



Township of Warwick

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



ADOPTED BY WARWICK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 16TH, 2009 – MOTION #10



F.J. GALLOWAY ASSOCIATES INC.
Management and Planning Consultants

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Township of Warwick is home to approximately 4,100 residents living in eastern Lambton County. The Township was formed through the amalgamation of the former Township of Warwick and Village of Watford. It is primarily an agriculture-based community with Watford being a commercial, education and professional services centre.

The Township has been progressive in pursuing economic development opportunities; supporting the agricultural community and delivering community services that are valued by and enhance the quality of life for Warwick residents. Parks and recreation represents one of the major areas of community service which has resulted in array of facilities, including an arena, numerous ball fields and parks, a soccer complex, two community halls, a splash pad, tennis courts, picnic areas and other venues.

In 1996 and 1997 separate Master Recreation Plans were completed for the Village of Watford and the Townships of Warwick. In June of 2004, a Master Recreation Plan was completed for the Township of Warwick which had been amalgamated. This undertaking was prepared by the Warwick Recreation Transition Committee.

In 2008 and early 2009, the Township Council identified the need for a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify the needs and set the priorities for the future delivery of parks and recreation services in Warwick. The need for the Master Plan had evolved based on individual initiatives that were coming forward from residents, service clubs and community organizations; a need to respond to changing demographics and economic opportunities within the municipalities; and to establish a more pro-active decision-making process for future investments in the delivery of parks and recreation services. This latter consideration focused both on the recruitment of a new Recreation Manager with some emphasis on programmatic initiative in the community, as well as aging physical plants and funding opportunities that have evolved in recent years.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan has a ten year window, 2010 to 2019. It has been developed based on a review of demographics, trends, current utilization and participation data. A financial assessment and other inputs, along with a consultation program that involved twelve focus groups held September 16th and 22nd, 2009, involving over seventy residents, were undertaken.

This document represents the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Township of Warwick. It was reviewed by Council and staff and presented to a Public Meeting of over twenty residents held December 7, 2009 at Centennial Hall.

2 MASTER PLAN RESEARCH REPORT OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following material summarizes the key observations and conclusions that emerged from the research and consultation programs in support of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

2.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- For the ten year Master Plan period, the population size will likely not significantly change, could decline somewhat but will age on a proportionate basis. This does not mean that there will be fewer children but proportionately they could be a smaller portion of the total population
- There is unlikely going to be any significant change over the planning period in regards to the visible minority profile of the population which can affect the types of activities that people prefer
- Future impacts on parks and recreation services from a community development perspective, will be dependent on the availability of residential building lots in Watford and any major initiatives that may emerge around economic development that could result in increased populations of both commuters and local workers
- For larger recreational facilities and services, a regional context prevails relative to five ice pads in neighbouring facilities, a municipal indoor swimming pool in Petrolia and a planned facility in Strathroy, and other facilities that diminish the specific need for these large facilities in Warwick.

2.3 RECREATION PROGRAM

- The Friendship Centre has been a significant benefit in regards to senior programs. However, it is limited in floor space and a broader senior's services strategy is necessary in light of the growing proportion of the population that will be seniors
- The Youth Activity Centre has been a significant addition, along with the arena, sports fields and other facilities. However, there is a broad-based perception that there is not enough activities for youth between the age of six and thirteen and younger adults between fifteen and their early twenties
- The minor and adult hockey programs are the central recreational activities that are widely acknowledged as successful and valued. Minor baseball and figure skating in Watford have experienced declines. Soccer has experienced some growth but the new facilities in Arkona will satisfy

their needs for a number of years. Scouts and Guides have had stable participation and have seen strong provincial growth

- A broad consensus that a paid activity director is required to both sustain the existing levels of recreation programs and to work with the community to enhance particularly seniors and youth program availability and accessibility. This would also include facilitating greater access to school-based facilities

2.4 RECREATION FACILITIES

- Concerns amongst some organizations related to the availability of Centennial Hall and being bumped on a continuous basis for other activities, the lack of storage for their equipment and materials and the need for larger spaces for meetings and other resources to facilitate their activities
- Expressed concerns about the aging physical plant at some of the key recreation facilities, with a particular emphasis on Centennial Hall
- A broad consensus that Centennial Hall has reached the end of its life expectancy and is too constrained by the limited number of people that it can accommodate, the quality of the kitchen and the fact that only one use can occur at a time in the main area. The lower level areas were seen as marginal in contemporary terms for programs
- The arena addition was highly valued and a broad perspective existed that the quality of the arena is excellent for the size of the community
- Warwick Hall is seen as a needed facility within Warwick Village but accessibility challenges were identified
- The Friendship Centre, though leased through the club, is seen as undersized and not able to support a growing membership and interest in a broader array of senior's programs
- The Youth Activity Centre is seen as limited in size and requiring a broader base of opportunities if enhanced youth programming is to emerge
- An almost universal consensus that a multi-use / event / meeting centre is required to meet the interests of all residents with particular emphasis on providing specialized spaces for community organizations, increased capacity to support senior, adult and youth activities and to provide a better base of fitness services, all within a multi-use environment and a more flexible building
- Identification of an interest in an indoor aquatics facility as part of a larger recreation complex, however evident concern over the annualized operating cost impacts of such a facility, especially when there are facilities within a thirty minute drive of Warwick

- Identified need to attempt to utilize school-based facilities more intensively, such as the gymnasiums rather than duplicate facilities. The Township may have to become a community facilitator in regards to accessing these resources as occurs in many municipalities.

