



Township of Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan



2012

Dunbar & Associates in association with
Lifetime Consulting Services, and
John G. Lohuis and Associates

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1. Acknowledgements

The Consulting Team of Dunbar and Associates is appreciative of the support, advice and guidance received throughout the Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Study Process. Many individuals gave freely of their time to make sure the recommendations and Master Plan are reflective of the parks and recreation needs of the entire community. The Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee, Ramara Township Council, and Township Staff showed commitment to the process and facilitated our work in every way. We give special thanks to Richard Bates, CAO and Caroline Schiavone, Recreation/Community Development Coordinator who provided ongoing direction and project support.

Many community members and residents took time to complete a survey, participate in an interview, prepare written briefs, or comment at public open houses. We greatly value their participation in shaping the future of Ramara Township. Their involvement ensures that the Master Plan addresses real needs and works toward achieving their long-term vision of parks and recreation in Ramara.

Cover Photo:

From Ontario Trails Council website at: <http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/trails-a-z/ramara-trail>
Showing the starting point of the Ramara Trail at the historic Mnjikaning fish weirs.

2. Executive Summary

The Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Study was completed in December 2012. The Master Plan makes 70 recommendations to enhance recreation, parks and culture in Ramara Township over the next ten years.

Public consultation included interviews, focus groups, open houses, and a community survey. A total of 335 surveys were completed which was an excellent response.

The top ten facilities (in descending order of priority) that survey respondents would like to see in Ramara are:

- Trails for biking and walking
- Outdoor ice rink
- Natural areas/parkland
- Waterfront access with parking
- Playgrounds
- Open space for fairs, events, etc.
- Canoe/boat launch
- Display/community gardens
- Baseball diamond
- Ball hockey court

Vision

The Township of Ramara will continue to be a vibrant, healthy, active community in which all people of Ramara may participate, thrive and enjoy accessible, equitable, and safe parks and recreation opportunities.

The types of programs that survey respondents chose as priorities to offer in Ramara are: special events, trail-based programs, water-based programs, exercise programs, swimming programs, youth programs and sports programs.

Ramara's population is aging. The 2011 Census data shows that the percentage of the population that is 55 years of age and over is now 40%.

Mission

Ramara Parks and Recreation is committed to delivering parks and recreation programs and services to its residents in a cost effective, fiscally responsible, legislatively compliant, and consultative manner that promotes sense of community, health and well-being and that protects and celebrates its rich history, rural lifestyle and bountiful water resources.

A population growth of 5,700 people is projected for Ramara between the years 2006 and 2031. While there is an aging demographic, total numbers of families and children will increase too, so the municipality will have to serve a growing number of seniors as well as families.

Current fiscal realities and population growth projections in the Township for the next 10 years preclude Ramara Township from considering major facility developments, such as arenas.

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
Facility and Sport Field Recommendations		
1. Review facility expansion options at Ramara Centre with “shovel-ready” plans for a full-size gymnasium and provision of lighting for the major soccer pitch.	2018+	109, 86-88, 102-108,
2. Ensure all entrances to facilities have consistent Township of Ramara logo/signage situated at roadways leading to the facility. Major facilities should have a floral arrangement (perennial/annual mix) and a consistent major sign.	2014-2018	109, 83, 102-108
3. Follow recommendations in the Frank Cowan insurance report including immediate action on all Priority #1 recommendations that could endanger life.	Immediate	109, 99 102-108
4. Ensure that there is a standard format for facility, park and equipment inspections in Ramara Township using generally accepted facility inspection templates (OMRA – Ontario Municipal Recreation Association or equivalent).	Immediate	109, 99, 102-108
5. Continue research into best practices in recreation facilities, sport fields and parklands to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation.	Ongoing	109, 100, 102-108
6. Establish a formal “damage covered” policy for any liabilities or breakage that may occur as a result of recreational program access to schools; maintain such access with an intent of establishment of a formal joint use community access agreement with both County of Simcoe school boards in Ramara Township.	2014-2018	110, 96 102-108
7. Seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnerships with Severn Township for the Washago outdoor rink.	2014-2018	110, 96, 102-108
8. Publicize all recreation facilities, trails, access points to lake and parks within Township on Ramara website (after completion of inventory work). Provide a limited publication of inventory of available programs, clubs, events, etc. with sections devoted to each geographic area.	2014-2018+	110, 91, 102-108
9. Prepare an inventory of all community assets including government facilities, agencies, churches, historic sites, private and public facilities.	2014-2018	110, 91, 102-108
10. Provide appropriate vehicular and bicycle parking at all major facilities and Township road “right of way” access points to lakeshore swimming.	Immediate	110, 102-108
11. Establish and/or expand three multi-use sport pads at Udney, Ramara Centre and Brechin to allow installation of moveable skateboard ramps.	2014-2018	110. 100, 102-108
12. Add a playground to Udney ball diamond.	2014-2018	111, 102-108

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
13. Establish unit cost measures (cost per acre for park maintenance, cost per sq. ft. for indoor recreation facilities, cost per person in recreation programs, etc.) to allow benchmarking, best practices and continuous improvement and to document budget efficiencies.	2014-2018	111, 102-108
14. Involve planning, recreation and parks staff with the Township Treasurer and CAO to map out a development charges strategy within land holdings and acquisitions along with 10 year capital planning. Such a strategy should be formally reviewed and submitted to Ramara Council.	2014-2018	111, 102-108
15. Develop capital asset plans for all community centres and parks, recreation and culture amenities.	Immediate	111, 98, 102-108
Parkland, Waterfront and Land Consolidation Recommendations		
16. Eliminate use of all boat ramps until such ramps can meet an acceptable service standard through the Township's insurer.	Immediate	112, 94-95, 102-108
17. Select one waterfront site to establish a fishing platform to further expand the range of recreational opportunities to residents.	2014-2018+	112, 94-95, 102-108
18. Separate water treatment facilities from public viewing on public parkland where possible or locate such facilities on separate land areas where possible.	2016-2018+	112, 94-95, 102-108
19. Develop a long-term Municipal land strategy with all Township Departments working together.	2016-2018+	112, 94-95 102-108
20. Consolidate existing parcels of parkland into five recreation areas: Brechin, Udney, Atherley, Washago area and Ramara Centre. If new land parcels are offered that do not fit the plan, take cash in lieu to fund the long-term park planning strategy.	2016-2018+	112, 94-95, 102-108
21. Involve the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee in all future 5% in lieu of parkland discussions with Planning Department.	2016-2018+	113, 94-95 102-108
22. Improve public access to the waterfront by: a) Making access to waterfront lands/facilities part of parks and recreation system in Ramara b) Developing appropriate water access facilities at north, central and south locations. c) Creating a focused, long term strategy to assemble road end allotments, waterfront access and parklands. This may require completing a waterfront study.	2016-2018+	113, 94-95 102-108
23. Review Township grass cutting policies and procedures in light of Species at Risk legislation and identify environmentally sensitive locations (e.g. nesting areas) for later scheduled grass cutting.	Immediate	113, 88

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
Recreation Programs Recommendations		
24. Support continued efforts to provide high quality, innovative children and youth recreation programs in locations throughout the municipality.	2014-2018+	116, 91-96, 114-115
25. Implement quality assurance measures for children and youth recreation programs by implementing provincially-recognized programs such as the Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) “High Five” program.	2014-2018+	116, 91-96, 114-115
26. Measure annual resident recreation program satisfaction levels to improve current overall rating of “good” to “very good” and “excellent” over the decade ahead. Use surveys to monitor and review program demands or priorities and to change program offerings when necessary.	2014-2018+	116, 92, 114-115
27. Support expansion of adult/older adult programs, given the demand for programs from this age group and the importance of recreation to the residents’ quality of life.	Immediate	116, 91-96, 114-115
28. Support the funding of additional signs at strategic locations across the vast geographic area of the municipality.	2014-2018	116, 91-96, 114-115
29. Make full use of the township mailings, press releases to media, community newspapers and newsletters, and other electronic, computer-based methods to improve communication about and participation in recreation program opportunities and events.	Ongoing	117, 91-96, 114-115
30. Authorize Ramara Township recreation staff to pursue additional partners within and on the borders of the municipality to create mutually beneficial joint recreation programs and services.	Ongoing	117, 91-96, 114-115, 118
31. Support expansion of parks and recreation programs and services that enhance the quality of life for residents as a key strategy to improve the tax base of the municipality.	2014-2018+	117, 91-96, 114-115
32. Continue research into best practices in leisure and recreation to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation programs and services.	Ongoing	117, 91-96, 114-115
33. Add components of physical activity to leisure and recreation programs and community events as a means to heighten community awareness of its vital health benefits.	Ongoing	117, 91-96, 114-115
34. Build upon staff’s current success with recreation programs and develop a plan based on the Master Plan survey findings to incorporate feasible residents’ ideas about new and existing programs, locations, and other suggestions for the future of recreation programs and services.	Ongoing	117, 91-96, 114-115

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
Community Development Recommendations		
35. Ensure that Recreation staff play a key role in developing Ramara's parks and recreation volunteer leadership by drafting a volunteer policy for adoption by Council.	2014-2018	120, 92, 119
36. Conduct research into grant and other funding opportunities for Centre maintenance, and capital projects.	Immediate	120, 92, 119
37. Work with the municipality's insurance agency to assess risks associated with voluntary Community Centre board-managed properties and voluntary organizations that offer programs and events for Ramara residents and visitors.	2014-2018	120, 92, 119
38. Keep abreast of legislative requirements affecting voluntary Community Centre board managed properties and voluntary leisure and recreation organizations, and inform volunteer leaders about compliance requirements.	Ongoing	120, 92, 119
39. Keep the Township's parks and recreation website information up-to-date including the Community Centre board-managed properties.	Ongoing	120, 92, 119
40. Provide more training and orientation opportunities for all councillors and community centre boards and volunteer committees.	2014-2018+	120, 92, 119
41. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and Municipality over five years.	2014-2018	121, 92, 119
Trails Recommendations		
42. Upgrade and develop Ramara trail and active transportation system using a 2-phase strategy.	2014-2018	125, 85, 122-129
43. Review and upgrade existing trails and build new trails to meet the following standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard surface (either stone dust, asphalt) • 10 feet/3 metres wide with 2 feet/1.5 metres clear cut zones on each side 	Immediate	125, 85, 122-129
44. Be proactive in Township planning department to create new trail connections within all new site developments.	Ongoing	125, 85, 122-129
45. Coordinate efforts between Trails Committee and Ramara Planning Department to work with Share the Road initiatives and develop a trails master plan for Ramara with wayfinding system.	2014-2018+	125, 85, 122-129
46. Promote 1.5 m edge to all new County and Municipal roads.	2014-2018+	125, 85, 122-129

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
47. Connect trails with community facilities and places people want to go, such as schools, parks, shops, businesses, restaurants and food concessions, etc.	2014-2018+	125, 85, 122-129
48. Review existing subdivisions, making improvements to trail accessibility and safety.	2014-2018+	130, 85, 122-129
49. Require all new subdivisions, commercial and public areas to connect their on-site pedestrian routes to offsite sidewalks and trail access points.	2014-2018+	130, 85, 122-129
50. Provide the following conditions on all pedestrian routes to promote and enable walking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian routes should be placed within 150 metres (or closer) of all residential areas. • Cul-de-sacs and other types of dead ends need to provide connection of a minimum of 3 meters wide which should be hard surface (compacted gravel as a minimum). 	2014-2018+	130, 85, 122-129
51. Incorporate changes to the current job description of Recreation Supervisor (formerly Coordinator) to include the following trails responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with and provide support to volunteer groups working on trail initiatives. • Begin and maintain a basic and regular trails standards inspection system. • Coordinate trail budget plans with volunteers and seek financial support from available funding sources and grant opportunities. • Work with North Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to increase awareness of trails and their importance. 	Immediate	130, 85, 122-129, 132, 134
52. Change the reporting methods of the Trails Committee as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on a monthly basis to the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee • Vet all projects, activities, grant applications with RPCAC and adoption by Council, 	Immediate	130, 85, 122-129
53. Comply with AODA legislation for accessible trails. Practice principles of sustainable design.	Ongoing	131, 85,
Human Resources: Staff and Volunteer Recommendations		
54. Reclassify existing Recreation/Community Development Coordinator position to Recreation Supervisor. Write new job descriptions with additional responsibilities (including but not limited to duties in support of the trails committee, community centre boards, youth activities and playground equipment maintenance.). Identify additional compensation required.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132
55. Create a staff flow chart outlining responsibilities and relationships between CAO and Recreation Supervisor.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132

