



CENTENNIAL PARK REVITALIZATION PLAN

December 1, 2024

Plan aimed at outlining future development and enhancements to Centennial Park, focused on improving existing facilities and amenities while introducing new features that align with the community's needs and expectations.

Centennial Park Revitalization Plan

Overview

Centennial Park, 61 Centennial Avenue, Watford, is a vital community asset that provides both active and passive recreational and social benefits to residents of all ages. This park is the primary destination for outdoor parks, recreation, tourism and cultural activities in Warwick Township. This park planning document aims to outline the future development and enhancement of Centennial Park, focusing on improving existing amenities and introducing new recreation and leisure features that align with the community's needs.

The purpose of this plan is to create a sustainable framework for Centennial Park's development that will ensure it remains a vibrant, safe, and accessible space for all users. This guiding document proposes new facilities that will improve the park's recreational value, stewardship, and accessibility.

Vision Statement

Centennial Park will be an inclusive, accessible, sustainable, and engaging outdoor community recreation hub that promotes passive/active activity, community involvement, and environmental awareness. The park will serve as a central hub for recreation, leisure and community events and will support both individual well-being and social cohesion.

Key Objectives

The following objectives will inform park design and future development and improvements.

1. **Recreational Facilities and Zones:** Enhance and expand the park's amenities to meet the needs of a diverse range of users, including the development of playgrounds, splashpad, trails and pathways, recreation facilities, sports fields, gathering spaces and community gardens.
2. **Accessibility & Inclusivity:** Ensure new and existing facilities are accessible to individuals of all abilities while providing equitable access to park amenities.
3. **Safety and Comfort:** Improve the safety, security, and overall user experience through enhanced lighting, park furniture, and shelters.
4. **Fiscal Accountability:** Advance projects and that meet the needs of the community and are fiscally responsible and ensure lifecycle maintenance.

It is important to note that this is a living document and adjusted accordingly based on shifting priorities, council directives, budget and community needs and expectations. Public feedback and current usage suggest a growing demand for more diverse and revitalized recreational facilities in Centennial Park.

Planning Process

Developed with input from community stakeholders and residents, the planning process included a 2023 Fall Centennial Park public survey, and stakeholder meetings that identified key priorities and areas for improvement and revitalization. The Public Consultation and Survey conducted during the development of the 2021 Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Culture plan was also reviewed and has informed this planning document.

The planning process included discussions with the Parks and Recreation internal staff team, the Parks and Recreation Committee. Concepts were completed in conjunction with Park N Play – Park Planners to gain an understanding of anticipated and appropriate facilities needs and requirements. Preliminary concepts, costings and replacement options were developed in part by Park N Play Design and will be updated as needed.

Park and Recreation Trends

Current recreation industry trends suggest a movement towards unstructured activities and as such, there is growing demand for unprogrammed space that can support a variety of recreational pursuits. Walking and outdoor exercise are highly valued, as are experiences in nature. Multi-use facilities are to be considered in any new design, as should an emphasis towards sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity.

The following industry trends align with Centennial Park and Concept Plans and priorities:

- Connectivity, Walkable and Accessible
- Safe parks with equitable access for all ages and abilities
- Multigenerational and Inclusive play
- Outdoor fitness and unstructured play
- Multi-Use space – Passive and Active Recreation opportunities

Key Existing Park Facilities & Amenities

The park currently has a decent range of facilities and amenities. Additional information and facility specifications can be found through the following link [PRTCMP](#). The existing Playground, Splash Pad, BMX Bike Park are nearing or past lifecycle.

Centennial Park currently spans approximately 15 acres and includes several key facilities:

- BMX Bike Park (closed)
- Children’s Playground x 2
- Splash Pad
- Asphalt Community Track
- Public Washroom
- Concession
- Bar/Pavilion Area
- 1 lit – Multi Use Sport Court and 2 Tennis Courts
- Adult Fitness Equipment
- Picnic Shelter
- 2 Lit Base Ball diamonds

Focus Facilities Zones and Improvements / Considerations

While current amenities are well-used, there is significant potential for expansion and revitalization to better serve the community. Projects in this document will ensure Centennial Park remains a destination and regional park. The following were identified as key focus areas and facilities in need of revitalization and or for future investment consideration.