2.5 SERVICE CLUBS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Service clubs have been a significant contributor of ideas, resources and funding for the development and delivery of recreation programs and park and recreation venues
- Volunteerism has been the primary strategy in the development and delivery of parks and recreation services and this model is highly valued
- There is a significant array of special events that contribute to the community's overall quality of life and identity
- Volunteerism is strong but has diminished somewhat from the strength it exhibited ten to twenty years ago
- The Horticultural and Historical Societies are significant contributors to the beautification of the community, the value of the parks, and to key cultural service areas within the community

2.6 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- An excellent supply of parkland exists in terms of the total volume of land for the size of population and the mix of parks related to neighbourhood / parkettes and community service levels
- A general perspective that the parks are well maintained, and the Horticultural Society makes a significant contribution and are highly valued
- Strong support for the redevelopment of the walking track, tennis court surfaces and the development of additional tennis courts and play courts in Centennial Park and Watford
- Strong concern over the quality, accessibility, security and functionality of the washroom / concession building in Warwick Park and the likely need for total redevelopment
- Identification of a need to enhance the washroom / concession facility in Centennial Park in Watford
- Possible opportunities to develop partnerships with St. Clair Region Conservation Authority in regards to jointly installing a heater in the outdoor pool in order to achieve broader use of the outdoor pool and access to other facilities for residents.

2.7 RECREATION SERVICES LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

- A preferred perspective that volunteer organizations be the primary service delivery model within the constraints and limitations of the volunteers available
- The Township be the primary supplier and maintainer of key facilities and venues
- Continuing importance of the Recreation Committee was identified, focusing on:
 - Communications and consultation
 - Service coordination and planning
 - Needs identification, assessments and services development
 - Advisory recommendations to Council

2.8 SUMMARY

From a strategic perspective, the following points summarize the main outcomes of the research:

- High value and satisfaction levels with the parks and recreation services available in the community
- A growing recognition of the limitation of volunteers in terms of expanding the areas of service, particularly in regards to the high needs identification for seniors and youth programming
- Increasing emphasis on needing to and responding to the aging physical plants, such as the Warwick Park washrooms and other facilities

A strong belief that a multi-use contemporary community / event centre is required as a replacement facility for an aged and limited Centennial Hall.

3 TOWNSHIP OF WARWICK PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN FOUNDATION AND POLICIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Warwick has been developed in four parts:

- Master Plan Foundation
- Master Plan Policies
- Specific Master Plan Initiatives
- Master Plan Implementation

The following material provides the recommendations associated with the Master Plan Foundation and Policies.

3.2 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN FOUNDATION

.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the Master Plan provides the philosophical and conceptual foundation and strategic directions for the Master Plan built on a Vision, Mission Statement and Principles. These components collectively create the strategic foundation for the Master Plan for the next ten years.

.2 MASTER PLAN VISION

A Vision defines a horizon, that is, the point moving forward that galvanizes the good will, energy and commitment of all stakeholders to move towards a common goal and outcome. It gives a strategic intent as to directions and priorities and guides all decision-making relative to the implementation of the recommendations.

The following Vision has been developed for the 2010 to 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Warwick.

Master Plan Vision

A vibrant and active community, whose residents actively value and embrace the benefits of participation in recreation parks and volunteerism.

The Master Plan's Vision speaks to the achievement or a goal of a vibrant and active community. Parks and Recreation Services have the capacity to significantly contribute to a strong sense of community. The Vision further identifies the importance of residents actively valuing these services as important contributors to their quality of life, and embracing the health / wellness, personal development and community strengthening benefits through active participation in the programs and venues that are available across Warwick.

.3 MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement speaks to the fundamentals and the focus of the Master Plan. In application terms, every strategic and operational decision associated with the delivery of Parks and Recreation Services should align with the intent and direction of the Mission.

The following Mission has been prepared for the Warwick Parks and Recreational Master Plan.

<p style="text-align: center;">Master Plan Mission</p> <p>Building upon all the community's resources and volunteers, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan guides the development and delivery of services that contribute to enhanced quality of life experiences for Warwick residents through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased resident wellness, personal growth, and social development for all ages and abilities;• Improved economic development outcomes;• Enhanced environmental conservation and stewardship.
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The Mission speaks directly to the need to coordinate and integrate all the parks and recreation services capabilities and resources within Warwick. The Master Plan cannot focus solely on what the municipality will undertake or provide, but needs to create an integrated network with not for profit, School Board, Conservation Authority, private sector and other service providers in ensuring the broadest array of opportunities for residents to participate.

The Master Plan is intended to guide and direct the provision of these activities; their organization and delivery; and the investments needed over the 2010 to 2019 period. The outcomes of these activities and investments are intended to support resident personal growth, social development and wellness; environmental conservation and stewardship; and to contribute to positive economic development through supporting the attraction and retention of employment opportunities and businesses and citizens.

PRINCIPLES

For the Master Plan, Principles provide a further opportunity to support the Mission's interpretation, identify how the Master Plan will engage with people and begin to identify key areas of accountability.

The following Principles have been developed for the Warwick Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Master Plan Principles	
Benefits-based Outcomes	Services provided will contribute to resident health and wellness, community economic development, environmental sustainability, community cohesion and a superior quality of life for Warwick residents
Shared Responsibility	Services development and delivery will be pursued as a shared responsibility between the community and the Township, building on the contributions and capacities of volunteers, staff, service clubs and other contributors
A Balanced Array of Services	A balanced array of services will be available, integrated through collaborative strategies and partnerships, that meet the evolving needs of residents and overall community aspirations
Fairness and Inclusion	Services will ensure fairness and inclusiveness in encouraging and facilitating participation for all residents across ability, age, cultural, economic, geographic and related perspectives
Quality Services Evaluation and Community Engagement	Quality services will be delivered, continually evaluated as to benefit, cost effectiveness and outcomes based on innovation, community consultation and sound technical analysis
Balancing Public Accessibility and Revenue Generation	Services will achieve a fair and reasonable balance between facilitating broad-based public accessibility and generating revenues that support both community organizations' sustainability and alignment with Township financial capacities
Maximizing Capacity	Services will maximize the utilization of existing resources before pursuing new initiatives by focusing on cost-effective operations, ongoing park and facility rehabilitation, and renewal and re-adaptive uses of available resources.
Conservation of Natural Resources	Parks, open spaces and trails will conserve environmentally significant resources, be accessible to the public for both programmed and non-programmed activities and contribute significantly to positive urban form
Services Development	Services will be developed to be flexible, sustainable, environmentally responsible, safe and based on evident and sustainable need.
Township Leadership Role	The Township will undertake a leadership role in the planning, coordination and evaluation of services, ensuring innovative delivery strategies via partnerships and joint ventures with, and direct delivery and supports to community organizations