Recommendations (Note: These are abbreviated recommendations. Refer to main document for full details)	Timeframe	Refer to Page #
56. Reflect costs and proposed additional costs per recreation sector in new detailed budget accounts: Ramara Recreation Centre, Staff, Building Maintenance, Field Maintenance, Equipment Maintenance, Staff Training. Prepare capital asset management plans.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132
57. Commence Canadian Standards Association approved staff training in playground equipment and trails maintenance as first priority.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132
58. Include Planning staff, Recreation Supervisor and Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee on future parkland acquisitions and/or 5% in lieu park land dedication decisions.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132
59. Present Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee meeting minutes to Council for adoption. Share regular budget printouts with RPCAC at monthly meetings. Present five-year forecasts, prepared jointly by RPCAC and Recreation Supervisor to Council.	Immediate	133, 89-90, 132
60. Rename Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee.	Immediate	134, 89-90, 132
61. Restructure the relationship of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee to the Township and formalize.	Immediate - 2016	134, 89-90, 132
62. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and Municipality over five years.	2014-2018	135, 92, 119
63. Work with Community Centre boards to create standard rental forms with site-specific rental rates, rules and regulations based on amenities and an on-line rental and payment process.	2014-2018	136, 92, 119
64. Work with Community Centre boards to create an operational policy and procedures manual for the facilities, including the board members' roles and responsibilities.	2014-2018	136, 92, 119
65. Prepare a 10-year capital budget forecast and capital asset plan for each Community Centre.	2014-2018	136, 90, 98
66. Coordinate joint purchase of supplies and services as per Community Centre board requests.	2014-2018	136, 92
67. Facilitate the development of a formal agreement with Community Centre boards that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of boards, municipal staff, and municipal council.	2014-2018	136, 135, 92
68. Streamline Community Centre bookings to reduce volunteer workload and maximize revenues.	2014-2018	136, 92
69. Liaise with boards and provide ongoing assistance and support according to the formal agreement between the boards and the municipality.	Immediate	136, 92, 119
70. Recruit youth members for all Community Centre Boards.	Immediate	136, 92, 119

3. Introduction

Ramara Township is steeped in a rich history, characterized by resilience, persistence, strong sense of community and steady change. One of Canada’s oldest human developments, the Mnjikaning Fish Weirs, now a National Historic Site in Atherley Narrows between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching, is testament to the ancient history of this area. Built before recorded history, some 4500 years ago, the site is protected today through efforts of the Mnjikaning Fish Fence Circle in partnership with the National, Provincial and Municipal governments.

“The site contains the largest and best preserved wooden fish weirs known in eastern North America, in use from about 3300 B.C. until the recent past.” Parks Canada

For the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, this is a sacred place that preserves a spiritual bond between all living things and the Creator. Furthermore, it is valued as a traditional gathering place because of its geographic location in which lakes and rivers converge. Known for their hospitality and caring ways, the Chippewas helped early settlers survive and adapt to their new environment.

Both the words “Mara” and “Rama” are believed to mean bitter, which reflect the harsh conditions that faced the early settlers to the area. The first settler to Mara arrived in 1823, while the first settler to Rama came in 1836. Mara was predominantly settled first by Scottish highlanders, then Irish immigrants who arrived in the 40’s, with immigration peaking in 1846 and 1847. The Campbells, Corrigan and Kellys were followed by the Bruces, Gilchris, Duffys and Morrows to name only a few. In Rama, the McPhersons and Garnets were the first to settle. In 1854, Reeve James McPherson represented Mara and Rama on the first County of Ontario Council. Two books document the early history of Ramara: *Reflections of the Past: The Story of Rama Township* (compiled and edited by Gabrielle Latimer, 1989) and *They Came To Mara...Pioneers of Mara Township Circa 1829-1900* (Corporation of the Township of Mara, 1993). Farms, small communities, mills, churches, schools and roads began to define the largely agricultural landscape.

More change came in 1994 when the Townships of Mara and Rama amalgamated to form Ramara Township. The influences of a growing senior population looking for second-home properties or cottages and the attractiveness of the area for recreation and water-based activities is redefining the nature of Ramara. The Township of Ramara anticipates its population to grow by almost 2,000 people over the next seven years. Public demand for parks and recreation services and programs will continue to grow and needs will change in response to population dynamics and new recreation and societal trends such as growing expectations of retirees from urban centres.

The last Parks and Recreation Master Plan was done for Mara in 1993. Ramara Township

Council recognizes the importance of planning for the future and has undertaken this Parks and Recreation Master Plan Study. The Master Plan identifies and prioritizes community needs and determines a sound and realistic course of action over the next ten years to properly budget for and deliver necessary parks and recreation programs and services to its residents. As Ramara's history has proven, much can be accomplished by capitalizing on strong sense of community and perseverance, in times of change and fiscal limitations.

3.1 Purpose and Scope of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The purpose of the Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan was to make recommendations that will be incorporated into Ramara's Official Plan to guide future decisions regarding Parks and Recreation in the Township for the next 10 years. Specifically, the plan recommends actions and strategies based on:

- Identifying relevant demographic and leisure trends,
- Consulting Ramara residents and key partners and stakeholders,
- Evaluating current program and service levels, parks, trails and facilities, and
- Assessing existing challenges and opportunities.

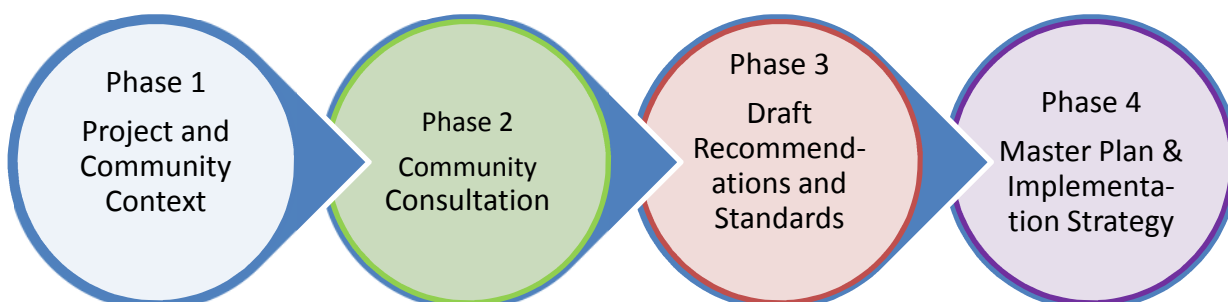
The scope of the project included:

- Leisure and recreation services, programs and delivery systems
- Parks, open space and trails
- Recreation facilities and Community Centres
- Human resources and organizational structure
- Partnerships

A guiding principle throughout the process was developing a strategy based on the fiscal and geographic realities of the Township and recommending achievable and realistic initiatives.

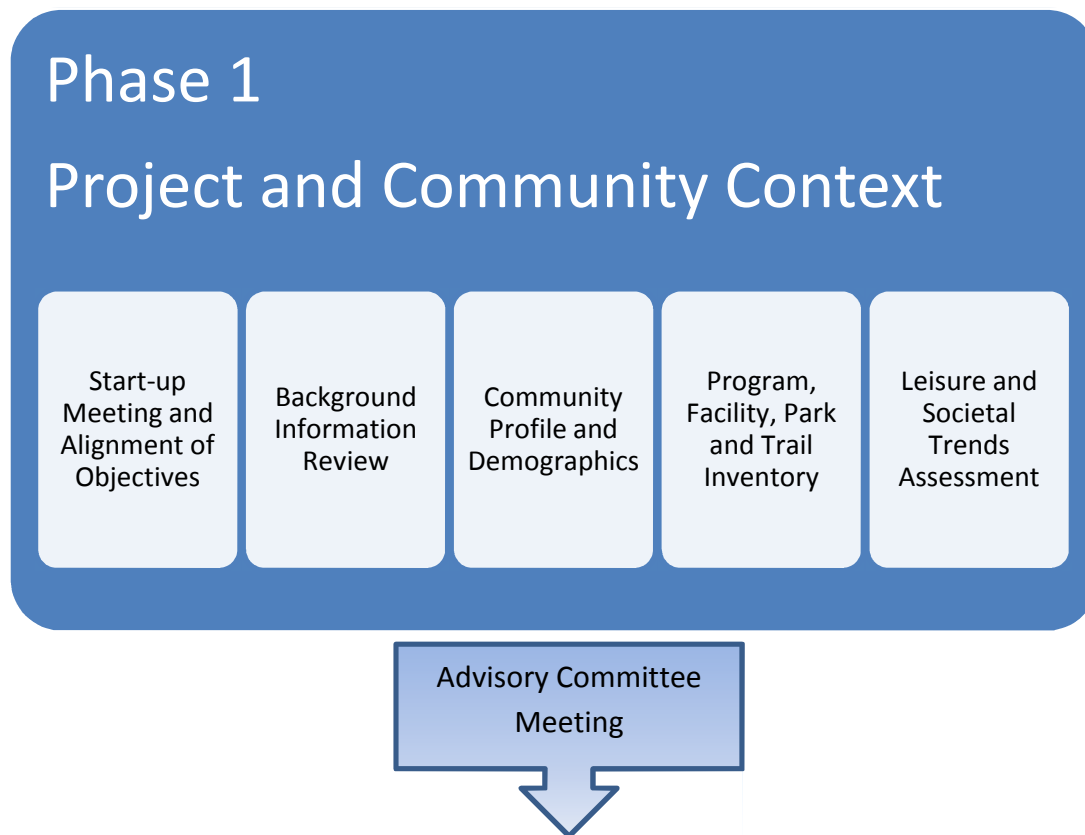
3.2 Study Process and Methodology

The study started in June 2012 and was completed December 2012. Over the seven-month period, a practical, four-stage process was used.



An integral part of the process was public consultation and involvement of residents and taxpayers, key stakeholders, staff, Council, partners and volunteers. Their involvement not only enriched the process and outcomes, but it created a sense of ownership and ensured that the Consulting Team had accurate information on which to base recommendations. The specific tasks of the Master Plan study were undertaken in four phases, as outlined below.

