position of the municipal recreation system is leaner than many municipalities of similar or larger size on a per resident basis since it has been able to share costs and assign program delivery responsibilities to community-based providers familiar with local needs.

Continued efforts are required to ensure that the Town's services are delivered efficiently and position itself to ensure accountability through quality assurance and risk mitigation. The collection of data on an ongoing basis will also allow the Town to make informed decisions based on monitoring performance and trends over the planning period.



Recommendations	Timing
Host focus groups with ice and soccer field users to better understand their satisfaction levels, isolate key issues and work together to improve service provision.	2022
Speak with adjacent and surrounding municipalities to discuss their willingness to contribute to the overall costs of providing recreation services in exchange for their residents to access opportunities in Goderich.	2022
Identify the cost of providing all recreation and sport services as a first step in identifying any further efficiencies, and appropriate cost recovery levels. This would be a first step in identifying transparency in setting of fees.	2023
Include the responsibility and accountability for the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario to meet legislative compliance and industry standards for each discipline in any future Town of Goderich/YMCA Operating Agreements.	2023
Include specific Performance Measures, Legislative Compliance and Quality Assurance expectations in the future Town of Goderich / YMCA Operating Agreement.	2023
Develop a 5-year implementation plan of the recommendations housed in the CRNA and indicate any financial implications.	2027

Estimated Cost implications

Capital: Not Applicable
Operating: Staff Time to analyze costs, formalize performance and quality assurance measures, and work with the YMCA

Section 4: Implementing the CRNA



Monitoring & Updating the CRNA

The Town should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the CRNA's Recommendations in order to ensure that they remain reflective of community needs. This may require monitoring activity levels, utilization, demographics, and continuing dialogue with community organizations. Outcomes of the renegotiated operating agreement with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, scheduled for 2022 and 2023, may also influence future actions and content contained in the CRNA. The development of annual work plans and year-end reporting should be undertaken to track achievements and lessons learned in order to determine the success of the CRNA. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The following steps should be considered to conduct an annual review of the CRNA.

- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, areas for improvement or adjustment, etc.).
- Review the CRNA to identify and/or confirm short-term initiatives based on staff reviews and consideration (e.g., trends, consultation, usage data, funding, partnerships, etc.).
- Identify potential challenges for the upcoming year.
- Communicate the status of ongoing and future projects with staff, Council, the Goderich-Huron YMCA, and the public.
- Revise capital budget and propose external funding opportunities, as necessary.

Note about Population Assumptions

Population forecasts that underpin certain CRNA assessments are derived from the Town of Goderich Development Charges Background Study that was presented for consideration of Town Council in 2021. It bears noting that more recent residential development trends, as well as changes in demand for housing resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may result in a different growth forecast than articulated in the Development Charges Background Study. Furthermore, the 2021 Census releases are scheduled throughout the year 2022 and may create a need to revisit approved growth forecasts. Any future changes to the Development Charge's growth forecast should be cause to revisit certain CRNA recommendations in the event that existing and projected population figures substantially differ from those used herein.

Preparing for Operating Agreement Discussions

As recommended in Section 3 of the CRNA, there is a need to refine approaches to governance, communication, culture and coordination with the various parties that the Town works collaboratively with. Central to this is the Town's role, relationship and reporting structure with the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario and the Goderich Board of Recreation Services. In particular, providing clarity with respect to asset management, contracted/outsourced operations, promotion, and complaint and dispute resolution will be critical.

Some of these areas for future improvement will take place leading up to scheduled discussions with the YMCA in 2022 in preparation of whether to renew the Operating Agreement for recreation. The CRNA supports a continued relationship between the Town and YMCA with some modifications aimed to improve overall delivery of recreation services to the public that both parties are tasked with serving. The commitment to improve the relationship and subsequent outcomes between the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario and the Town of Goderich should be outlined in the new Operating Agreement with the following elements of a successful operating agreement offered for consideration (as a minimum).

- a) **Who is Served and Intended Goals** – The Operating Agreement must state that the residents of the Town of Goderich are paramount in terms of their engagement in safe, quality, and engaging recreation and sport activities. Their ongoing needs must be identified, and the system modified to accommodate changing needs. There is an understanding that the benefits of participation fall to individuals, families and the greater good of the community.
- b) **The Recognition of a Partnership** – The new Operating Agreement should be a clear reflection as to how the Town of Goderich is choosing to deliver recreation services. The agreement does not absolve the Town from its responsibilities to the residents but rather it simply allocates some responsibilities and accountabilities to a third party. The agreement should outline that the delivery of services is a partnership whereby the success will lie in each organization playing its part in working as a collective.
- c) **A Culture of Cooperation** – The articulation of the corporate culture, guiding principles, values and resultant behaviours are key in setting the partnership up for success. It is important for these elements be defined as a collective (i.e. among all parties) to ensure that there is a clear understanding and that all parties live these values on a day-to-day basis.