3.3 PARKS AND RECREATION AND SERVICES DELIVERY POLICIES

.1 SERVICES DELIVERY POLICY FRAMEWORK

Overview

Municipalities face increasing expectations to provide a broadening array of parks, recreation and cultural services. Many of these are of a traditional perspective but have new dimensions being added. Others involve newer and / or emerging activities that often initially involve smaller numbers of participants. The operating environment is becoming increasingly sophisticated, integrated and has growing capital and operating financial and sustainability perspectives.

Services are also becoming increasingly segmented in terms of activity types, as well as levels of engagement from experiential to high performance. Therefore, programs, parks and facilities need to meet more complex and sophisticated user expectations and needs that continually evolve.

The basis for the Township to pursue its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and recreation services, is a Service Delivery Policy framework that ensures that the Township is not the only deliverer. However, the policy also needs to recognize that the Township is in a unique participation and leadership role in terms of its skills and capacities, assets and financial resources. Developing a balance between the Township's role and the role of the community is an important strategic dimension of the long term services planning and delivery process.

Recommendation 1: Services Investment Policy Framework

The Services Investment Policy identifies a four level approach to determining what services the Township will engage in within the resources available. Township strategic initiatives and recreational, broad-based participation represent the core investment priorities. Also recognized is the need to support those individuals within the community that experience participation barriers and who need some support in order to encourage them to participate and realize the benefits that can be achieved from participation. The final focus, is on high-performance / competitive oriented services, particularly for adults over the age of eighteen. However, the primary responsibility needs to reside with the community sports organizations, possibly supplemented by the Township but not at the expense of broad-based resident service opportunities.

Support Township Strategic Initiatives	Services that support the values and strategic directions of the Township
Support to Broad-based Resident Participation	Services that encourage and facilitate broad-based resident participation at recreational levels of engagement.
Support to Inclusion	Services that enhance participation by identifiable groups experiencing participation barriers, including those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new Canadians and those with limited financial resources who benefit from participation.
Support to Competitive / Higher Performance Programs	Services that support competitive / high performance sport development participation with the primary responsibility for this area of service residing with individual community sport organizations.

Recommendation 2: Township Leadership Role

The Township has a defined leadership role due to its unique assets, capacities and policy position. This role can be fulfilled through leading needs and trends identification, being an effective coordinator and evaluator of services, and through providing a range of community development and capacity building supports that enhances volunteer, not for profit and other service providers to be able to offer quality services on a sustainable basis.

That the Township undertakes a leadership role in the integration, planning and evaluation of Parks and Recreation Services, via providing ongoing:

- **Needs and trends identification**
- **Services delivery coordination and evaluation in collaboration with the Recreation Committee**
- **Community development and capacity building activities in support of community-based service providers**

Recommendations 3: Township Delivery Role Hierarchy

This policy framework indicates that facilitating community groups is the first priority the Township will pursue in the development and delivery of services. The next level of engagement would be participating in partnerships, joint ventures or other collaborative approaches that facilitate the delivery of needed services that are sustainable. If the first two approaches are deemed not to be viable, the Township will then consider direct service delivery within the policies and resources in place.

That the Township's role in the development and delivery of services will be undertaken within the following investment hierarchy, and within the budgetary priorities and capacities as established by Council:

- 1. Facilitation - Actively work to facilitate and support community groups and individuals in the development and delivery of services through the provision of:**
 - **Technical supports**
 - **Access to grants / financial resources, data and information**
 - **Volunteer training and recognition**
 - **Access to facilities**
 - **Trends research, governance training and related initiatives**
 - **Other supports**

- 2. Partnerships - Enter into partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborated initiatives, at a level of involvement that ensures:**
 - **The interests of Warwick residents are fully realized**
 - **Need / demand for the services are demonstrated**
 - **Sustainability within acceptable risk parameters exists**

- 3. Township Direct Delivery of Services - Undertake the direct delivery of services where need is established and other service delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as Township staff operating alone or in partnerships.**

.2 USER FEE AND RATES POLICY

Overview

User fees continue to be an area of considerable discussion and concern as identified in the community consultation program, as well as from the challenges faced by both community service providers and the Township in funding the delivery of services. The key concerns that continue to be discussed are affordability, fairness and equity, revenue coverage of operating costs and affordability as it affects access to participation.

Recommendations 4

- **That the Township undertake an assessment and develop a strategy associated with its user fees and fee waivers, that results in:**
 - **Fees being increasingly based on the cost of services delivery;**
 - **Fairness and equity amongst users and community organizations;**
 - **The policy establishing revenue to cost coverage ration targets by individual service areas, as well as for the overall Township as a basis to establish fees and budgetary directions;**
 - **Staged implementation strategies that reduce impacts on participation levels and community organizations due to short term increases.**
- **That the User Fee and Fee Waiver Policies development ensure educational-based stakeholder consultation and training.**
- **That user fee strategies incorporate more market-based strategies, such as variable price points to balance utilization levels and to maximize revenues in high demand categories.**
- **That user fees be reviewed annually, and the policy assessed a minimum of every three to five years as to the cost inputs to the formula and the equity being achieved.**
- **That the policy on organizational and individual participant financial support be a separate initiative from the User Fee Policy.**

Two policy points in need of further explanation involve the references above to variable price points and the revenue to cost coverage ratio. In regards to the market-based strategies, the Township should give consideration to incorporating different pricing strategies as seen in other service delivery models. One example would be the tendency of municipalities to have two prime time price points for ice, being youth and adult. This also occurs similarly for non-prime time ice. However, in private sector arenas, there are often six to eight price points to reflect different target audiences through the course of the day and evening, for both prime and non-prime times. One example, is a lower ice rate after 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. to attract late night use, as well as a different price point for 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to try to encourage user groups to start programs earlier. This type of modeling could occur for all allocated spaces in terms of gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, and certain sports field usage, in addition to ice services.