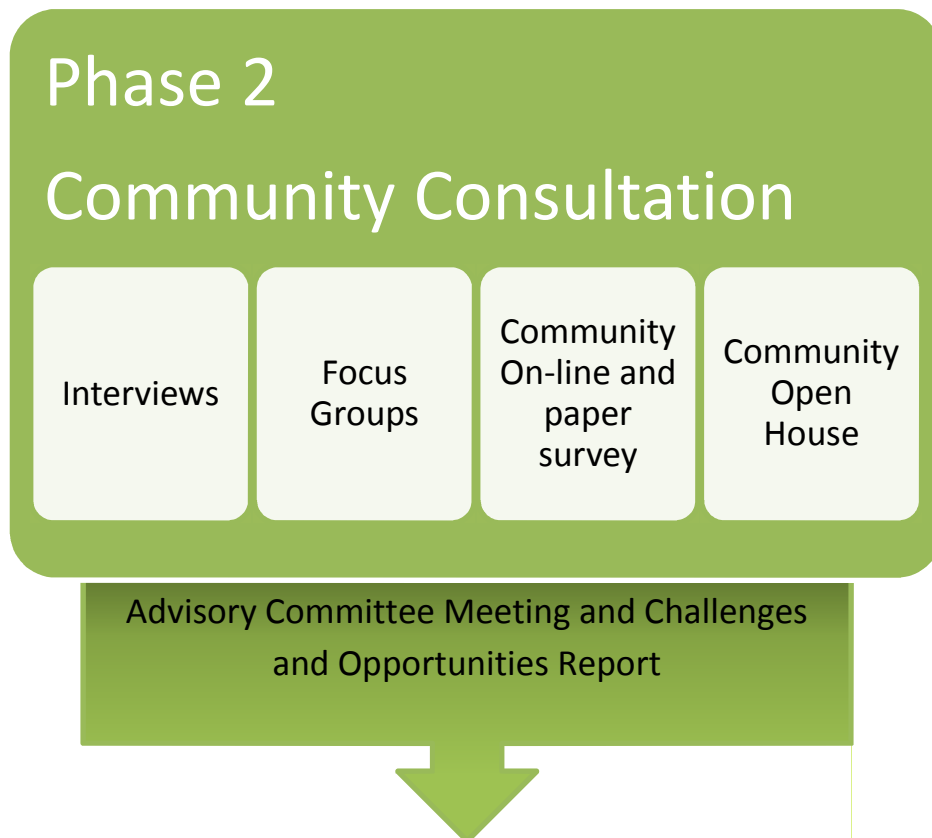
Phase 1: Project and Community Context



The Master Plan process was kicked off in Phase 1 with a meeting between the Consulting Team and the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee. Objectives were aligned and information relevant to the study process was exchanged. Work on the various assessments, such as programs and services review and facility and park inventories, was started. A background literature review was completed as well as a community profile and demographics analysis. Information sources consulted included the Ramara Youth Survey, Ramara Accessibility Plan, Ramara Active Transportation Plan, Our Ramara, Hemson Simcoe Area Growth Plan, 2011 Stats Canada statistics on agriculture and geography, and recent statistics from Heart and Stroke and Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to name a few. Significant societal and leisure trends were identified which will likely have an impact on future parks and recreation services in Ramara. At this point, it was determined that a collection of exemplary best practices and models from other communities of similar size and composition would be beneficial.

A check point meeting with the Advisory Committee made the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2. This meeting served to share information collected to date, identify issues, clarify facts and prepare for the survey design and implementation of the public participation components.

Phase 2: Community Consultation



Consulting team members conducted numerous interviews with Council members, the Mayor, Advisory Committee members, partners, and key stakeholders. These interviews were useful in setting the context for the study and honing in on key issues to probe at community open houses and in the survey.

Three focus groups were scheduled to gain more detailed insight and direction for the future of parks and recreation in Ramara, with the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee, the Trails Committee and the Youth Committee. The Youth Committee Focus Group was cancelled due to lack of quorum.

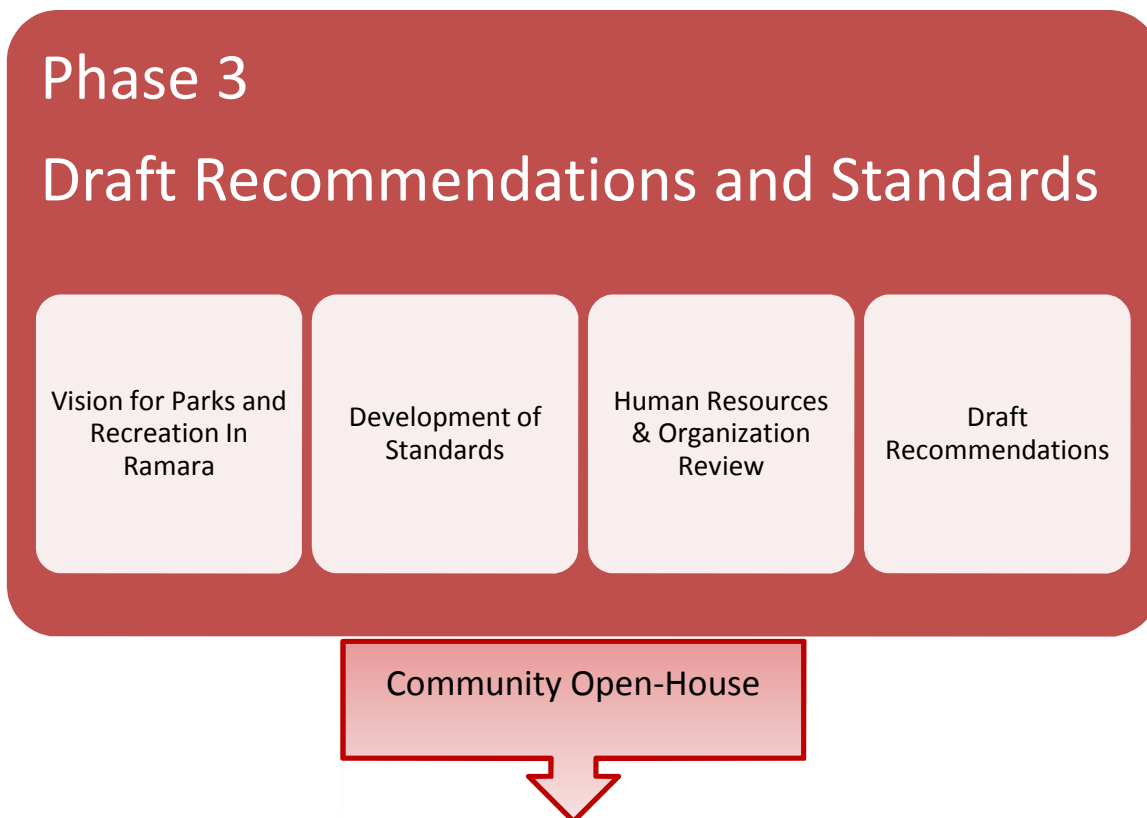
An on-line survey was developed (See Appendix 1), tested and administered on the Municipal website. Recognizing the large number of residents in Ramara who do not have access to the internet, paper versions of the survey were made available at the Ramara Centre and Municipal Offices as well as at public events, such as Soccer Day, Ramona Fair, committee meetings, and so

on. In all, 335 survey were completed by the September 30, 2012 closing date, which is an excellent response rate. A summary of the survey findings is in Section 7.1.

Two Open Houses were convened at the Ramara Centre for the general public to give input to the Master Plan. The first one was hosted on Saturday, August 11, 2012 with the purpose of collecting ideas and concerns early on in the process. The second one was scheduled for Saturday, October 27, 2012 from 10 am to 1 pm and enabled participants to see and respond to the draft recommendations.

At the end of Phase 2, all public input and data collected to date formed the basis of the Challenges and Opportunities Report (see Section 7.2). This report was presented to the Advisory Committee for discussion.

Phase 3: Draft Recommendations and Standards



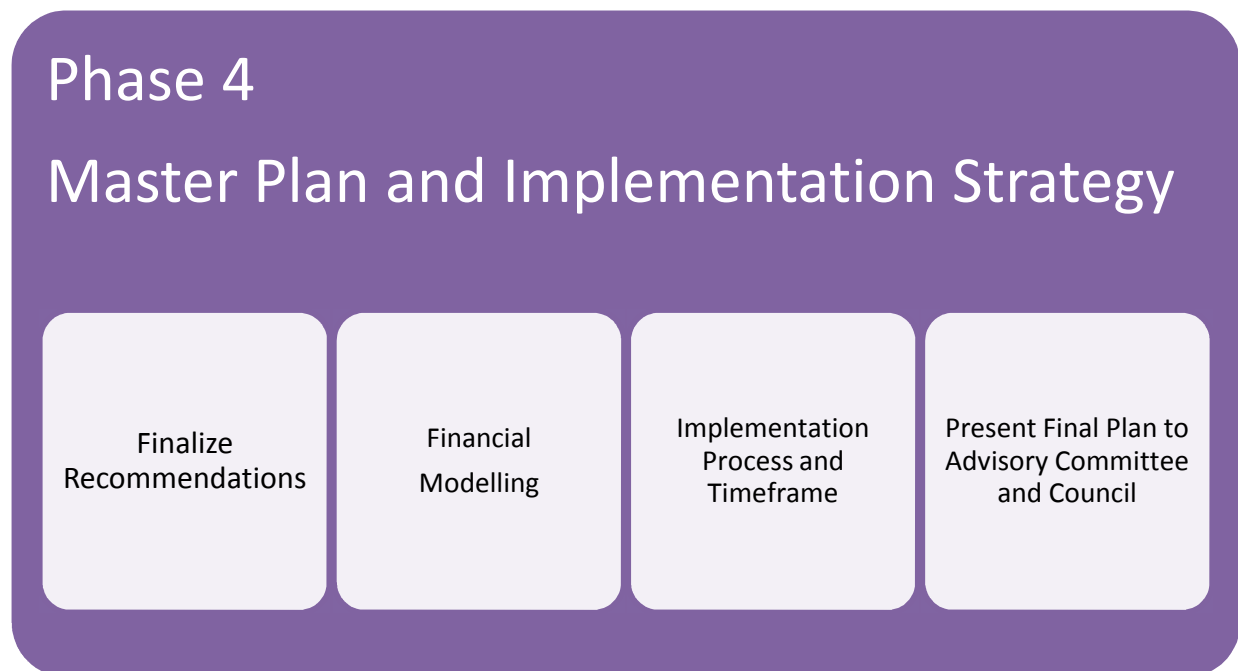
Given the challenges and opportunities summarized in Phase 2 as well as the projected needs identified by the Consulting Team, six key themes were developed to help focus future initiatives. Then draft recommendations and standards for parks and recreation in Ramara Township were formulated. Recommendations were drafted for several key areas:

- Trails
- Parks and Facilities
- Human Resources/Organizational Structure
- Recreation Services and Programs

- Partnerships
- Community Development

The draft recommendations were presented to the public for feedback on Saturday, October 27, 2012 at a Community Open-House.

Phase 4: Master Plan and Implementation Strategy



The fourth and final phase of the process involved finalizing the recommendations, based on the input from the Community Open House and the Advisory Committee. The implementation process, including setting priorities, implementation timeframes, and some costing was developed to be realistic and achievable. The final plan was presented to the Advisory Committee and Council.

4. Ramara Community Profile

Ramara Township is located in Simcoe County. Its appeal to residents and visitors alike is often described with such terms as:

- Boater's paradise
- Gateway to relaxation
- Retiree haven
- Country living at its best
- Strong agricultural base
- Stunning, most picturesque waterfront views and beaches



Ramara Chamber of Commerce Map at: <http://www.ramarachamber.com/ramara.pdf>

4.1 Regional Context

The Township of Ramara (419.25 square kilometres) is located in Simcoe County along the shores of Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe in the west, bordered by the Township of Severn to the North, Durham Region in the South and the City of Kawartha Lakes to the East. County Road 169 dissects the Township, running all the way from Washago in the North to meet Highway 12 near Brechin in the South. Highway 12, travelling east out of Orillia connects with 169, making this a vital corridor connecting the Greater Toronto Region to cottage country.

Many small communities, such as Gamebridge, Brechin, Udney, Sebright, Uptergrove, Atherley, Rama, Longford Mills, and two retirement/resort communities (Bayshore Village and Lagoon City), dot the largely rural landscape. The Chippewas of Rama First Nation is a progressive community with a rich history and culture. Their territory was known as “the gathering place” because of its unique geographic location (where lakes and rivers converged) making it an excellent meeting place or rest-over spot. They were well known for their willingness to share and their knowledge of healing and helped many early settlers to survive the harsh wilderness. Their contributions to the area are many, building farms and mills, the travel corridor now known as Highway 12, the Mnjikaning Fish Weirs, and Casino Rama, to name a few.

The area is a popular tourist destination with many seasonal residences, cottages, resorts and campsites. Within its boundaries are Mara and McRae Provincial Parks, the Mnjikaning Fish Weirs National Historic Site of Canada, Casino Rama, Fern Resort, the 150-acre YMCA Geneva Park facility, public beaches and extensive water-based recreation opportunities on Lakes Simcoe, Couchiching, Dalrymple, St. John and Mud and the Black, Severn and Talbot Rivers. The Trent-Severn Waterway is on Ramara’s southern doorstep in Durham Region and in the north at Washago.

