



Summary of Recommendations

Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan

November 2017

Service Delivery Assessment	Term
Service Delivery Model	
1. The Town should be proactive in engaging its service providers on matters related to recreation and leisure services. At a minimum, all recreation, leisure, and sport services provides should be convened to discuss joint vision, guiding principles, and strategic priorities for recreation and leisure in St. Marys. Other opportunities should include the ability to share resources and training opportunities, engage in joint planning, marketing, better understand total market penetration, legislative compliance and reduce duplication where it exists.	Ongoing
2. Complete an annual analysis of trends, social issues, community priorities and determine the opportunities that are offered through other accessible organizations. Offer programs where there are gaps in the fulsome provision of programs and services.	Ongoing
3. Develop an Affiliation Policy to ensure that all volunteer based community groups are supported in a consistent fashion.	Short
Key Result Area #1 – Programs and Services for All	
4. Test the list of Recreation and Leisure Core Services offered in the Master Plan with the public to ensure that these are reflective of their needs. Further ensure that Non-Core services are fully cost recoverable to profit making to offset costs of Core Services.	Medium
5. Develop an Access Policy to Recreation that is proactive in engaging and supporting marginalized populations.	Short
6. Implement the Parks and Recreation Ontario's High 5 Active Aging quality assurance program as it applies to providing/enabling recreational opportunities to older adults.	Short
7. Work with other recreation and leisure providers to develop a level of service for each discipline (aquatics, programs, camps, etc.) and age group. Further discuss the primary organization to provide the suggested level of service with a view to decreasing duplication and sharing resources.	Ongoing
8. Implement, where possible, the newly revised criteria of the Playworks Partnership to enable the Town of St. Marys to be designated a Youth Friendly Community.	Short
9. Work to better understand market penetration of the various age groups in recreation and leisure services by identifying the unique clients of the various agencies and organizations offering programs and services.	Ongoing
10. Develop an online central data source where all programs and services regardless of the provider can be promoted. Use social media, where possible, to cross promote all opportunities.	Ongoing

Service Delivery Assessment	Term
Key Result Area #2: Fiscal Sustainability in Recreation and Leisure Services	
11. Develop a policy on Core and Non-Core Services and levels of service in concert with the community.	Medium
12. Articulate the costs to provide individual units of service to develop an equitable and fair-minded Pricing Policy.	Ongoing
13. Further investigate the cost reductions and revenue enhancements suggested in the Service Review and create a formalized Business Plan for the Pyramid Recreation Centre to be approved by Council – increase arena rentals during prime time, food services cost reductions/revenue enhancements, arena overtime reduction and cost recovery for contracted services at the Friendship Centre, etc. Further, develop Program Based Budgets (program and operational costs) for Recreation and Leisure to fully understand the cost to provide these services. To ensure the successful delivery of this Plan, implement a process for annual reporting to Council with effectiveness measures based on the performance measures recommended as articulated in Recommendation 19.	Ongoing
14. Consult with the public on the principles of the potential partnership between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA. Host discussions between the Town of St. Marys and the YMCA regarding any preliminary and beneficial (no cost/low cost) arrangements that could be made in the short term. Bring any short term recommendations and longer term vision to Council for discussion.	Short
15. Obtain volunteer software to offer online volunteer opportunities, provide an online screening process, training and tracking of volunteer hours with a view to increasing volunteerism in St. Marys.	Long
16. Apply for alternate funding to cover the costs of the Swim to Survive program.	Medium
Key Result Area #3: Organizational Effectiveness and Governance	
17. Coordinate discussions with Town staff to articulate the Departmental culture and supporting values and behaviours.	Medium
18. Develop a Communications Plan that engages community groups and serves to better inform the public as to the recreation and leisure opportunities available using traditional and social media communications vehicles at a minimum.	Short
19. Gather the data required to support the development of performance measures. Report annually to Council and the public and compare results year over year to inform continuous improvement initiatives in community engagement and service delivery.	Short
20. Provide the tasks involved and an implementation schedule on the development of a Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee. Articulate the skills and competencies needed to implement the Master Plan recommendations and ensure that the Town recruits and selects members transparently based the needed skills and competencies.	Short