Another important definition from a user fee perspective is the revenue to cost coverage ratio. This is a tool that identifies what percentage the revenues generated cover of the direct cost to deliver a specific service. Some of the current youth and adult service delivery policies identify 66% to 75% coverage ratio

for youth and 100% coverage ratio for adults. However, these policies typically do not define what is incorporated on the cost side, such as direct costs, departmental overheads, rehabilitation charges, etc. The revenue to cost coverage ratio is an effective tool in terms of both pricing programs and services, as well as developing the policy frameworks that facilitate the investing of available public funds.

.3 INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Overview

Most municipalities and not for profit service providers have developed financial subsidy programs for individuals, families and other groupings who do not have the financial means to cover participant fees but who would clearly benefit from participation. Many minor sport programs have developed internal resources or have worked with services clubs and other bodies to generate the funds necessary to reduce fees. This form of investment is important in order to support the principles of inclusion, fairness and equity and in supporting the personal development and healthy lifestyles of all residents.

Recommendations 5

- **That the Township, in collaboration with the service clubs, continue its involvement in offering individual participant financial support to access services based on the following principles:**
 - **Evident benefit to qualifying participants**
 - **A reasonable assessment of financial and other limitations that are barriers to participation**
 - **Selective tracking of financially supportive participation to ensure engagement and assess the benefits realized**
- **That this policy be positioned outside the User Fee Policy in order separate participant financial subsidy from revenue generation targets**
- **That the financial support offered to individual participants be aligned with their assessed capacity to fund portions of the applicable fees**

.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT VENTURES

Overview

Warwick has used partnerships and joint ventures for many years such as for the splash pad and soccer complex. This strategy will continue to be vital in the development and delivery of current and future parks and recreation services.

Recommendations 6

- **That the Township actively continue to lead in / or support the development of partnerships, joint ventures and related service delivery initiatives where:**
 - **Need is identified and demonstrated;**
 - **Public access and affordability are assured;**
 - **The partnership arrangement is financially sound and sustainable;**
 - **The scope of the Township's investment is reflective of the benefits to be realized by the participants and the community at large.**

.5 MULTI-USE STRATEGIES

Overview

Multi-use strategies are an increasingly important strategy in achieving cost effectiveness, in maximizing participation and achieving the benefits from the investments made.

Recommendation 7

- **That Warwick continue to utilize the development of multi-use / multi-partner approaches in the renewal of existing and the development of new services, facilities and parks based on a criteria of:**
 - **Participant convenience and experience enrichment;**
 - **Operational economies of scale and improved marketing opportunities;**

.6 **PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND COMMUNITY TRAILS**

The intent of the Master Plan's policies with respect to parks, open space and community trails development over the next ten years is to work within a parks classification system and to sustain the current parks and open space system.

Recommendation 8

- **That the following Parks Classification System be used by the Township in its on-going management of parks, open spaces and trails:**
 - **Parkettes**
 - **Small landscaped venues intended to contribute to a local area's urban design, provide passive / rest areas and lower level park amenities**
 - **Access via walking and cycling**
 - **Features may include landscaped areas, rest areas, public art, monuments and related features**
 - **Neighbourhood Parks**
 - **Venues intended to support the outdoor recreational needs of defined neighbourhood areas**
 - **Access is primarily via walking and bicycling with parking to support facilities if required**
 - **Site development features include a range of neighbourhood level services, such as playgrounds, passive areas, open space play areas, trail linkages, secondary level sports fields for youth and similar activities**
 - **Natural features could include small woodlots and naturalized areas**

- **Community Parks**
 - **Larger venues intended to support the outdoor recreational and facility needs of all Township residents**
 - **Ideally located on major roads to enhance access via walking, cycling, trails and cars and to reduce neighbouring land use impacts**
 - **Facilities would include primary and secondary youth and adult sports fields, that would be appropriate for lighting; spectator and user amenities, such as parking, seating, washrooms, concessions, etc.; playground structures and large open play areas; specialized facilities, such as skateboard and water play facilities; or other similar features**
 - **Trails, trails heads and linkages, woodlots, naturalized zones and other passive use areas could be included**
 - **Supporting amenities and features that could include maintenance buildings**
- **That the Township is well served as to parks and open space resources and the Master Plan's focus should therefore be on:**
 - **Completing planned projects**
 - **Seeking opportunities to enhance neighbourhood and community park resources in established areas**
 - **Unique opportunities to enhance the park and open space system, particularly within partnership, joint venue or innovative site development frameworks**
 - **Accessing publically owned-lands as opportunities arise**
- **That the Township actively pursue the development of multi-use trails via:**
 - **Partnerships with Regional Trail Organizations**
 - **Partnerships with Warwick service clubs and groups**
 - **Direct development as opportunities present themselves**

4 Specific Master Plan Initiative Recommendations

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the research and consultation programs in support of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the following recommendation have been developed for consideration by Council and the community in support of current and future parks and recreation services development and delivery for the 2010 – 2019 period.