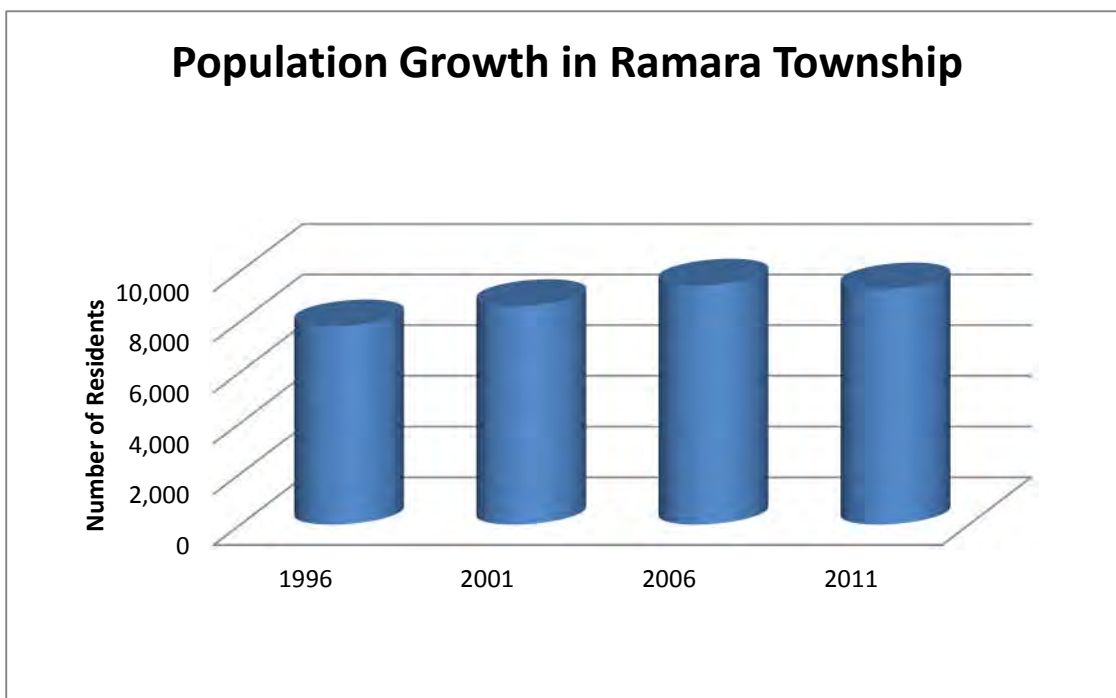
Ramara has a number of strengths which are particularly compelling, such as its 104 kilometres of shoreline, the trails and active transportation plan, the volunteer sector and community centre boards which are the lifeblood of numerous initiatives in the Township, and the rich history and culture within the area. These attractive qualities hold great potential for affordable, accessible, and integrated recreation and tourism opportunities.

4.2 Historic Population Growth

The Township of Ramara was incorporated in 1994 with the amalgamation of Rama and Mara Townships. The chart and graph below show the population growth over a fifteen-year period. According to Statistics Canada this represents a -1.6% growth rate from 2006. In comparison, the provincial growth average was 5.7% during the same period.

Year	Population
1996	7,812
2001	8,615
2006	9,427
2011	9,275

(2006 and 2011 Census data, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-csd-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&TAB=0&GK=CSD&GC=3543019>)



2011 Census Dissemination Area Data reports approximately 73% of Ramara's population lives south of the boundary line between the former Mara and Rama townships and 28% of the population lives to the north.

Population Growth In Neighbouring Communities

This chart shows the growth trends in Ramara Township and some of its neighbouring communities. **With the exception of Gravenhurst, all communities are well below the average provincial growth rate.**

Neighbouring Census Subdivisions

Census subdivision (CSD) name	Population		
	2011	2006	% change
Ontario	12,851,821	12,160,282	5.7
Simcoe County	446,063	422,204	5.7
Ramara, Ontario	9,275	9,427	-1.6
Kawartha Lakes, Ont.	73,214	74,561	-1.8
Brock, Ont.	11,341	11,979	-5.3
Georgina, Ont.	43,517	42,346	2.8
Severn, Ont.	12,377	12,030	2.9
Mnjikaning First Nation 32 (Rama First Nation 32), Ont.	870	846	2.8
Orillia, Ont.	30,586	30,259	1.1
Gravenhurst, Ont.	11,640	11,046	5.4

(Statistics Canada. 2012. Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census. *Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-310-XWE2011004*. Ottawa, Ontario. Analytical products, 2011 Census. Last updated May 29, 2012. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-csd-eng.cfm?Lang=Eng&TAB=0&GK=CSD&GC=3543019>)

4.3 Growth Projections for Ramara Township

The population in Simcoe County has almost doubled since 1981 and is expected to see strong pressure for growth in the years ahead. (Simcoe Area Growth Plan, Hemson Consulting Ltd., May 2008.) However, not all municipalities will experience growth pressures to the same extent. The Simcoe County Official Plan reference forecast for Ramara Township's projected population

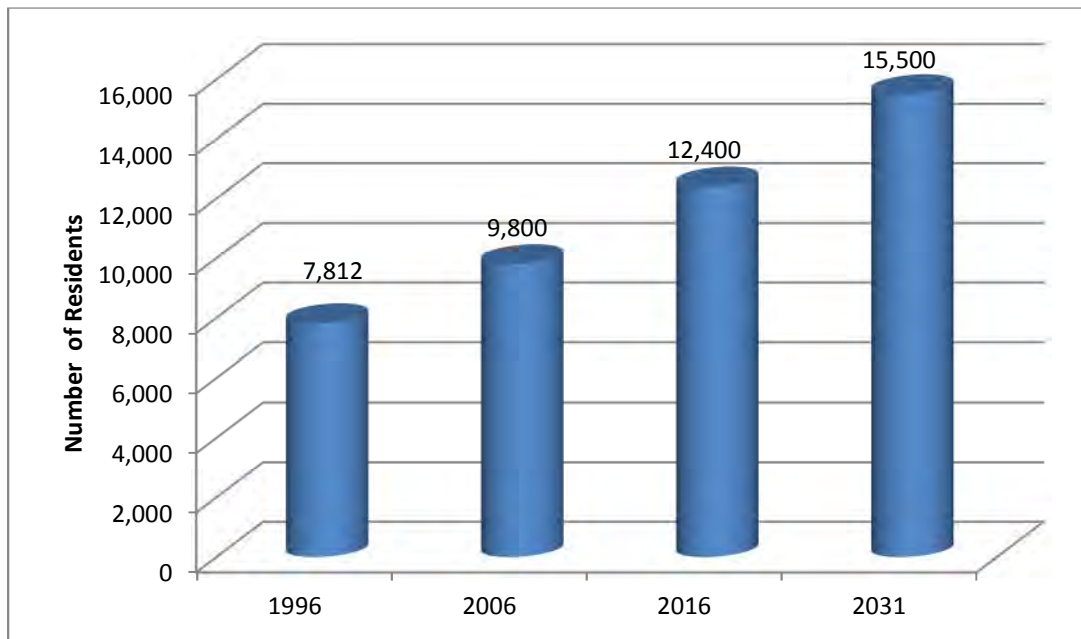
growth is 12,400 in 2016, or 1.9% growth. The low forecast is 1.7% growth (or 11,200) and the high forecast is 2.3% growth (or 13,700).

Projections by Municipality for the Year 2016

Municipality	Population 1996	Population 2016	Households 2016	Employment 2016
Adjala-Tosorontio	9,361	13,700	4,580	2,590
Bradford West Gwillimbury	20,213	34,400	11,340	8,870
Clearview	12,407	16,700	6,200	1,980
Collingwood	15,596	18,900	8,180	12,960
Essa	16,363	18,400	6,330	9,730
Innisfil	24,711	40,800	15,170	7,490
Midland	15,035	18,985	7,300	13,590
New Tecumseth	22,902	32,300	11,700	8,710
Oro-Medonte	16,698	25,000	9,410	4,090
Penetanguishene	7,291	10,640	3,940	3,970
Ramara	7,812	12,400	5,110	1,890
Severn	10,257	15,500	6,020	1,790
Springwater	14,793	22,600	7,790	4,670
Tay	10,965	11,175	4,140	4,250
Tiny	8,644	13,100	5,270	2,400
Wasaga Beach	8,698	14,400	7,070	2,880
County Total	221,746	319,000	119,550	91,860
Barrie and Orillia	107,037	168,800	64,770	109,840

County Of Simcoe Official Plan, Consolidated 2007.

Projected Population in Ramara



The Simcoe Area Growth Plan projects a population growth for Ramara of 5,700 people between the years 2006 and 2031.

Distribution of Population Growth, 2006-2031

Community	2006 Census Total Population	2031 Proposed Total Population	Population Growth 2006-2031
Adjala-Tosorontio	11,100	14,200	3,100
New Tecumseth	28,800	49,000	20,200
Bradford-West Gwillimbury	25,000	49,700	24,700
Innisfil	32,400	65,000	32,600
Essa	17,600	22,900	5,300
Clearview	14,600	26,000	11,400
Collingwood	18,000	30,200	12,200
Wasaga Beach	15,600	35,000	19,400
Springwater	18,100	26,500	8,400
Oro-Medonte	20,800	28,100	7,300
Ramara	9,800	15,500	5,700
Severn	12,500	20,200	7,700
Tay	10,100	11,300	1,200
Tiny	11,200	13,900	2,700
Midland	16,900	19,700	2,800
Penetanguishene	9,700	12,300	2,600
Simcoe County Total	272,200	439,500	167,300
City of Barrie	133,500	185,000	51,500
City of Orillia	31,400	41,000	9,600
First Nation	1,500	1,500	-
Total Simcoe County Area	438,600	667,000	228,400

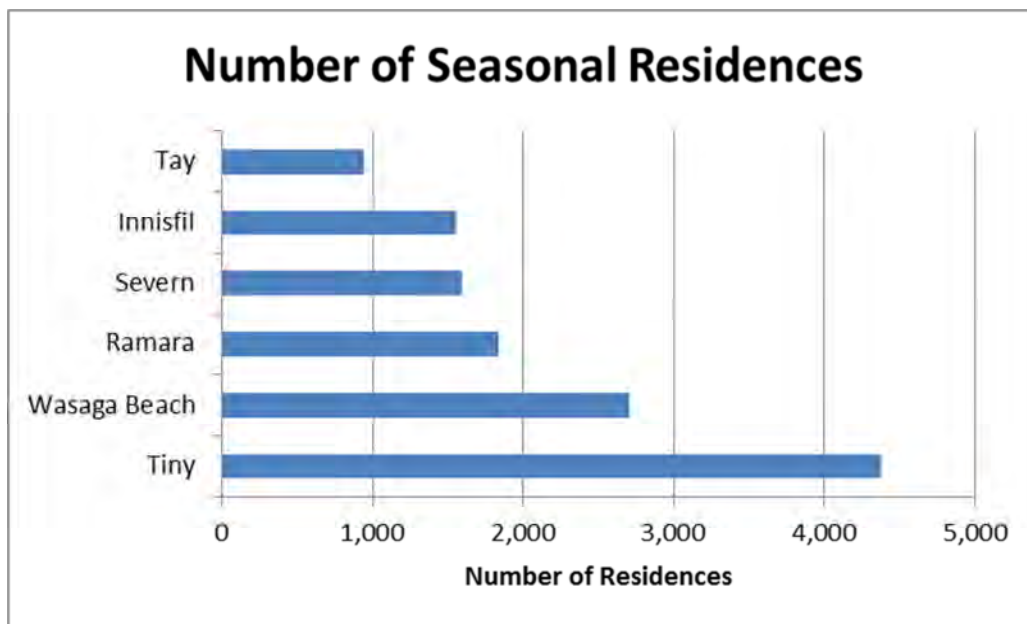
(Simcoe Area Growth Plan, Hemson Consulting Ltd., May 2008)

Residences in Ramara

The 2011 Census reports that Ramara Township had 3,784 private dwellings occupied by usual residents (i.e. residents who spend the major part of the year at the dwelling.) The change in private dwellings occupied by usual residents from 2006 was 0.0%. Projections for 2016 (from the Simcoe County Official Plan) estimate 5,110 households in Ramara.