Parks and Trails Recommendations	Term
Parkland Classification System	
21. Incorporate a revised parkland classification system to provide greater clarity and accuracy towards locational characteristics, service area, permitted uses and amenities, and other details into the Town of St. Marys Official Plan at the time of its next review to guide the development and redevelopment of parkland in St. Marys.	Short
Parkland Supply and Distribution	
22. On an opportunity basis, pursue opportunities to rectify any parkland gaps that exist, utilizing parkland development strategies identified in this Master Plan, in addition to working with local non-municipal organizations (e.g., schools, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Conservation Authority, etc.) to maximize access to a wide range of active and passive open spaces.	Ongoing
23. Strive to achieve a minimum parkland service area of 800 metres, unobstructed by major barriers such as major roads, railways, waterbodies, etc.	Ongoing
Park Naturalization	
24. Consider naturalization of select areas of parklands, including Meadowvale Park and Southvale Park, in order to reduce parkland maintenance efforts. The naturalization of these parks or park areas may require the removal and/or relocation of certain recreation facilities, as articulated in this Master Plan. Where appropriate, naturalization of other municipal lands is also encouraged.	Ongoing
Parkland Acquisition Policies and Guidelines	
<p>25. During the next Official Plan Review, explore opportunities to bolster existing parkland policies, with consideration given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review the Town's parkland dedication policies to ensure that they consistent with the amended <i>Planning Act</i> as a result of Bill 73. b. Outline criteria for accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland, such as when the required dedication fails to meet an area of suitable shape, size, or location stipulated in the Town's parkland classification system or if parkland dedication would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development, or other constraint preventing suitable park or land use development. c. Clarify that the where policies currently state that 5% of land be dedicated for parkland through development applies only to residential subdivision development. Consistent with the <i>Planning Act</i>, a new policy should be developed stating that 2% of land shall be required for all other forms of development (e.g., commercial or industrial). Additionally, policies should be established to consider applying the alternative parkland rate of one hectare per 300 dwelling units. d. Woodlots, storm water management ponds, naturalized areas, and environmentally sensitive areas should not be accepted as a part of parkland dedication, although the Town may assume these lands (over and above) for the purposes of protecting, natural areas for passive recreation (e.g., trail development) and educational uses. 	Short to Medium
26. Accepting parkland smaller than 0.5 hectares will be discouraged, except in instances that may be advantageous to the Town to reconcile gap areas and to address shortages in parkland.	Ongoing

Parks and Trails Recommendations	Term
27. Utilize alternative parkland acquisition tools, as necessary, to supplement parkland dedications and to enhance future parkland opportunities to serve current and future residents.	Ongoing
Enhancing Active Transportation Opportunities	
<p>28. Through an Official Plan Review, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthen policies that support active transportation, trail development, and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, with reference to this Master Plan. b. Integrate the active transportation network (existing and conceptual trails) in Schedule “B-Road Classifications” or in a new Schedule to the Official Plan to serve as an awareness tool for Town staff, developers, planners, and interested members of the public. c. Establish policies requiring the dedication of land for pedestrian and bicycling facilities as a condition of plan of subdivision approval, with consideration given to the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan. 	Short to Medium
29. Utilize a range of strategies to secure new lands for active transportation network development.	Ongoing
30. Engage the public in the planning and design process in advance of trail construction to facilitate opportunities for public input.	Ongoing
<p>31. Prepare an Active Transportation Master Plan to assist with long-term implementation of the conceptual active transportation network contained in this Master Plan. The Active Transportation Master Plan should build upon the directions contained in this Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, including the following. The Town should identify other objectives for the Active Transportation Master Plan, as necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a vision statement and guiding principles to reflect the Town’s commitment to supporting and developing active transportation opportunities in St. Marys. b. Explore opportunities to enhance active transportation connections to the existing trail system. Modifications to existing conceptual trail routes may be permitted to recognize terrain and landscape features, as well as new trail opportunities. c. Identify active transportation design guidelines in the planning and development of trail routes, with consideration of provincial and municipal construction standards (including accessibility requirements). d. Engage the public and community groups to solicit input and feedback with respect to planning and designing active transportation infrastructure. e. Develop a trail hierarchy system to define types of active transportation routes, permitted uses, and design standards. f. Provide direction on the provision of active transportation amenities including, but not limited to, trail safety (e.g., pedestrian crossing design and locations), lighting, signage, parking, rest areas, and other ancillaries. 	Ongoing

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Arenas	
32. To maximize revenue opportunities by making efficient use of the Town's ice pads by encouraging greater use of available ice, particularly during shoulder and weekend hours. Other strategies may include, but not be limited to, promoting drop-in skating programs during available prime time hours on the weekend and co-ordinating blackout periods with user groups to ensure that it does not negatively impact playing schedules. (The existing supply of two ice pads is expected to be sufficient to serve ice users over the planning period)	Ongoing
Curling Pads	
33. Working with the St. Marys Curling Association, the Town should take a proactive role in exploring strategies to maximize utilization and participation levels by attracting new members, programs, and events. (No additional curling pads are expected to be required during the planning period)	Medium
Indoor Aquatics	
34. Recognizing the financial burden associated with operating the indoor pool at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, the Town should investigate partnership opportunities in an effort to seek a third party facility operator / partner. Should this investigation fail to result in a partnership, the Town should consider the other, less desirable, option noted in the Master Plan.	Short
Fitness Spaces	
35. If a third party partnership necessitates the provision of a fitness centre at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, investigate facility options through an architectural assessment.	Short
36. Explore opportunities to offer the indoor walking program to all residents and expand walking routes to include circulation areas and/or the Community Hall at the Pyramid Recreation Centre to provide the program on a year-round basis when the arena is in use during the skating season.	Short
Community Halls, Multi-Purpose Spaces and Meeting Rooms	
37. Using a business mindset and entrepreneurial spirit, the Town should continue to explore strategies to maximize the use of existing spaces. This may include reviewing how the Town promotes and markets municipal spaces to ensure that the community and non-municipal organizations are aware of opportunities to utilize spaces.	Ongoing
Gymnasiums	
38. Engage the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board and continue to work with the Avon Maitland District School Board to formalize reciprocal agreements to facilitate regular access to school gymnasiums located in St. Marys (and other school facility space, as required).	Short
39. Continue to develop and offer, where feasible, gymnasium-based recreation activities in the Town's community halls, multi-purpose spaces, and arena dry floor pads, to improve utilization levels in those spaces.	Ongoing