4.2 PROGRAMMING LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION IN WARWICK

In the last two reviews of the Recreation Manager's position, identification has been made of an interest by the Township in having more staff capacity in supporting recreation program and community development. Also, the consultation program for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan received significant input from various groups, particularly those associated with seniors and youth, of the need for a professional staff position that could support seniors, youth and other organizations in the development and delivery of recreation programs. The perspective offered on this particular consideration, is that volunteers have done an outstanding job and can delivery service to a certain level. However, the community as a whole would benefit significantly from a programming-oriented staff person who could undertake several key functions:

- To support, through community development and capacity building initiatives, the work of the volunteer-based service providing organizations that are the corner stone of the overall delivery model. This could include volunteer recognition and training, assisting in the sourcing of grants, providing training in regards to governance, working with groups to identify needs, to develop proposals and a host of other supports
- To develop and organize the delivery of programs where service delivery organizations are not available or feel they do not have the capacity to enhance and broaden the program operations they are offering. This would include seniors and youth service areas particularly, which were widely identified as being of interest to and potentially underdeveloped programmatically within Warwick
- To assist the Township, the Department and the Recreation Committee in bringing a strong program focus to the planning and coordination of service delivery across the community
- To provide a centre point for enhancing and broadening access to school-based facilities, particularly gymnasiums

Recommendation 9

- **That the Township of Warwick recruit a full time professionally trained Recreation Program Coordinator, reporting to the Recreation Manager, who would focus on the following key tasks:**
 - **Community development and capacity building initiatives within the total community, ranging from volunteer development and recognition, to training and development, to assisting in the sourcing of grants and resources, to accessing school sites, etc.**
 - **Develop and coordinate the delivery of programs directly where demand is evident but community capacity is not available to support those programs, with a particular early focus on seniors and youth-based programs and services**
 - **To be a resource to Council, the Department and the Recreation Committee in terms of identifying needs, understanding strategic and community trends and other research and inputs that would support the planning, development and coordination of service delivery.**

4.3 WARWICK PARK WASHROOM AND SAFETY NETTING

It was widely identified by individual residents and groups using Warwick Park, that the current washroom / concession facility has fallen into significant disrepair, has reduced-functionality and security challenges and is not a facility comparable to the quality of the rest of the park. Need exists to enhance the quality of this facility in terms of accessibility, functionality, security, etc.

Other challenges with the facility include the lack of hot water the concession area, the inability for people with disabilities to access the facility effectively and particularly related to the requirement of Ontarians With Disability Act, the inability to reduce vandalism and related challenges. The perspective offered by many people was that the facility is beyond renewal and consideration should be given to a replacement facility.

A second consideration is the need to instill safety netting along the road to stop baseballs from interfering with traffic which is a safety issue.

Recommendation 10

- **That the Township undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Warwick Park concession / washroom building and develop an effective strategy to replace this facility with a building that meets the needs of the user groups as well as all regulatory requirements. This would include:**
 - **Accessibility with people with disabilities**
 - **A concession that meets contemporary user and health requirements**
 - **A more affective cleaning and maintenance program**
- **That the Township install road-side safety netting along the ball field**

4.4 SCHOOL GYMNASIUM / ROOM USE

In Watford, there are two schools, one a former secondary school. The East Lambton Elementary School has a double gymnasium with some use by community members and groups. This is an important resource and relates to the increased interest, particularly in youth activities, around basketball, volleyball and related activities.

For the Township to build a gymnasium would likely be a significant duplication of an existing gym facility within East Lambton Elementary School, and possibly what is available at St. Peters Catholic Elementary School. The preferred strategy for the Township in developing spaces to support both youth and adult activities, would be to maximize accessibility and use of the existing three gymnasiums in the community.

One of the primary ways to facilitate improved access would be through the efforts of a Program Coordinator, who would have one of their specific tasks being liaison with school board officials and the facilitation on behalf of all community groups in maximizing the utilization of available school resources in the Township.

Recommendation 11

- **That the Township recognize the importance of gymnasiums being available in support of broadening opportunities for youth and adult physical activities within the community, and focus such programming primarily on accessing school gymnasiums**
- **That the Township assign to the proposed Program Coordinator position a key responsibility to be the liaison with school officials and to facilitate community access to school facilities at the maximum level possible**

4.5 OUTDOOR POOL FACILITY AND WARWICK CONSERVATION AREA PARK ACCESS

The identification of aquatic facilities was widespread through the consultation process. However, there was broad recognition that indoor aquatic facilities are very expensive to operate. Indoor pools also exist in the public and private sector in Petrolia, Forest and other locations, and a possible new indoor aquatics facility could emerge in future years in Strathroy. The market size for indoor aquatic services in Warwick is not substantive enough to support an indoor pool initiative without committing to an extensive annual subsidy to operate such a facility.

In the Township, there is an outdoor pool currently at the Warwick Conservation Area. Though it is not located within the main urban node, it is readily accessible to Warwick residents. The Township should explore the possibility of working with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority on how to maximize access to both the outdoor pool and other facilities available at the Conservation Area. It was identified that 80% of the use of this venue is by Warwick and Lambton County residents which indicates it is primarily a regional outdoor recreation park.

Possible partnership initiatives could involve the purchase of an outdoor pool heater to extend the season and overall utilization of that facility, providing financial support for Warwick residents to utilize the outdoor facilities and other strategies. These types of approaches would have a better economic benefit than duplicating facilities of a similar nature.

Recommendation 12

- **That the Township approach the St. Clair Conservation Authority on the possible development of a broad partnership on facilitating Warwick resident access to the use of the Warwick Conservation Area outdoor recreation facilities in terms of facility enhancements that would support broader uses and extended seasonal activities for residents.**

4.6 WATFORD LANDFILL PARK

The Community Commitments Agreement and the Environment Assessment Reports for the Watford Landfill site expansion identified an end use for this large area as an outdoor park with multiple activity opportunities. Also, the early site development plans identified the possibility of a trail system on the periphery of the venue.

The Community Commitments Agreement identifies the launching of a master planning design process within two years of the operational start-up of the facility with a proposed Master Plan being developed by the end of the fifth year with regular updates thereafter. It also identified the possibility, that as parts of the venue are closed after their use is completed, they could be developed prior to the end of the life of the total facility.