The number of seasonal residences in Ramara is the third highest in the County, behind the municipalities of Tiny and Wasaga Beach. Since these figures do not include multi-dwelling condominium or other such types of part-time dwellings, the actual number of seasonal residences is underrepresented. (Simcoe County Official Plan.)

The Northeast Simcoe Population Health Profile (2006) finds that the population in some municipalities is estimated to increase by up to 50% each summer with the arrival of seasonal residents. Northeast Simcoe Profile, North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) May, 2006.)



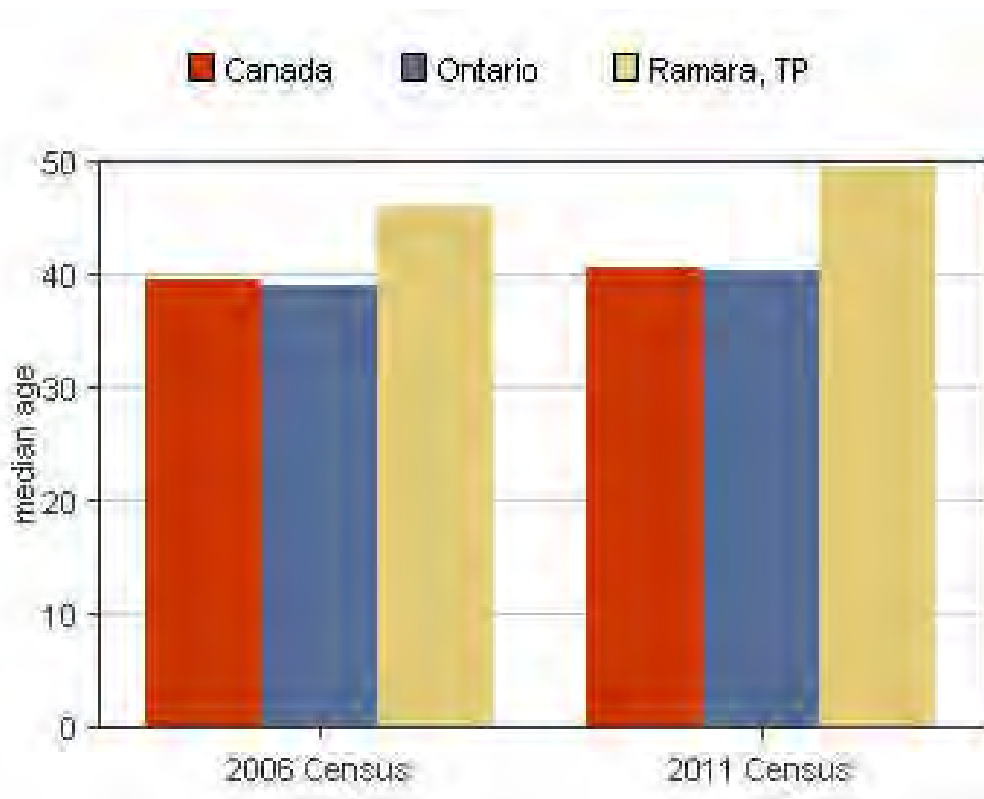
Although Ramara's rate of growth is slower than surrounding areas, it will grow and so will the need for more parks and recreation programs and services. **While there is an aging demographic, total numbers of families and children will increase too, so the municipality will have to serve a growing number of seniors as well as families.**

In addition, there is a seasonal influx of residents, which means greater demands for parks and recreation in the warmer months. This makes amenities such as trails, water access, parks and

other such self-scheduling and easy-to-use features attractive to full-time residents, seasonal residents, and tourists alike.

4.4 Age Profile

The median age in Ramara Township is 49.7 years of age, much higher than the provincial (40.4) median age. This is an increase of almost 4 years since 2006.



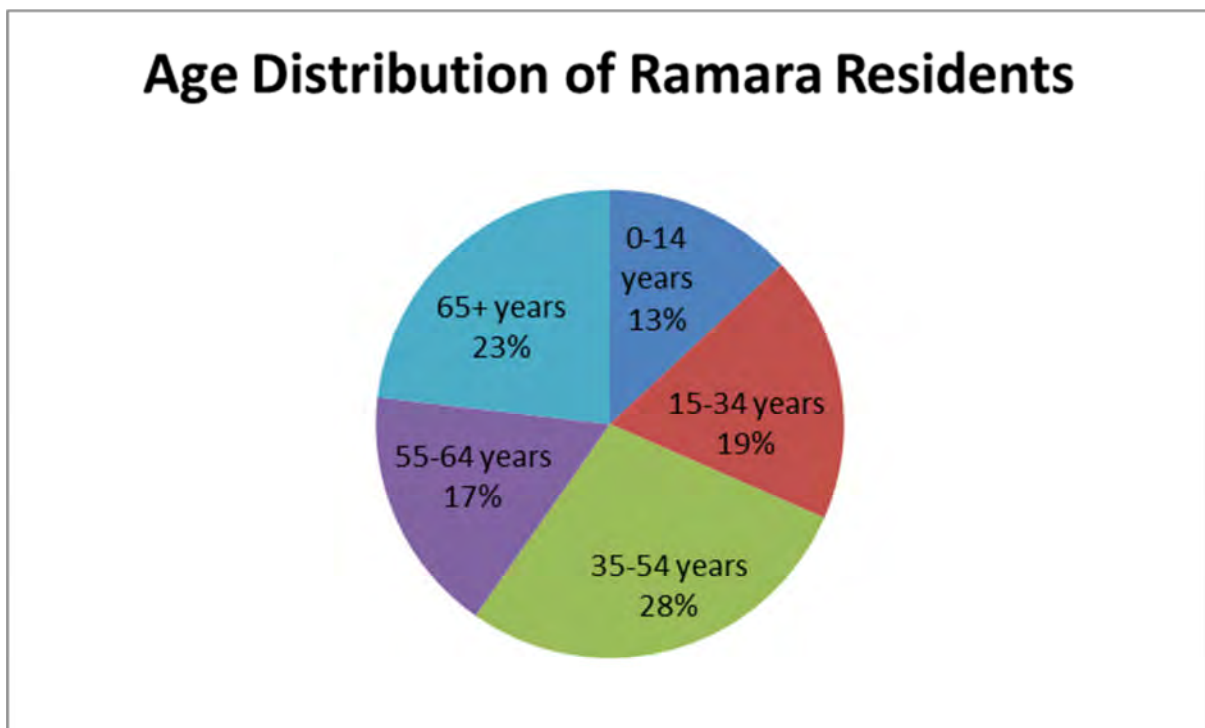
(Statistics Canada. 2012. Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census. *Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-310-XWE2011004*. Ottawa, Ontario. Analytical products, 2011 Census. Last updated May 29, 2012.)

The 2011 Census data (Geography Series) shows Ramara's seniors (65+ years of age) outnumbering children aged 0-14, by almost 2:1, or 23% compared to 12.3%. The national percentage of seniors aged 65+ is 14.8%.

Of the sixteen municipalities comprising Simcoe County, there are eight where the seniors' population is greater than the children's population: Wasaga Beach, Ramara, Collingwood, Midland, Tiny, Penetanguishene, Severn and Tay.

Age Distribution

Ramara's population is aging. The 2011 Census data shows that the percentage of the population that is 55 years of age and over is now 40% (up 4% from 2006) and those 65 years and over comprise 23% (up 3% from 2006) of Ramara's population.



The aging demographic in Ramara implies that many residents are entering retirement or are at a later stage in life. Leisure trends indicate that this group will have diverse needs and interests in terms of parks and recreation services. Older adults today are active, with high levels of expectation for services not traditionally offered to this age group.

The other large demographic here, is the 47% of working-age residents, between the ages of 15 and 54. Working adults tend to look for flexible, affordable, easily accessible recreation because their work commitments, travel, family responsibilities and so on, take up large amounts of their time. They want their recreation to be convenient and adaptable to their individual circumstances.

4.5 Employment and Income

Historically, Ramara's economic base was largely agricultural. Now it has approximately 350 businesses in diverse sectors, such as aggregates, manufacturing, tourism, retail, technology, artisan and small/home-based business.

Tourism

Ramara is located just one hour north of Toronto, making it (as well as the districts of Mnjikaning, Orillia, Oro-Medonte and Severn) a prominent, year-round tourist destination. According to the most recent statistics, Simcoe County attracted 6.9 million visitors in 2004. In particular, the Lake Simcoe Tourism Area, which includes Ramara, is highly accessible to visitors with over five million residents of the GTA living within a 1-hour drive and 10 million people within a 3-hour drive using the 400 series highways or the more scenic back routes. The 2007 Lake Simcoe Tourism Area Assessment (by the Resource Management Consulting Group at: http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/PR_Barrie_Orillia.pdf) found that the Lake Simcoe Tourism Area enjoyed a higher share of visitors than neighbouring tourist areas, presumably because of Casino Rama, major ski resorts, Georgian Mall and the opportunities for golfing, fishing, festivals/events and outdoor recreation.

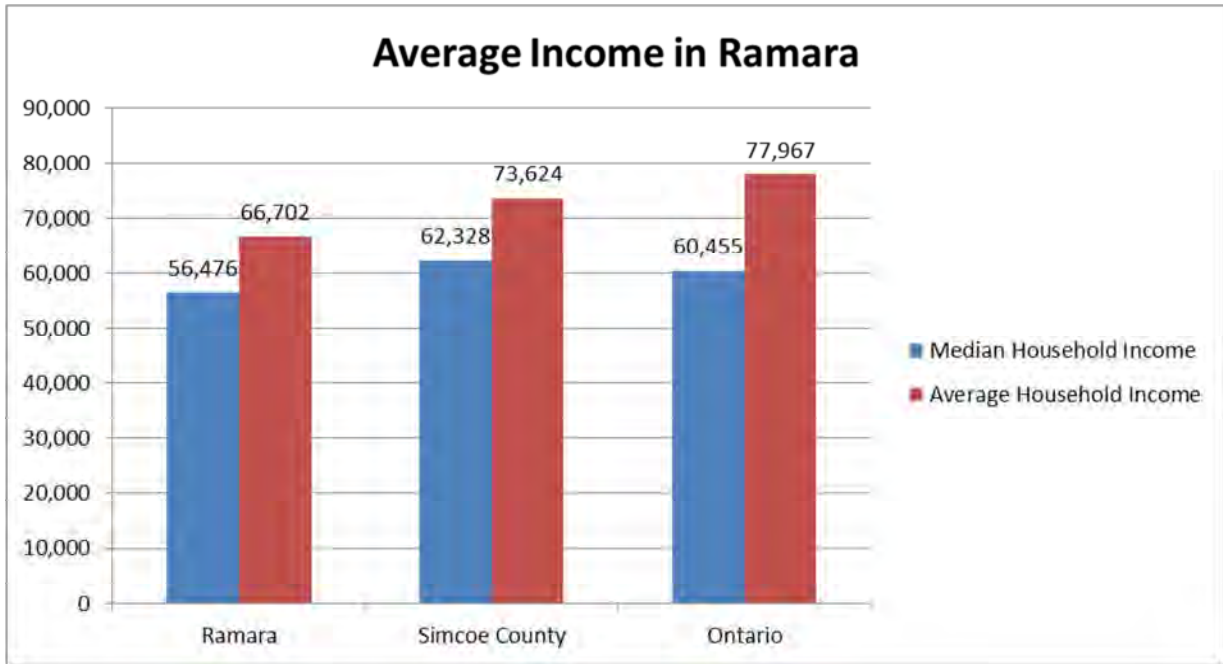
Agriculture

The 2011 Census of Agriculture reports that Ramara has 156 farms, which is a 12.9% decrease from 179 farms in 2006. Even though the number of farms and total land area decreased, there was a 10% increase in farm size since 2006. This indicates a trend for farm operators to consolidate and have larger operations.