Playgrounds and Splash Pad - Accessible and Inclusive:

The main children's playground will be redesigned and expanded to include modern, accessible equipment that serves different age groups and abilities. A new expanded splash pad will be introduced to provide a fun and interactive water feature for families. Both Areas will exceed the 7 Principles of Inclusive Design* and exceed AODA Accessibility and CSA safety Standards. Both will connect seamlessly with other areas of the park.

Proposed Features to be considered:

1. Playground (new): Install accessible and inclusive playground for toddlers, older children, and inclusive equipment for children with disabilities. Surface will be the poured in place rubber and connect seamlessly with splashpad. Multiple ground level features and a swing set to be included.
2. Splash Pad (new): Install a new and expanded splash pad with interactive water features that can be used by all ages. The splash pad will be eco-friendly, flow through design and incorporate water-saving technologies.
3. Shaded Seating Areas: Place benches and seating between the playground and splash pad creating a covered gathering space for caregivers, with shaded areas for comfort. This space would connect seamlessly with rest of the park.
4. Install wind sail shade cover over the existing Adult Fitness Equipment.
5. Maintain the existing Natural Playground with added seating.

Open Aired Community Stage:

Consideration of an Outdoor Community stage has been identified in the PRTCMP and supported within the recently conducted Public Survey.

Proposed Factors to be considered:

1. Investigate the community need and design an Open Aired - Outdoor Community Stage inside the existing walking track. Addition of small natural berm amphitheater type seating should be considered (new).

Naturalized Area and Community Gardens:

Community gardens can be established in a multiple of ways including offering residents the opportunity to grow their own food, the planting of edible forests, and providing pollinator and native species gardens. Each garden would promote environmental stewardship and community interaction. Additional native tree canopy is recommended. Minimal Maintenance gardens will be priority. Areas for consideration include space behind the ball diamonds and at the North end of the park / community track. Any community garden project advanced for consideration would be done so through a community group partnership and / or stewardship program.

Proposed Features to be considered:

1. Designated Garden Plots: (new) Create individual garden plots that can be rented or assigned to community members for planting vegetables and herbs.
2. Accessible Gardening: (new) Ensure that raised garden beds are available for elderly individuals and those with physical limitations.
3. Water and Composting Facilities: Water access points and composting facilities to support sustainable gardening practices to be provided.
4. Tree Planting: Expand the tree canopy in all areas of the park.
5. Pollinator and Native Species Gardens: (new) supports biodiversity by providing habitats for bees, pollinators, butterflies promoting environmental sustainability.

Park Shelters, Amenities and Furniture:

Enhancing visitor comfort is a key component of the park's development. New Park furniture and amenities will be installed throughout the park to create pleasant, shaded, lighted areas for relaxation and gatherings. Park shelters provide protection from the weather enabling community members to enjoy recreational activities year-round. They can create versatile spaces for gathering, and special events and would enhance the parks functionality.

Centennial Park currently has two well used covered shelters that shall continue to be maintained and utilized as required. The addition of a new permanent shelter adjoining the outdoor kitchen, a new shelter in the newly revitalized All Wheels area, a covered area at new ball diamond, and an expanded Optimist Pavilion should be considered.

Additional Park furniture to be considered along current and new pathways and multi-use trails.

Proposed Features:

1. Park Furniture: Install additional park benches, picnic tables, and seating areas throughout the park, particularly near high-traffic areas like the playground, splash pad, and trails. Investigate bleacher seating near track with potential for portable seating for groups utilizing the track.