This venue could have significant opportunities for the community on a long term basis. Its proximity to Watford and to Hwy 402 with a major intersection creates the prospects of both a community park as well as regional facility that may have tourism potential which could have economic impact benefits. It is recognized that the site will have constraints in terms of the decomposition of materials, the instability of the landform and other considerations that would limit the development of permanent structures. However, a wide range of all season activities could be considered that would support a range of uses, involving tobogganing, possibly low-level skiing, environmental interpretation areas, trails, mountain biking, selective sport fields and other activities for both local residents and as a destination-based recreation venue.

Recommendation 13

- **That the Township of Warwick actively pursue the Community Commitment Agreement clauses in regards to the planning, development and commissioning of a major outdoor park resource as an end use for the Watford Landfill Venue**
- **That the Township ensure that a comprehensive analysis be completed to determine the best uses for the venue in support of:**
 - **Warwick residents as local users**
 - **A regional destination park venue**
 - **Potential tourism opportunities**
- **That the design processes ensure the following principles are incorporated in the work completed:**
 - **A four season venue**
 - **A mix of uses that meet the broad array of needs of users**
 - **The sustainability of the facility as a long term recreational resource**
 - **The assurance of safety, inclusion, accessibility and affordability principles**

4.7 COMMUNITY COMPLEX

A broad consensus emerged from the consultation and research program for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that Centennial Hall has reached the end of its life expectancy and that Warwick Hall is significantly constrained in size and location and only able to service localized requirements for indoor meeting, program and celebration uses. The key challenges identified for Centennial Hall were as follows:

- The hall size is limited to 270 people which results in a significant exodus of weddings, receptions and other activities out of the community, as well as it limits the scope of some special events
- The building is essentially a single use facility as only one activity can occur at a time in the main area which results in significant use conflicts, groups being bumped and reduced space availability for community clubs and organizations
- The interior of the facility is significantly dated and cannot provide the quality of interior space that banquets, weddings and other renters require
- The downstairs program room has no windows, is isolated and is not to a contemporary standard with the washroom directly in the program area
- The Gun Club space is a dedicated use for a limited number of users and must constantly deal with noise and safety challenges
- The kitchen, though upgraded on several occasions, is not effective in terms of appropriate work stations and is under capacity in terms of electrical and has many dated features which diminishes interest in using it as a cooking kitchen
- The overall building is showing its forty plus years and has energy consumption and other challenges based on more contemporary standards

The user groups also identified the need for a multi-use facility within the community that could support more than one activity at a time; had a range of space sizes, ceiling heights and activity capacities; and was of a contemporary quality and standard that support banquets, special events and a range of other activities. Two key strategic perspectives emerged from the user groups in the community. The first was the need for a banquet, conference, meeting and related venue. The second perspective was for a gymnasium type space that would have a higher ceiling, a wood floor and other features for more physical activities. It is evident that both types of uses cannot successfully function within the same space and the Township is unlikely to have the resources or the user demand that warrants the development and operation of two such facilities in one complex.

The strategy recommended is to maximize the use of the school gymnasiums for floor sports primarily coordinated through the introduction of a Recreation Programs Coordinator and working with community groups to facilitate school access. The focus of the multi-use centre community complex would then be on a large hall for banquets, conferences, special events, meetings and related activities, as well as provide a minimum of two to three specialized rooms for a range of activities for Cubs / Brownies, board meetings for non profit organizations, seniors and youth programming and other activities that could occur on a multi-use basis within a single facility. Also, some consideration will need to be given to potentially dedicated spaces for groups such as the Horticultural Society that meets several times a week and has various equipment and dedicated space requirements.

A further perspective, will be the need to determine the user fees model for the space. Some groups are using Centennial Hall at no cost but are often bumped on a regular basis. Others have the capacity to pay for the use of space. Affordability will become a factor for some groups who are use to not paying or paying low fees. A balance will have to be achieve within the Master Plan's User Fee Policy recommendation to maximize access but also to not place undue burden on the municipality's tax payers. This will be particularly true for groups that have dedicated space in the building whereby broader use by the community could not occur. Also, the future of the Gun Club would need to be considered as it is primarily a regional dedicated use with specific requirements that are often beyond the scope of what a community complex developed by a municipality would provide.

Three multi-use complex development models have emerged through the course of discussions. The first would be to decommission and demolish Centennial Hall and convert the site to a parking area or develop further outdoor activities. The following actions would then be undertaken within this model:

- Realign the baseball field further to the south
- Extend the southern face of the arena outward developing a community hall on the second floor to support 300 to 400 person events / activities.
- Incorporate and significantly upgrade the second storey space, add an elevator, enhance the kitchen and improve the overall décor.
- Develop two to three meetings rooms of 500 square feet to a 1000 square feet under the community room expansion
- Upgrade the size of the foyer and entrance to the arena

A second facility model would be to build a multi-use community facility for 300 to 400 individuals with three multi-purpose rooms and ancillary supports just south of the arena on ground level. In this model, there would be a common entrance built from Centennial Road where people could come into the facility and go one way to the arena and one way to the community centre. This large extended entrance and foyer could be used as crush space for large events but also as a possible Hall of Fame, Community Volunteer's Recognition site, and other uses.

The third model would be to build a new community complex as described on the site of the current Centennial Hall. This model would not require relocation of the ball field.

The first Complex model would have the following pros and cons.

Pros

- Results in a multi-use facility that has both large and small space options, facilitating multi-use opportunities
- The primarily recreation activities would be in one building which would have better economies of scale and operational benefits
- Builds on the existence of a hall on the second floor of the arena that can currently support 170 individuals
- Recognizes the fact that eventually the Township will have to build an elevator to the second floor of the arena under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act
- Maximizes utilization of the hall between what occurs in the second floor arena hall and Centennial Hall, resulting in one large space rather than two.
- Many of the current Centennial and upper arena room activities could occur within the proposed meeting and program rooms
- Opens up potential parking capacity on the current Centennial Hall site

Cons

- A technical analysis would have to be completed to determine the feasibility of the extension and the facility integration strategy
- Likely would require some relocation of the ball field to the south to maximize the space in the arena / community complex area

The following pros and cons are identified for the second model.