Another noticeable trend is the aging demographic of Ramara's farm operators. In 2006, 51% of Ramara's farm operators were in the 35-54 years of age bracket. In 2011, farm operators 55 years of age and older comprise 51% of the farming population.

Household Income

Household income indicates how much disposable income, if any, residents may have to spend on recreation and leisure programs and services. Low levels of income can be a barrier to participation in recreation while higher levels of income and education often increase the likelihood that a person will engage in recreation or leisure activities. The average household income in Ramara is \$66,702, which is lower than both the County and Provincial average incomes.



(Simcoe County Social Services, Research Analyst, Irena Pozgaj; based on 2006 census at: http://www.simcoecountycoalition.ca/Libraries/Council/Simcoe_County_Demographics_10-12-2010_1.sflb.ashx).

In Ramara Township, 4.4% of households spend 70% or more of their income on basic necessities (food, shelter and clothing). This is a lower percent than the provincial average of 11.1% and the County average of 6.6%.

Private households in Ramara, comprised of couples without children, make up over half of the population. This is much higher than the County and Provincial populations.

Household Composition in Ramara

Total census families in private households	Couple families with children	Couple families without children	Female lone-parent	Male lone-parent
Ontario (3,422,320)	49%	36%	13%	3%
Simcoe County (122,655)	47%	39%	11%	3%
Ramara (3,000)	36%	53%	9%	2%

(Simcoe County Social Services, Research Analyst, Irena Pozgaj; based on 2006 census at: http://www.simcoecountycoalition.ca/Libraries/Council/Simcoe_County_Demographics_10-12-2010_1.sflb.ashx).

The employment and income trends in Ramara pose both opportunities and challenges. While the area has great potential for tourism and introduction of new forms of recreation, it must also fulfill the needs of its long-time, strong agricultural base. While many households are on fixed incomes, many others are higher income “couples only” households. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found that “kids from higher-income families have a 25% higher participation rate than those from lower-income families.” This points to the need to offer a variety of programs and services, to find ways to lessen or remove participation barriers, such as income, and be sensitive to the changing composition and needs within the community.

4.6 Education

Almost half of Ramara’s population has some post-secondary education. This is similar to County percentages, but slightly lower than the provincial percentage. The percent of the population without a certificate, diploma or degree is slightly higher in Ramara than in the Province or County.

	No certificate, diploma or degree	High school or equivalent	Some post-secondary education
Ontario	22%	27%	51%
Simcoe County	24%	29%	47%
Ramara	27%	26%	47%

(Simcoe County Social Services, Research Analyst, Irena Pozgaj; based on 2006 census at: http://www.simcoecountycoalition.ca/Libraries/Council/Simcoe_County_Demographics_10-12-2010_1.sflb.ashx)

Generally, higher levels of income and education often increase the likelihood that a person will engage in recreation or leisure activities. However, studies show that more involvement in sports and recreation, can actually improve a student’s chances of doing well at school. “Teens who are active at school or play sports are 20% more likely to earn an “A” in math or English than sedentary teens.”(Active Living Research a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012.)

Again, provision of parks and recreation services should be sensitive to the needs of youth and families who may face barriers to participation, such as transportation, and find creative ways to get youth involved in activity. As well, various methods of communication should be used as not everyone is computer literate or has access to technology. Partnerships with churches, schools, community centres/halls and other venues may help in reaching and serving community members.

4.7 Language, Immigration Status, Visible Minorities

According to the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), the percentage of the population who were of aboriginal identity was higher in North Simcoe Muskoka and Northeast Simcoe, which include Ramara, as compared to the Province (Northeast Simcoe Profile, North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network, May 2006.)

In North East Simcoe, approximately 93.5% of the population identified themselves as Francophone or Anglophone, compared to only 72% in Ontario (LHIN, 2006.)

	Francophone	Aboriginal Identity
Ontario	4.4%	2.0%
Simcoe County	2.9%	3.1%
Mnjikaning First Nation	0.0%	88.7%
Ramara	0.8%	3.2%

(Simcoe County Social Services, Research Analyst, Irena Pozgaj; based on 2006 census at:

http://www.simcoecountycoalition.ca/Libraries/Council/Simcoe_County_Demographics_10-12-2010_1.sflb.ashx

Foreign born persons who have immigrated to Canada account for 12% of Ramara's population and there have been no recent immigrants (between 2001 and 2006).

	Foreign Born Population	Recent Immigrants	Non-Immigrants
Ontario	28%	17%	71%
Simcoe County	12%	7%	87%
Ramara	12%	0%	88%

(Simcoe County Social Services, Research Analyst, Irena Pozgaj; based on 2006 census at:

http://www.simcoecountycoalition.ca/Libraries/Council/Simcoe_County_Demographics_10-12-2010_1.sflb.ashx

Ethnicity of community members can influence the types of programs and services requested. For example, communities or centres with a large foreign-born population may be asked to provide types of recreation not traditionally offered, such as bocce ball or cricket.

5. Trends in Parks and Recreation

There are a number of societal, recreation and health trends that have implications for the delivery of parks and recreation services in Ramara.

5.1 Inactivity Leading to Poor Health In All Age Groups

Canadians of all ages are too sedentary and the consequence of this is poor health. Reasons for inactivity are numerous, the main ones being:

- Lack of time
- Increase in computer and electronic use
- Barriers such as low income, racial discrimination, disabilities or lack of facilities

Almost half of Canadians say that long work hours and lack of time prohibits them from being more active. (Heart and Stroke Foundation Report, November 2011, Time Crunch is Stealing Healthy Years from Canadians at:

http://stream1.newswire.ca/media/2011/11/29/20111129_C2074_DOC_EN_7447.pdf

Relevant Statistics

- The Heart and Stroke Foundation reports that rates of high blood pressure have skyrocketed by 77%, diabetes 45% and obesity 18% affecting both young and old in the last 2 decades.
- Screen time (TV, computers and video games) among children and adolescents is estimated to exceed recommended maximums. By contrast, approximately 90% of Canadian children and adolescents are not meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines. Children living in poverty, with disabilities, or living in neighbourhoods where activity is restricted by climate, safety concerns, lack of facilities, or shortage of money are most at risk for low activity levels. (Caught in the Time Crunch: Time Use, Leisure and Culture in Canada, June 15, 2010, Report of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing at: <http://www.spra.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=4be0ee90-ff6b-41f2-aaae-bcca44ea7b49>)
- The 2012 Report Card on Physical Activity gives an “F” grade to Active Play and Leisure, citing 46% of kids aged 6-11 get 3 hours or less of active play per week. (Is Active Play Extinct? 2012 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth at: <http://dvqdas9jty7g6.cloudfront.net/reportcards2012/AHKC%202012%20-%20Report%20Card%20Short%20Form%20-%20FINAL.pdf>)
- The Report Card also mentions that “kids from higher-income families have a 25% higher participation rate than those from lower-income families.” To compound this problem,

leisure and culture activities are becoming more expensive. “Canadian families are participating less frequently in these kinds of activities, but spending more money on them.” (Caught in the Time Crunch: Time Use, Leisure and Culture in Canada June 15, 2010 Report of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing at:

<http://www.spra.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=4be0ee90-ff6b-41f2-aaae-bcca44ea7b49>)

- A higher proportion of women – nearly 20% more than men – feel caught in a time crunch attributed to caring for senior parents and/or children, working at a job, household responsibilities, commuting, and so on.
- Quality of life and health can be negatively affected by lack of facilities, resources, sport and recreation programs and even open space. (Caught in the Time Crunch)

Implications for Ramara

Due to its proximity to the GTA, Ramara probably has a large number of commuters who have less disposable time for recreation. An article in The Sport Journal (George Karlis, Ph.D., United States Sports Academy, “The Future of Leisure, Recreation and Sport in Canada) finds that although urbanization in Canada overall is increasing, there is also a trend for some Canadians to move back to rural areas to enjoy country living. The Township of Severn Master Plan found that their residents have travel options allowing them to live in rural areas, yet still be within easy reach of towns and cities for work.

Also, family income in rural areas tends to be lower than in urban centres. Of interest though is the fact that North East Simcoe (which includes Ramara) has a lower proportion of low income individuals than Ontario (North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network, 2006). Participation in sports and recreation in rural areas becomes even more expensive when facilities are not within walking distance and residents must travel, sometimes long distances, to a program or facility. Transportation and centralized services often become a challenge in rural communities.

The reasons for inactivity are numerous, so for Ramara it means tackling the issue with a multi-faceted approach that may include building flexibility and convenience into programs to make it easy for busy families to participate, looking at ways to reduce the transportation barrier, being creative in ways of motivating kids to shut off their computers or tvs and participate in an activity. The Heart and Stroke Foundation poll reports 48% of respondents thought that their community could be more activity-friendly.

On a positive note, people don’t need a facility to be active and healthy (Heart and Stroke Foundation Report, November 2011, Time Crunch is Stealing Healthy Years from Canadians at: http://stream1.newswire.ca/media/2011/11/29/20111129_C2074_DOC_EN_7447.pdf). This

implies that Ramara Township can look at alternative ways of providing programs and services that are not dependent on costly facilities.

5.2 Desire for Walkable, Active, Healthy Communities

Across Ontario, Canada, North America and Europe, many initiatives are underway to plan sustainable, greener, walkable communities. Key objectives are:

- Active transportation policies,
- Trail development,
- Reducing the carbon footprint,
- Decreasing traffic congestion, pollution
- Encouraging activity, good health, and well-being.

Relevant Statistics

- “Active, healthy community design strategies – such as good public transit, well-maintained parks, and safe, efficient walking and cycling networks – make it easier to get the physical activity Canadians need to promote heart health, prevent stroke and maintain a healthy lifestyle.” (Heart and Stroke Foundation Report, November 2011, Time Crunch is Stealing Healthy Years from Canadians at: http://stream1.newswire.ca/media/2011/11/29/20111129_C2074_DOC_EN_7447.pdf).
- A nation-wide Environics survey showed that 82% of Canadians support spending government money on more dedicated bicycle lanes and paths in their communities.

Implications for Ramara

Ramara is currently moving forward on active transportation and trails, so residents are already expressing this need or desire. As a largely rural municipality, walkability does not make sense in all areas, but in terms of new developments and subdivisions and existing town centres, it should be viewed as an essential component because demand for these types of communities will grow.

Particularly relevant to the Ramara area are longer trail systems for cycling and hiking. Trails are accessible, affordable and convenient to most residents and visitors and offer an unstructured opportunity for family outings, fitness, or cycle tours.

5.3 Aging Population with Diverse Needs and Interests

The population in Canada is aging. As the baby boom generation ages and life expectancy increases, there will be more older adults requiring parks and recreation services than ever before.

Relevant Statistics

- North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network, 2006 finds that North East Simcoe, including Ramara, has a higher proportion of seniors than elsewhere in Ontario and attributes it to retirees who wish to relocate to cottage country and stay active and healthy by enjoying four season recreation and outdoor activities.
- The 2008 Parry Sound and Area Culture and Recreation Master Plan noted cottage conversions and second home ownership as important trends driven mainly by the older population.

What is particularly challenging about this demographic trend, is that the growing population of older adults is diverse in their expectations and needs. For example, some are still working and balancing their leisure with other responsibilities, so they have some of the same characteristics of a younger age group. They are staying active much later in life and may participate in strenuous activity, like hockey or triathlons. They may be affluent and own more than one home, staying in Ramara only part of the year.

Implications for Ramara

Ramara has and will continue to have a large older adult population. These residents will have diverse needs and expectations for programs and services that will be different than more traditional offerings to seniors. Some will be affluent, others on fixed incomes; some will be fit and mobile, others will have disabilities and mobility issues; some will be computer literate and technologically savvy, others will prefer more traditional forms of communication; some will participate in vigorous activity and sport, others will want more passive leisure choices. Many will be seasonal residents; others will be permanent, retired residents. It will be necessary to frequently keep a pulse on this group and involve them in decision making to best serve their needs.