2. Construct a permanent covered shelter that adjoins the ELCC Outdoor Kitchen and blends seamlessly with existing park space to the North (new).
3. Add covered picnic tables to greenspace adjoining the Outdoor Kitchen (new).
4. Add small, shade structure near tennis court entrance (new).
5. Add spectator covered seating along 1st Baseline of new Ball Diamond (new).
6. Redesign and develop a covered Gathering area at Outdoor Kitchen (new).
7. Design and build Gathering area N & E of Pavilion/Ancillary Building (new).
8. Waste and Recycling Stations: Place waste and recycling bins at regular intervals in park to maintain cleanliness / encourage proper waste disposal.
9. Lighting: Install solar-powered lighting to allow safe use during the evening.

BMX Bike Park & All-Wheels Park:

Consideration of an “All Wheels Park” would meet the demand and provide an opportunity for recreational use conducive to bikers, skateboarders, rollerbladers and scooter riders. This space would provide a safe and engaging environment for youth/adults and requires minimal upkeep. In terms of long-term community impact, the All-Wheels Skate Park would benefit a wider range of individuals and have more consistent usage, leading to stronger, sustained community engagement.

“All Wheels Skate Park” offers a broader demographic appeal, lower maintenance, and long-term community integration due to its versatility and year-round usability and are generally considered to be a “Core” level of service for municipalities.

The existing BMX Bike Park, closed by Township Council in 2021 could see a scaled down version built offering a BMX Bike – Dirt Park as an alternative to or as a compliment to an “All Wheels Park”. An asphalt Pump Track should be strongly considered as an alternative to replacing the BMX dirt pump track. An asphalt pump track and modular “All Wheels Park” could flow seamlessly together and would target and reach the highest audience.

“All Wheels Park” designs shall consider the more cost-effective modular park design and or the more traditional concrete skatepark. The “All Wheel” options offer minimal maintenance and upkeep, both of which would be done in-house. The modular skate park is the most economical option and provides a wide variety of elements.

Elements within the Modular Skatepark designs will be selected in part through stakeholder meetings with the Townships local youth.

Proposed Features to be considered:

1. Multi-Use “All Wheels” Park: Design the park for multiple “All Wheels” sports, including BMX biking, skateboarding, rollerblading, and scootering. The park would feature ramps, rails, jumps, and other obstacles and would be either modular OR Concrete Skate Park in design (new).

2. Redesign of modified BMX park / construction of adjoining “All Wheels Park” that would include a scaled down version of just the dirt Jump Line or just the short dirt Pump Track.
3. Design an Asphalt Pump Track to accompany and connect with the “All Wheels Park” modular design (new).
4. Maintenance: Ongoing costs shall be considered prior to development.
5. Safe Design: Ensure the park is designed with safety in mind, including appropriate signage, rules, and proper access where necessary.
6. Seating and Spectator Areas: Provide benches and sheltered seating area connecting both the “All Wheels” modular park and or the pump track.

Connectivity - Trails & Pathways:

Revitalization will include a comprehensive network of multi-use trails and pathways that connect key features within the park. These trails/pathways will provide a safe, accessible way for visitors to explore and enjoy the park’s natural environment. Pathways and trails are shown in the concept drawings and would be a phased approach.

Improving accessibility and connecting gaps, the overall approach is to provide a variety of paths and trails, improved access nodes while encouraging multiple users (walkers, bikers, and runners) access to all recreation zones within Centennial Park.

Proposed Features to be considered:

1. Multi-Use Trails: Construct 2m wide, trails suitable for walking, jogging, and biking. These trails will be surfaced with asphalt and or granular material. (new)
2. Accessible Pathways: Ensure that all pathways are accessible, with clear signage and resting spots with benches. (new/revitalized)
3. Outdoor Community Track: Replacement / re-surfacing to be considered.
4. Trail Extensions: Expand the existing trail network to include a scenic loop around the park’s perimeter, providing connection points. (new)
5. Trail Access Nodes: Improved access points with park furniture at North end (new).
6. Lighting and Signage: Install solar-powered lighting and clear wayfinding signs along all trails to enhance safety and usability during evening hours.
7. Work with Lambton County Library on relocation of Story Board Walk (revitalized)

Budget and Funding

The estimated budget for Centennial Park’s multi-phased development is 4-6.5million. Funding will be sourced from municipal budgets, provincial and federal grants. Community fundraising and donation initiatives can be implemented as required.