- d) Roles, Responsibilities, and Accountabilities are clear – The agreement should be thorough in articulating the responsibilities and accountabilities in the delivery of service. All parties must be assured that they each have the expertise, resources and commitment to collaboratively deliver quality recreation services to Goderich residents in the spirit of the Operating Agreement.
- e) Inter-Organizational Communications – Ongoing and supportive communication mechanisms (an internal communications plan) must identify what is defined to be “communication” along with how often and in what form to ensure that an openness exists to help each organization be successful. Regularly scheduled check-in meetings will serve to plan for upcoming events and ensure that the agreement deliverables are on track. The Use of Shared Files, including status of the annual plan, will also ensure that there is open communications and shared information.
- f) Risk Assessment, Quality Assurance, and Legislative Compliance – The risks to each party should be identified and addressed in the Operating Agreement. Quality assurance mechanisms and legislative requirements must be clearly assigned and monitored as to compliance on a regular basis.
- g) The Requirement for Joint Annual Planning – An annual review of what has been accomplished, the identification of any further gaps in the delivery of service and prioritization of actions over the next year should be identified as part of the annual budgeting process.
- h) Performance Measures Identified – The agreement must identify how success will be measured. There should be an identification of the varied choices that all residents have either through the YMCA, stakeholder groups or through other parties. The capacity and utilization of facilities, programs and services will identify growth in participation year-over-year. Satisfaction levels will identify the effectiveness in the delivery of service. The number of complaints per year in varying areas will identify if the Town and the YMCASWO are addressing and alleviating public concerns. Efficiencies would be measured in either the reduction in the costs to deliver various services or the attainment of alternate revenues through grants and project supports. Further, measuring participation by marginalized groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, persons experiencing low income, racialized communities, etc.) and specific age groups (youth and older adults) will identify if outreach mechanisms are effective. Gathering baseline data in Year 1 of the new Operating Agreement will allow all parties to understand the starting point, identify gaps and provide the ability to set realistic targets.

Financial Considerations

Due to the Town of Goderich taking a proactive approach to recreation through its historical and recent investments in its recreation facilities, the CRNA results in a cost-effective and fiscally responsible strategy to meet 10 year needs. A total of \$2 million in future capital has been identified for the CRNA Recommendations, which are generally balanced between addressing population growth-related requirements along with leveraging the Town’s ongoing works and existing infrastructure.

All CRNA Recommendations that have a capital requirement would be brought forward on an annual basis through the budgeting process once the Town has the information it needs to develop costs (e.g. design characteristics, funding sources, etc.). A portion of the \$2 million is expected to be eligible for Development Charge funding under provincial legislation due to growth-related service needs.

Please note that all costs presented herein are preliminary estimates that will need to be independently verified by the Town of Goderich based on final design, site conditions, and due to the fact there is extreme volatility in the cost of materials, labour and construction due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary of Major CRNA Capital Items	Suggested Timing	Estimated Cost
Outdoor Recreation		
Columbus Park Basketball Court Redevelopment	2022	\$25,000
Soccer Field Construction	2026	\$300,000
Refrigerated Skating Rink / Trail	2027	\$800,000*
Basketball Court Construction	2031	\$40,000
Barrier-free Playground Enhancements	Ongoing	\$70,000
Goderich Waterfront		
Splash Pad	2023	\$600,000*
Natural Playground	2024	\$125,000*
Future Studies		
Goderich Memorial Arena Consultation & Conceptual Plan	2022	\$40,000
Arena Energy Audit	2023	TBD
Mackay Centre Accessibility Audit	2023	TBD
Preliminary Capital Implications		\$2,000,000

* Denotes suggested cost allocation for budgeting purposes noting that the actual cost will depend upon approved design.

Notes: Costs for CRNA major capital items exclude purchases of land and assume optimal site development conditions. Costs are order of magnitude, preliminary in nature based on experience in other municipalities. The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing at time of writing and has created extreme variability/volatility in the price of materials, labour and construction. All costs presented above should be confirmed by the Town through detailed analyses prior to integration into budgets/work plans. All costs are stated in 2022 dollars and exclude adjustments for future escalation.

GODERICH

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