Pros

- Results in a multi-use facility that has both large and small space options, facilitating multi-use opportunities
- Results in one integrated facility enhancing economies of scale and operational benefits
- Provides two large rooms that gives greater flexibility and program delivery opportunities
- Does not require second floor access to the main hall, though an elevator would need to occur within this model as well

Cons

- Would have higher construction and operating costs as more spaces are being built resulting in a second hall an less economies of scale overall
- Could result in the crowding of the ball field even if it is moved to the south

Pros

- Opens up potential parking capacity on the current Centennial Hall site
- Creates the opportunity for a large entrance and foyer that could be used as a community celebratory and recognition space

Cons

The following pros and cons are identified for the third model related to rebuilding on the current Centennial Hall site.

Pros

- Results in a multi-use facility that has both large and small space options, facilitating multi-use opportunities
- Results in sustaining two to three large rooms that provide increased program and user group flexibility
- Would not require the relocation of the current ballfield

Cons

- More significant capital costs and ongoing operating costs due to the fact that there is a second large hall as well as the loss of economies of scale with not being within a single building
- Does not necessarily increase parking capacity on the total site

The multi-use rationale for a complex needs to consider the following specific program service areas:

- Seniors programming, particularly through the daytime in one of the multi-purpose rooms, including periodic use of the main hall for carpet bowling, fitness activities and related activities
- A youth activities room in the evening and on weekends, during March break and at other times
- A fitness area for youth and adults and walking track
- Potentially dedicated area for the Horticultural Society and possibly some service clubs
- One of the smaller rooms to be more of a board room to support community organizations and their various meeting and activity requirements
- A contemporary kitchen with work stations, adequate electrical supply and related equipment
- A multi-unit storage area where each of the primary user groups could have secure storage for their equipment and materials

- A potential office for the Program Coordinator and ancillary supports in terms of washrooms, janitor's closets, small operational storage areas, storage for chairs and tables and related requirements

Groups who wish to have dedicated space or prescribed space at set times may be required to support leasehold improvement costs for their space. This perspective will need to be factored into the overall community fundraising component which is beyond the scope of this Master Plan.

Recommendation 14

- **That the Township of Warwick initiate the planning for the replacement and decommissioning of Centennial Hall, with the site being converted to alternate uses in support of Watford Centennial Park in whole or in part, as well as potential parking expansion for the venue**
- **That Model 1, the southern extension of the arena and focusing on the expansion of the upstairs meeting room be identified as the preferred community complex initiative at this time**
- **That the Township undertake the facility technical and business assessments necessary to discern the feasibility of this model**
- **That if this model is deemed not to be technically viable, that Model 2, be the second choice with the development of multi-use community complex on the current Centennial Hall site being the third priority**
- **That the Municipality form a Project Building Committee that will have the responsibility to:**
 - **Undertake consultation with user groups to determine specific facility interests and needs**
 - **Develop the user fee schedule for Council consideration**
 - **Provide input on the design and development processes for the facility**
- **That the Township form a Recreation Complex Fundraising Committee to coordinate and undertake a capital campaign within the community to fund the community's share of the overall development costs**

Table 12 provides a preliminary costing based on the three models identified associated with the multi-use community complex.

**Table 12
Multi-Use Complex Preliminary Capital Cost Profile Models**

1. Spaces and Sizing	Models		
	1 (sq. ft.)	2 (sq. ft)	3 (sq. ft)
Arena Hall Expansion to 350 people	3,000		
Large Banquet Room for 350 people		5,300	5,300
Three Variable Meeting & Program Rooms (300, 700, 1000 sq. ft.)	2,000	2,000	2,000
Offices and Storage Area	1,000	1,000	1,000
Joint Foyer	1,000	1,000	500
Two Dedicated Rooms (300 & 400 sq. ft.)	700	700	700
Washrooms and Closets	700	700	700
Ancillary Spaces (Corridors, Utility Rooms, etc.)	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL	9,400	11,700	11,200
2. Preliminary Capital Costs	1 (\$)	2 (\$)	3 (\$)
Construction @ \$210/sq. ft.	1,974,000	2,457,000	2,352,000
Arena Space Renovation 3000 sq. ft. x \$125	375,000		
Sub Total	2,349,000	2,457,000	2,352,000
Demolition of Centennial Hall	50,000	50,000	50,000
Professional Fees @ 10%	235,000	246,000	235,000
Furnishing and Fit-out @ 15%	352,000	369,000	353,000
Site Servicing and Development @ 10%	235,000	246,000	235,000
Contingency @ 10%	235,000	246,000	235,000
Relocating the Ball field	75,000	75,000	
LEED 5%	118,000	123,000	118,000
TOTAL	3,649,000	3,812,000	3,578,000

The data indicates that based on the assumptions and projections provided, that a facility between 9,400 square feet and 11,700 square feet would evolve. In terms of capital cost, at \$210.00 per square foot, new construction costs would range from \$2 million for Model 1 and nearly \$2.5 million for Model 2. The first model would also require renovations to the upper room and an elevator priced at \$375,000. There are also a series of soft costs involving professional fees, furnishing and fit-out, a contingency, relocation of the ball field, site development costs and potential investments in LEED technology possible at the Silver Level. An approximation of \$50,000 has been identified for demolition of Centennial Hall.

Model 2, the ground level addition to the arena would have the highest cost at \$3.81 million. The second story extension and ground floor addition to the arena would have a cost of approximately \$3.65 million, while the replacement of Centennial Hall would have a capital cost of about \$3.58 million.

From a scope perspective, the capital investments are relatively the same for all three models. The replacement of Centennial Hall, Model 3, has the lowest cost because it does not have the larger foyer and celebratory space. However, it will have the highest operating costs which are annualized expenses as staff will continue to travel to that space for cleaning, opening, etc. There would be no improved operational economies at scale.