The demographic trend of an aging population will mean that there will be a growing number of adults requiring various types of support to enable them to participate in recreation, such as handrails, ramps, larger print, adapted programs and so on.

Although the population is aging, the Township's overall population is expected to grow and so the total number of children, youth and other age groups will increase and there will be a need to continue to focus on family and child-centred activities too.

5.4 Changing Interests and Types of Recreation Programs

There are always new and emerging interests in sport, recreation and leisure, influenced by fads, social trends, demographics, technological advancements and innovations and so on. For example:

- a) There are emerging or new interests in sports and activities. Communities across Canada are seeing increased demand for such things as multi-use sports fields, skateboard and bmx parks, climbing walls, cricket, indoor soccer, standup paddleboarding, gathering areas for family celebrations, community parties and special events.
- b) Year round sport specialization and high level sport competition at much earlier ages. For example, year round indoor soccer; specialized sport camps; younger participation in competitive travel teams, etc.
- c) Arena sports, once predicted to decline, are actually on the increase. Female participation in hockey and men playing the game longer, have maintained the need for ice surfaces.
- d) Female participation in riskier athletics, like rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, downhill bike racing, etc. has increased because it is now socially acceptable for them to participate and manufacturers have produced equipment lines especially suited to women participants.
- e) Individual are experiencing time constraints as they multitask and try to balance work, family and recreational interests. They are looking for activities that they can self-schedule in a time and place of their own choosing.

Relevant Statistics

- The City of Orillia Facility Study documents activity trends to be lacrosse, aquatics, soccer, basketball, fitness, engaging youth in meaningful activity, older adults, girls and women .
- A survey conducted by the American College of Sports Medicine lists the Top fitness trends for 2012 ((She Knows Health and Wellness, Dec 05, 2011, Kristen Fischer Top 20 Fitness trends for 2012, at: <http://bing.search.sympatico.ca/?q=latest%20trends%20in%20recreation&mkt=en-ca&setLang=en-CA>)
 1. Educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals
 2. Strength training
 3. Fitness programs for older adults
 4. Exercise and weight loss
 5. Children and obesity
 6. Personal training

7. Core training
 8. Group personal training
 9. Zumba and other dance workouts
 10. Functional fitness
 11. Yoga
 12. Comprehensive health promotion programming at the worksite
 13. Outdoor activities
 14. Boot camp
 15. Reaching new markets
 16. Spinning (Indoor cycling)
 17. Sport-specific training
 18. Worker incentive programs
 19. Wellness coaching
 20. Physician referrals
- BC Recreation and Parks Association found” leisure activity areas that have grown include walking and cycling, home landscaping and gardening, cultural activities, outdoor activities and environmental learning, cultural learning and ecotourism, and physical activity as rehabilitation. Demands by parents for children’s physical activity programs will grow.” (BC Recreation and Parks Association, Excerpt from the Strategic Plan for the Parks and Recreation Sector in BC, Trends in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Field, 2006 at: http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about_bcrpa/documents/Trends.pdf3.2.7).

Implications for Ramara

Not all new activity interests will apply to Ramara Township. Those that appeal to an aging population, are water-based, or geared toward youth and families will be most relevant in Ramara, such as paddle boarding, bmx/skateboard facilities, sports fields, community events and gathering areas, trails and nature areas, gardening programs, cultural programs, fitness programs for older adults, outreach programs for youth, etc.

Given the “time crunch” statistics and the fact that many working families don’t have time for recreation, programs and activities that can be self-scheduled or spontaneous will be in demand.

The Lake Simcoe Tourism Area Assessment 2007, prepared by The Resource Management Consulting Group (at: http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/PR_Barrie_Orillia.pdf) identifies five core attractors to the Lake Simcoe area: outdoor recreation activities, such as fishing, skiing, hiking, golfing and trail use; festivals and events; resort experiences, including Fern Resort; Gaming; and Recurring Sports Competitions. There are emerging attractors too: arts and culture, agritourism, and new outdoor recreation (e.g. dog sledding, mountain biking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, treetop trekking, bike touring, ATV trail systems). The report also found that the area is most likely to attract “upscale adventurers,” families and “retired roamers.”

5.5 Greater Use of Technology

Technology is affecting how parks and recreation departments do business. Software programs are streamlining such daily tasks as scheduling, registration, facility rentals and facility maintenance. Communication with website visitors is instantaneous and paper-free. Program information is at everyone's fingertips and virtual tours of facilities or parks can be done from the comfort of home. More and more, people will expect the choice to do business on-line.

Today's youth expect technological sophistication and for the most part solely rely on electronic devices for most of their communication.

Implications for Ramara

Internet access is problematic in Ramara because service provision is lacking, inconsistent or too costly. As well, the aging demographic in Ramara may mean that demand for technology has not yet peaked, however this will change as more older adults become computer literate.

Web-based information is an easy and cost effective way to communicate with the far reaches of the municipality. However, given the lack of internet access, this method is somewhat restricted. So too is the ability to reach the youth of the Township.

As the community grows and changes, there will be more demands placed on having important information, such as rental forms, program registrations etc. on-line to service time-strapped families that may not have time to register in person.

5.6 Allure of Enhanced Quality of Life with Water-Based Recreation

Water-based recreation greatly enhances the quality of life in Canada and especially in Ramara. Using clean lakes and rivers for activities, like camping, sightseeing, birdwatching, boating, angling, photography, hiking, swimming and going to the beach, is important to Canadians.

Relevant Statistics

- The 2012 RBC Canadian Water Attitudes Study (at: http://www.foca.on.ca/xinha/plugins/ExtendedFileManager/demo_images/2012_RBC_Canadian_Water_Attitudes.pdf) found that Canadians have many fond memories related to water when they think of time spent in the Canadian outdoors, and mentioned hiking, spending time at the beach, swimming and fishing as their top four fondest outdoor experiences. In Ontario, respondents ranked going to the beach and swimming as their fondest memories, followed by hiking and fishing.

- The 2012 RBC Canadian Water Attitudes Study also states that “fresh water is the natural resource most cared about by Canadians.”
- Health Canada, Environmental and Workplace Health at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/recreat/index-eng.php> protects Canada’s water quality for swimming and states: “Canadians everywhere understand the importance of clean, safe recreational bathing waters. Whether they are used for sport or relaxation, health or pleasure, there is something about the enjoyment and sense of well-being derived from the experience that cannot easily be matched.”
- The Ontario Recreation Framework (2011) at: <http://brant.siretechnologies.com/sirepub/cache/2/1dkhkzqjr5pefkv1zeo0c32f/156211127201211561762.PDF> recognizes that “by acquiring, protecting and managing valuable open spaces, trails, natural features and culturally important assets, recreation supports environmental sustainability. Parks, trails and natural areas contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, improve air quality and lessen the effects of urban heat islands.
- Access to natural, undeveloped, spaces has a dramatic and positive impact on our physical and mental well-being. (Dr. Frances E. (Ming) Kuo, Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat. National Recreation and Park Association, 2010, at: http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/MingKuo-Summary.PDF).

Boating

Boating is a big industry in Canada and the National Marine Manufacturers Association reported in June 2010 that there were six million boaters prepared to go boating that summer. (National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) Canada, 2010).

According to marketing trends, boaters are increasing in average age and income. (Recreational Boating and the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Region Great Lakes Commission, Feature Report, 2000 at: <http://www.glc.org/advisor/00/recboating.pdf>).

- Another study found that spending by anglers, cruisers, trailer-boater, cottagers with boats and land-based visitors contributed about six billion dollars to the economy and this figure does not include American boaters who boat in Canada. (Recreational Boating’s Big Splash The Economic Impact of Recreational Boating in Canada: 2006 Summary Report Discover Boating Canada, Bolton, Ontario, at: http://www.cmma.ca/cmma/downloads/EIS_Summary-FINAL-10-Jan-08.pdf)
- Due to many factors including shrinking water levels, declining fish populations, gas prices, unsteady economy, aging boaters and anglers, recreational boating is stagnating or declining. (Dr. Dan McCole, Michigan State University, Recreational Boating and Tourism Technical Working Group, International Upper Great Lakes Study, 2010 at:

http://www.iugls.org/docs/DocStore/ProjectArchive/RBT_RecBoating/RBT01_McCole_RecBoatingTourismContextualNarrative/Reports/RBT01-R1_McCole.pdf).

- Conversely, paddle boating (kayaking, rafting and canoeing) are increasing and the power boating market is looking to attract new markets, such as women, Asian and Hispanic boaters.

Angling

The average age of anglers is increasing and their overall numbers are declining. However, more than 3.2 million adults bought fishing licenses in 2005. (Recreational Anglers in Canada, Nancy Hofmann, Environment Accounts and Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/16-002-x/2008002/article/10622-eng.htm>).

- “Approximately eight out of every ten, or 2.5 million, anglers fished within their home province or territory and approximately three quarters of active resident anglers live in Ontario, Quebec or British Columbia.” (Recreational Anglers in Canada, Nancy Hofmann, Environment Accounts and Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/16-002-x/2008002/article/10622-eng.htm>).

Implications for Ramara

Ramara offers a wealth of opportunities for water-based recreation on Lakes Simcoe, Couchiching, Dalrymple, St. John and Mud and on the Black, Severn and Talbot Rivers and the nearby Trent-Severn Waterway. With over 104 kilometres of shoreline, angling, boating, sunbathing, swimming, paddle boarding and so on are important to the quality of life in Ramara and to its many visitors.

Even though numbers suggest that the overall boating and angling population is declining in Canada, the Ramara area is a highly sought destination for water-based pursuits. While many tourists and visitors enjoy Ramara’s water-based activities, many full-time and seasonal residents do too. That’s why it is important to ensure public access to the water for residents, docking facilities and programs that enable residents to participate in water-based activities.

There may be a role for Ramara to play in looking for creative ways (e.g. partnerships, joint initiatives) to offer more or improved water-based activities or services to its residents.

5.7 Aging Infrastructure and Needs for Upgrades

The CEO of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, in his opening remarks at the 2010 3rd International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health, said that “the aging of sports and recreation infrastructure is a major trend that is occurring and proving to be a challenge for many jurisdictions: Cash-strapped governments at all levels are finding it hard to finance replacement of older facilities.”

Relevant Statistics

- The Parks and Recreation Ontario report (2007) *Investing in Healthy Ontarians through Recreation and Parks Infrastructure* finds that “Ontario’s sport and recreation infrastructure is in a state of physical decline. The vast majority of publicly owned recreation facilities were built between 1956 and 1980, and are nearing the end of their useful life.”
- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires municipalities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to full participation in the life of the province. In many cases, this means facility upgrades and renovations to bring older buildings up to code.

Implications for Ramara

Many rural communities have been burdened by the necessity to upgrade and renovate their aging community halls, as is the case in Ramara. Establishing capital budgets and planning for eventual upgrades and even new facilities will be necessary.

5.8 Urgency in Meeting Youth Needs

The statistics about child and youth obesity and inactivity are startling. Aside from excessive amounts of time spent in front of a tv, computer or other electronics, youth today may be home alone a good portion of the time as their parents work and commute. Often they do not have a parent who engages in regular physical activity to be a role model for health and fitness. And the number of young adults living at home is increasing (George Karlis, Ph.D., The Sport Journal, United States Sports Academy, The Future of Leisure, Recreation and Sport in Canada). Active Living Research found that 20% of teens who are active at school or play sports are more likely to earn an “A” in math or English than sedentary teens. (Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012, at: http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_PowerofTrails.pdf).

Implications for Ramara

Youth of Ramara showed a wide range of interests in the Ramara Youth Survey, which demonstrates how engaged they wish to be in recreation. Being a rural community, there are some barriers, such as transportation and poor internet service, that further isolate the youth. Section 6, Best Practices discusses the needs of youth in rural communities and how to engage involve them. A key message was the need of rural female youth to have opportunities for both co-ed and “girls only” programs.