High-level estimates of projected capital costs are provided. Estimated costs include a contingency range appropriate to the concept stage.

Large ticket Items identified in this plan were rated between 83% and 92% in support of Public Spending within the Parks and Recreation Facilities the Public Survey completed as part to the Parks, Recreation, Culture and Tourism Master Plan process.

All capital projects will be advanced to Council for consideration and approval to proceed at the annual Budget Deliberations meeting. Potential Capital investment and projects identified in the Plan are not guaranteed to be completed and will be adjusted as needed.

Timeline and Project Phasing

Given the size of Centennial Park, achieving the final park vision will require time and an understanding of the priority projects and strategic phasing of future recommendations. It is important to note that the phasing will not be instantaneous, but has been prioritized based on budget, importance, public safety, strategic direction and immediate impact.

The plan will be conducted through a prioritized phased approach over the next 10-12 years. Key recommendations are identified in Appendix A.

Community Engagement and Feedback

Ongoing community engagement will be facilitated, and stakeholders will have opportunities to provide input throughout specific planning and implementation phases as necessary. Modular Skate Park design would be completed with Youth Input.

Key findings from the 2023 Centennial Park Public Survey:

- 70 Respondents to the Survey.
- 35% of respondents visit the park 2-3 time/week. 8.5% rarely or never visit the park.
- Highest level of dissatisfaction with the current recreation facilities available within Centennial Park was from the Teens – 13-17 years old.
- Highest level of dissatisfaction with the quality of recreation facilities within Centennial Park was the Natural and Large Playgrounds and Community Track.
- In terms of recreational facilities, the highest supported level of investment importance in Centennial Park identified were Accessible & Inclusive Playground, Accessibility Improvements and Splashpad.
- When asked, would you support the addition of an outdoor music and community stage/pavilion? 65.5% said YES while 18% said NO.
- When the BMX Park was in operation how often did you use it? 81% Never*
- Would you support the development of an “All Wheels” outdoor multi-use facility in Centennial Park? OF 55 Respondents 60% said YES and 40% NO.
- Would you support the development of an asphalt pump track? 57% YES 44% NO (55 responses)

- When you think about the Township of Warwick Future, how important is Centennial Park Recreation Facilities/Amenities? 44 people answered and 44 VERY IMPORTANT
- List up to two facilities/amenities that you would like to see provided that are not currently provided. Top answers were Skate Park, Pool, Accessible areas.

Masterplan Recommendations:

Recommendation – Centennial Park. Reinforce Centennial Park as a premier outdoor community destination in the Township by undertaking the following improvements:

- Re-orient the tennis/ pickleball courts in a north-south direction; expanding the court footprint will be required to allow for sufficient playout space between the court and baseline fencing (completed).
- Replace the existing creative playground with a new structure that features barrier-free components including a firm and stable surface such as rubber, engineered woodchips or another alternative.
- Convert the Watford BMX Park & Pump Track to a concrete surface for wheeled action sports with permanent or modular features. Consultation with youth and young adults in the Township should form a part of the planning and design process.
- Move forward with undertaking repairs or resurfacing of the asphalt walking track.
- Identify a location to install a permanent stage/band shell to support local special events.