4.8 SKATEBOARD PARK

Over the last ten years skateboard parks have become increasingly popular with investments by municipalities in both portable and fixed facilities and equipment. Brooke Alvinston has developed such a facility, as have some other communities surrounding Warwick. Also, there was broad identification of interest in a skateboard park from both the elementary school students as well as representatives of the various user groups.

The locating of a skateboard park is important. It needs to be visible and well managed from a staff perspective, and be sensitive to the surrounding park and open space uses. If a facility is not visible other challenges emerge in terms of developing as a hangout area. The preferred location for a skateboard facility is also away from residential areas where activities, noise, etc., can be bothersome to neighbours.

A preferred location would be in Centennial Park in Watford as part of the overall hub concept. The potential to locate the facility in close proximity to the arena should be considered. Its potential location inside the track in the northerly area would place it away from residents but keep it in close proximity to where staff are generally on duty. Another location may be in the area of Centennial Hall if it was decommissioned and the land become available under the two preferred scenarios for the proposed multi-use community complex.

Recommendation 15

That the Township, working with youth, service clubs and others, plan and implement the development of a multi-dimensional skateboard park that responds to the skills of both younger and older youth.

4.9 LONG TERM PLANNED FACILITY AND PARK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Many municipalities and not-for-profit organizations that operate facilities and venues have recognized the impacts of aging facilities and equipment. As a result, there has been a trend towards the development of

five to ten year, long term maintenance plans that have both preventative and proactive reinvestment and renewal components as a means to ensure the adequacy of funding for replacement of major systems, facility enhancements and related considerations.

The Township of Warwick has made significant investments in key facilities, such as the arena, Warwick Hall, outdoor recreation facilities, a splash pad, washroom / concession buildings and other elements. As these facilities age, a long term renewal plan should be developed to assist Council in assessing the reinvestment requirements and the staging of contributions to reserves and overall capital funding, either through taxes or via grants.

Recommendation 16

That the Township develop a ten year rehabilitation and renewal plan for all its major parks, recreation facilities and venues as a basis to plan capital investments and the sourcing of potential grants.

4.10 OPERATIONAL INITIATIVES

During the course of the consultation program and other research assessments, two further perspectives have arisen that should be addressed by the Township associated with the operation of its parks and recreation services.

The first involves the reservation and allocation of spaces, such as ice, halls, baseball diamonds, sports fields, etc. Currently there is a split in the overall operation of these services with the Township as the administrative office undertaken certain reservations and the arena other reservations, particularly in the area of community halls.

A centralized reservation and allocation process should be considered as it is more efficient, results in the Recreation Manager being fully responsible for all the reservations and allocation processes and provides a centre point for considerations of priorities, needs, etc.

The second operation consideration involves the development of an agreement between the Township of Warwick and the Township of Brooke-Alvinston in terms of establishing a formal framework for the distribution / acquisition of ice in regards to the minor hockey program which is now amalgamated. This arrangement has been working on an informal basis, however, there is significant considerations related revenue balance, availability of ice and other factors that should be worked out so that there is no concerns or issues arising in the future.

Recommendation 17

- That the Township aggregate all reservation and allocation of ice, community hall space and sports field use through the Recreation Manager position
- That the Township investigate the potential benefits of an initial interest in developing a formal ice allocation agreement between the Township of Warwick and the Township of Brooke-Alvinston to create a balanced framework in light of the joint use environment that exists

5 Implementation

5.1 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Table 1 outlines a proposed implementation framework for the specific initiative recommendations within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It identifies the proposed year the initiative should be undertaken, the parties responsible, the estimated capital costs and the need for Council approval.

Table 1 is a road map that should guide the ongoing development initiatives of the implementation process. It calls for extensive effort in the early years of the master planning period but recognizes that the actual construction and development activities will extend out over time, particularly related to the Watford Landfill site park and potentially in regards to a new community complex.

5.2 MASTER PLAN REVIEW

The following ongoing review and updating of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Township of Warwick is proposed:

- At end of each fiscal year, there should be a review of the projects as to their completion or rescheduling, and a recalibration of the capital costs to reflect inflation and other factors.
- Every five years, Council and senior staff should undertake a more comprehensive review to ensure that the Master Plan is updated based on new inventory information, deletion of projects that have been completed and other impacts involving population and related perspectives that could influence the Master Plan's ongoing implementation.
- Every ten years, the Township should undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the Master Plan through the use of focus groups and other consultation programs, technical assessments and related inputs that would support a new strategies and recommendations for the subsequent ten years.

**Table 1
Recommendations Implementation Framework**

Recommendation	Proposed Priority	Development Responsibility	Capital Cost Estimate	Operation Cost Estimate	Approvals
1. Program Coordinator	2010	CAO		\$50,000 with benefits and supports	Council
2. Warwick Park Washrooms and Netting	2010	Recreation Manager	\$75,000 to \$100,000		CAO Council
3. Access to School Facilities	2010	Recreation Manager			
4. Warwick Conservation Area Partnership	2011	Recreation Manager	\$10,000 to \$25,000	TBD	Council
5. Watford Landfill	2010 / 2011 to start master planning process	Council CAO	WMI	TBD	Council
6. Community Complex	2010 Alternative Feasibility and Selection	Council Committee Staff		TBD	Council
	2011 Funding and Development	Committee CAO		TBD	Council
	2012 – 2014 Construction and Opening	Recreation Manager	\$3.5 million to \$3.8 million		Council
7. Skateboard Park	2011 / 2012	Recreation Manager	\$50,000 to \$75,000	TBD	Council
8. Facilities and Parks Long Term Renewal Program	2010	CAO Recreation Manager			Council
9. Ice and Space Allocation and Arena Agreement	2010	CAO Recreation Manager			Council

APPENDIX I

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Research Report