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment	Term
Youth Spaces	
40. Continue efforts to enhance children and youth opportunities and access to the Youth Centre and expand eligibility requirements to include senior high school students. (No additional youth spaces are recommended during this planning period)	Ongoing
41. Establish an annual youth forum to identify programming gap areas, discuss opportunities to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters related to youth.	Ongoing
Older Adult Space	
42. Facilitate regular meetings to engage older adult and seniors to discuss opportunities to become an “Age-Friendly Community” which may involve identifying gaps in programming and services, areas to improve recreation opportunities, and other relevant matters. (No additional dedicated older adult and seniors spaces are recommended during this planning period)	Ongoing
Soccer Fields	
43. Direct greater levels of maintenance and future improvements to soccer fields at Solis Park. In doing so, redirect resources through reducing the frequency of maintenance on lower use fields and reposition them as casual open field areas intended for unstructured, passive and pick-up forms of play.	Short
44. As a condition of soccer field permitting, require St. Marys Minor Soccer to collect and submit to the Town annual soccer game and practice schedules as well as membership figures to improve accuracy in tracking field usage and demand.	Ongoing
45. Once the Town has established a strong understanding of field usage trends, re-evaluate opportunities to consolidate, readjust maintenance practices, or decommission the soccer fields at Southvale Park and West Ward Park.	Short
Ball Diamonds	
46. Continue to work with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, with input from its regular users, to identify and prioritize improvements while a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out prior to undertaking any improvements.	Ongoing
47. Readjust maintenance practices at ball diamonds with low utilization to a suitable level to support neighbourhood play and the occasional rental. As a result, the Town should be strategic in undertaking ball diamond renewal projects at these locations. The Town should also continue to monitor usage at these locations as enhanced improvements and maintenance may be required should utilization levels increase.	Short
Tennis Courts and Pickleball Courts	
48. Delineate playing boundaries for pickleball on two of the existing tennis courts (tennis court lines are to remain). Consideration should be given to using a distinct boundary colour to differentiate playing areas in order to avoid confusion between the two sports as well as installing a strap system to allow the net to be adjusted. The Town should subsequently monitor utilization, as well as work with the St. Marys Social Tennis Club and pickleball players to ensure that game scheduling does not conflict between the two activities, particularly during tournaments and special events. The need to expand the supply of outdoor tennis and pickleball courts should be evaluated during an update to the Master Plan, which should be based on court usage and demand.	Short

Recreation and Leisure Facility Assessment		Term
Basketball Courts		
49. Explore opportunities to construct at least one new basketball court in a future or existing park in an underserved area(s) to enhance outdoor recreation facilities for youth. Areas of focus include the southwest and north area of St. Marys.		Medium
Skateboard Parks		
50. Integrate a limited number of basic skateboarding components - such as a ramp, curb, and/or rail - into the design of a future park or within an existing park in the north end of St. Marys as a means to enhance geographic accessibility and provide local children and youth with introductory-level skateboarding opportunities.		Long
Outdoor Aquatics		
51. Proceed with the construction of a splash pad at Cadzow Park to support outdoor aquatic needs. Once the second splash pad is operational, the Town should monitor usage and demand of both locations and re-evaluate St. Marys' splash pad supply during an update to the Master Plan.		Short
52. Continue to maintain access to the Thames River to support water-based activities such as canoeing and kayaking. The Town should also explore opportunities to provide supporting amenities such as a floating dock and rentable storage lockers.		Ongoing
Playgrounds		
53. Explore opportunities to resolve playground gap areas through future park development. Consistent with the A.O.D.A. (2005), the design of new and redeveloping playgrounds should incorporate accessible playground features, such as using a firm and stable surface.		Ongoing
54. Through the replacement of the play structure located at Meadowridge Park at the end of its lifespan (2025), remove and construct a new playground in a more visible location in Southvale Park.		Long
Other Recreation Facilities		
55. Unsolicited proposals from established organizations should be supported by a proponent-led assessment and business plan that demonstrates the risks and benefits of the Town becoming involved in the provision of a non-core facility, the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved, as well as a funding strategy that is suitable to the Town.		Ongoing

Implementation		Term
Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan		
56. Establish a system for the regular implementation, monitor, and review of the Master Plan, including the creation of an annual work plan to identify accomplishments and priorities for the coming year. A high level 5 year review and a detailed 10 year update should be undertaken. As part of the implementation, the Town should seek ways to improve the sustainability of the recreation system (e.g. creation of an endowment fund, developing a capital reserve fund, etc.)		Medium / Long