Recommendations- Parkland Design Considerations

- Potentially in collaboration with others, enhance the Township's role on environmental stewardship and climate change resiliency through strategically naturalizing open spaces, establishing pollinator gardens, establishing tree canopy targets, delivering outdoor educational programs, and other strategies.
- Design Township parks with a commitment to universal accessibility, safety, and comfort. Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and consultation with persons with disabilities is recommended.
- Strategically incorporate amenities and features that create welcoming and inviting experiences within the Township's parks, outdoor public spaces, and trails. Consideration should be given to seating, trees and/or shade elements, trails and pathways, washrooms, utilities, and other amenities that enhance the user experience.
- Install outdoor fitness equipment in Centennial Park. - COMPLETED

Recommendations- Recreational Trails Guided by public consultation, strengthen recreational trail opportunities in the Township with an emphasis given to:

- a. Establishing walkways within the Township's parks and open spaces.

Conclusion

The Centennial Park Revitalization Plan will serve as a high-level living document and dynamic short/long term plan that includes concept designs and key recommendations that may be adjusted as community expectations dictate, legislative requirements, Council direction and shifting priorities. This plan includes implementable action items to guide decision making for ongoing improvements.

General Concept plans for the overall park facilities and concepts for the Trails and Pathway network have been completed and will form part of this document. Park N Play has provided product and equipment options for consideration including new Playground, Splash Pad, All Wheels Park, Picnic Shelters and Park Furniture that will be considered during the development and final approval process.

Centennial Park is an essential part of Warwick Township and Towns of Watford's community life, and through these planned enhancements, Centennial Park will continue to serve as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable space for the community to enjoy for many decades to come.

Centennial Park Revitalization Plan

Appendix A - Key Recommendations:

Recommendation	Priority	Cost	Identified
Install a new Accessible/Inclusive Playground (290msq)	short	\$300,000-\$400,000	Y
Install a new Splash Pad in existing location (280msq)	Short	\$400,000-\$500,000	Y
Create improved multi-use pathway/trail network loop –connecting core areas and creating a park loop. (2m wide)	Medium/long	\$20,000-\$150,000	Y
Resurface the Community Outdoor Walking Track in a poured in place rubber surfacing	Medium	\$250,000-\$300,000	Y
Construct a modified/smaller BMX Bike Park Dirt Pump track OR Dirt Jump Line	Short	\$50,000	N
Construct an asphalt pump track that flows seamlessly with the “All Wheels” park	Short	\$120,000	Y
Design and construct an “All Wheels” park in the former BMX Bike Park area adjacent to a modified BMX Bike Park	Short	\$150,000 – \$200,000	Y
Design and construct new covered shelter to the North of the Community Walking Track / All Wheels/BMX Area	Short/Med.	\$75,000-\$125,000	N
Re-design the Outdoor Kitchen Area to create a permanent gathering and shelter structure that connects with the existing green space to the North.	Medium	\$100,000 - \$200,000	N
Construct 2 new open concept Dugouts at the Optimist Ball Diamond	Medium	\$25,000	N
Design and construct an expansion Shade Structure creating an improved gathering space to the North and East of the existing Pavilion offering better viewing of the Optimist Diamond. To be built to connect seamlessly with existing pavilion	Medium/Long	\$500,000+	N
Improve the Trail Gateway Access nodes at both the NW and NE corners of Park	Medium	\$10,000-\$25,000	N
Add Community or Pollinator Garden inside the North End of the Community Track	Medium	\$10,000	N
Create naturalized area and or gardens and cont. Tree Planting behind ball diamonds	Medium/Long	\$5,000-\$8,000	N
Design and construct a Community Stage structure that meets the needs of Community user groups. Further consultation and design specs required.	Long	\$100,000-\$350,000	Y
Update Park furniture throughout Centennial Park (benches, tables, addition of Bocce Ball Courts, garbage receptacles, signage)	Short/Med/ Long	\$5,000 - \$50,000	Y
Install shade sails over the existing Adult Fitness Equipment.	Short	\$60,000	Y
Install new Wind Screens on the existing picnic pavilion	Medium	\$7500	N
Change the Optimist Ball Diamond – Light Standards to Concrete posts.	Short/Med.	\$150,000	N
Install Story Board Walk on pathway between pavilion and courts (library partnership)	Short/Med.	\$1000	Y