6. Best Practices and Models

Ramara is a rural community with many small towns spread over a wide geographic area and a large seasonal population. This circumstance poses some challenges for effective delivery of parks and recreation programs and services, such as communicating and networking across the municipality, building a strong volunteer base, providing consistency in service, being able to maintain and service existing facilities, or responding to new, changing or growing resident needs. However, Ramara is not alone and a number of resources from other small and/or rural jurisdictions in Ontario, Canada and the U.S. are provided here to assist Ramara in shaping its own future.

6.1 Bringing the Communities of Ramara Together

Cavan-Monaghan Cultural Mapping Project

Many municipalities find that producing a brochure or booklet of community resources is an excellent way to inform people of what is available, where and when. The Township of Cavan Monaghan is undertaking a cultural mapping project which is an on-line resource for information on cultural resources in the Township, such as:

- Community organizations
- Cultural industries and businesses
- Cultural and creative occupations
- Cultural and natural heritage
- Festivals and events
- Facilities and spaces

The Township sees it as a way of capturing Cavan Monaghan's unique character and identity and provides the following quote on arts and culture in rural communities:

“Arts, culture, and heritage are not only amenities to improve quality of life, but are a foundation upon which the future of rural and small communities rests. Arts and creative activities can profoundly affect the ability of a town not only to survive over time, but to thrive.”

Creative City Network of Canada. *Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Culture*. Creative City News, Special Edition 6.

<https://cavanmonaghan.civicweb.net/FileStorage/37A6467EA3D445668D5BC186F34EFDA9-2010%2011%2015%20Project%20Website%20with%20graphics..pdf>

North Perth Community Connection

The Municipality of North Perth is inviting residents to sign up for “Community Connection” an e-newsletter to inform the community about recreation in the municipality. An example of the newsletter is at the following link at:

<http://www.northperth.ca/en/thingstodo/resources/ConnectionNewsV12I4.pdf>

Minto Retiree Activity Group

This active group focuses on meeting the recreation needs of seniors in the entire township and meets once a month. This initiative builds networks across a large area and truly works on collaboration among all small municipalities.

“The Minto Retiree Activity Group is a collaboration of members from Clifford, Harriston, Palmerston and the former Minto Township. Some of the members are also members of their local senior's club, while others are not.”

Clearview Township Culture Days

New to Clearview Township this year is Clearview Culture Days (at: <http://www.clearview.ca/home/culture-daysClearview>.) This ten-day festival will occur in September 2012 throughout the entire Township. For residents and visitors alike, the festival encourages people to become SHUNPIKERS (people who shun/avoid major highways/pikes) and discover local gems along the back roads of Clearview. Intended to celebrate agriculture and multicultural heritage, it's inviting anything from yoga classes, drumming, corn maze adventures, sheep shearing, composting, feeding turkeys, throwing pottery, to performing arts.

Clearview Township Trail Mixer

Each spring, Clearview Township coordinates a Trail Mixer event. This event is hosted by a different community each year with the purpose of celebrating trails and fitness and bringing community members together. This year New Lowell was the host community. The local public school ran fundraisers (e.g. food concession, silent auction, Besty Bingo with the Mayor's sheep), the Family Y organized a Fun Run on the trail, a local outfitter ran kayak, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding clinics at the pond, the OPP organized a bike rodeo, local fitness professionals ran programs such as sunrise yoga, trail enthusiasts led guided hikes on the Ganaraska, and local musicians played in the park pavilion.

Bruce Grey Healthy Communities Fund Project

In the rural municipality of Bruce Grey, they applied for a Healthy Communities Fund Project Grant which ended up bringing all the residents of Grey Highlands together for the Longest Day of Play with the intention of promoting health and wellness and strengthening connections among

the various communities. The initiative was a fun competition among municipalities to see who could log the most hours of PLAY on June 21st, the longest day of the year.

(at: <http://www.greyhighlands.ca/living.php?pgid=196> and www.playbrucegrey.com)

More information about the Healthy Communities Fund Grant Program (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) can be found at: <http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/healthy-communities/hcf/2012/2012%20Local-GuidelinesEN.pdf>

“This cost-sharing program encourages partnerships and community networking and provides:

- Non-capital, project-based seed funding to organizations for the successful delivery of integrated health promotion initiatives.
- Opportunities for under-served/disadvantaged persons who do not have equitable access to health promotion programming in their communities”

This deadline for application to this program ended in 2012. The province now has a centralized on-line grant application process, called Grants Ontario at: <http://www.grants.gov.on.ca>

This is a good resource to watch for new, upcoming grants that may be applicable to Ramara.

6.2 Standardized Forms and Fees

In the interests of consistency and efficiency, many municipalities have standardized forms and fee structures.

The Municipality of North Perth (Listowel area)

This Municipality divides its services and programs into two units: Sports and Recreation, and Parks and Trails. A “quick link” on the home page immediately directs you to the municipality’s recreation services. By following the links, rental fees and forms are available at:

<http://www.northperth.ca/en/#>

Clearview Township

At: <http://www.clearview.ca/home/tourism-and-recreation/recreation/community-halls>

At: <http://www.clearview.ca/home/information/applications-and-forms>

Of particular relevance is Clearview’s Hall Board Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix 2).

Tiny Township

At: <http://www.township.tiny.on.ca/recreation/FACILITIESRENTALS/index.htm>

Oro-Medonte

Tennis usage registration form at: http://www.oro-medonte.ca/ws_par/groups/public/@pub/@oromed/documents/web_content/wspar_029473.pdf

Bruce Grey

General Conditions Facility Rental Agreement at: <http://www.greighighlands.ca/downloads/761.pdf>

Fees and Charges at: <http://www.greighighlands.ca/downloads/390.pdf>

Municipal Facility/Hall Rental Agreement at: <http://www.greighighlands.ca/downloads/360.pdf>

6.3 Outdoor Ice Facilities

Clearview Township

Many communities are getting creative in providing outdoor, temporary ice surfaces. In Clearview Township (Stayner area) which is largely rural with a high influx of tourists and seasonal residents, the village of New Lowell firefighters builds and maintains an ice rink in the village park beside the firehall and in Stayner, volunteers flood the baseball diamond in Ives Park, beside the Curling Club. Coming on board for the 2012 season will be the villages of Creemore and Singhampton. This initiative is largely made possible by Clearview Firefighters.

At: <http://bing.search.sympatico.ca/?q=Clearview%20township&mkt=en-ca&setLang=en-CA>

Wasaga Beach provides an outdoor ice rink on its tennis courts adjacent to the Family Y.

Oro Medonte

This Township maintains outdoor ice as well and their website contains an “ice rink checklist” for maintenance and inspection purposes at:

<http://www.oro-medonte.ca/MunicipalServices/DepartmentServices/RecreationCommunityServices/index.htm>

Caledon

Even larger, urban centres are opting for volunteer-operated outdoor ice rinks. This practice occurs in Ottawa and Caledon, to name two. The following excerpt comes from Caledon’s website:

“Weather permitting, Parks staff can assist community members with the creation of outdoor rinks in some Town parks each winter, with the following requirements:

- *Rinks are not supervised or maintained by Town staff*
- *All maintenance is done by volunteer community members*
- *Rinks generally are allowed on ball diamond infields and some hard-courts*
- *Ball diamond lights can be used for evening skating – parks staff must turn hydro on at each site at beginning of skating season*
- *Parks staff can berm snow after first significant snowfall, and can clear snow after heavy snowfalls only after all work is complete on roads and sidewalks.*
- *Community-run rinks are NOT for organized sports – NO hockey practices or team activities are allowed*
- *Use is casual-only with no bookings or rentals*

If you are interested in helping to create an outdoor rink in your community, [contact us.](#)”

6.4 Community Capacity Building in Rural Communities

Our Ramara Project

The “Our Ramara Project” is a good example of a community capacity building initiative which could be revitalized for future.

Tiny Township

Tiny Township has a truly exemplary volunteer development policy for a small, rural municipality.

“The Township of Tiny is committed to creating a caring and inclusive living environment through citizen engagement and provides opportunities for everyone to fully participate in the life of his or her community. It recognizes the importance of the role volunteers can play in the achievement of its mission and mandate and enhancing the work of paid staff in the creation of a safe and enjoyable place in which to live. This policy has been developed to facilitate the involvement and management of volunteers in the delivery of its services.”

The policy is attached in Appendix 3

Rural Youth: Leading Today, Tomorrow and Beyond

(A Report from The Ontario Rural Council (TORC), Ontario AgriCentre, Guelph, Ontario, July 2007 at: <http://ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=bf17140f-ce38-4360-9722-b37a2290acad> and www.torc.on.ca)

This report suggests many best practices, resources and ideas for engaging youth in rural communities. In March 2007, a one-day workshop for rural youth “Leading Today, Tomorrow and Beyond” identified the ten top issues for youth living in rural areas:

- Gainful youth employment
- Stereotypes that limit youth/eliminating the negative images of youth
- Transportation
- Teen pregnancy and substance abuse
- Homeless youth
- Little or no consultation of youth in political decision-making processes / lack of youth representation/voice on town councils, boards of directors
- Teen depression, peer counseling
- Youth Entrepreneurship
- Healthy downtowns (no matter how small) and a limit to sprawl
- Lack of sports and recreational activities

A Compilation of Research on Rural Girls’ and Young Women’s Issues

(Rural Secretariat Community Development Program, Government of Canada. Compiled by Girls Action Foundation, February 2012, at:

http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/files/rural_research_review_online.pdf)

This resource includes the “Rural Community Action Guide: A collection of reflections, best practices, and resources from practitioners who work with girls and young women in rural communities.” According to the research done during this project, girls and young women in rural communities need:

- Inclusive gender-specific and co-ed programs that include young people in both design and delivery.
- Accessible youth-friendly spaces in the community. Ideally, this would be a youth centre or other designated room or building where youth are free to take part in organized and unorganized activities.
- To feel safe (no drugs, discrimination, or violence) without being under surveillance.

An interesting and most dominant theme in this research was young women in rural communities feel attached and supported by the community. “In this rural community, the participants feel closely connected to and supported by their friends and family. Many of the participants also state that church membership, close relationships with teachers, and involvement in sports and other community activities have been instrumental in instilling both a sense of attachment and support.”

Financing and Sustaining Out-of-School Programs in Rural Communities

(Kate Sandel, Soumya Bhat, January 2008, The Finance Project at:

<http://www.financeproject.org/publications/ostruralyouth.pdf>)

Even though this is an American resource, many of the key principles apply to Canada and many of the funding sources referred to have Canadian counterparts. This report concludes that the keys to success for rural communities are dynamic leadership, key champions, ability to capitalize on community strengths, broad community support, results orientation, and networking and information sharing. Major barriers in rural communities are having few private partners, a limited tax base, high transportation costs, staffing challenges, and limited eligibility for funding.

Capacity Building in Action Summary of Community-Based Projects BC Healthy Living

At: <http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/sites/all/files/file/CapacityBuildingInAction.pdf>

This resource documents many capacity building initiatives taking place across B.C., including ice rinks, community gardens, youth activities, leadership programs, sport fields, health living, etc.

BC Healthy Living Alliance Community Capacity Building Strategy, September 2007

At: http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/sites/all/files/BCHLA_CapacityBuildingStrategy_1.pdf

A framework, models, and better practices for capacity building are provided, with reference to Canadian resources.

Municipal Economic Development Readiness Initiative Best Practices in Rural & Small Town Economic Development

This presentation provides ingredients for success, best practices and approaches to capacity building in rural areas and small towns at:

http://www.gogeraldine.co.nz/site/gogeraldine/files/positive%20futures/best_practices_report_final.pdf, Rick Hundey, Management and Planning Services, January 2004, Huron County Economic Development Corp.)

Clearview Trails Donor Recognition Policy

Clearview Township has developed a policy for encouraging donations as part of their overall trails fundraising plan. The policy outlines fair and consistent procedures for trail donations and donors and builds lasting relationships with trail donors (See Appendix 4).

7. Ramara Public Consultation

Public consultation involved interviews, an on-line and paper survey, focus groups, community open houses and committee meetings. Findings are presented in this section in two parts: the survey results and the challenges and opportunities summary charts.

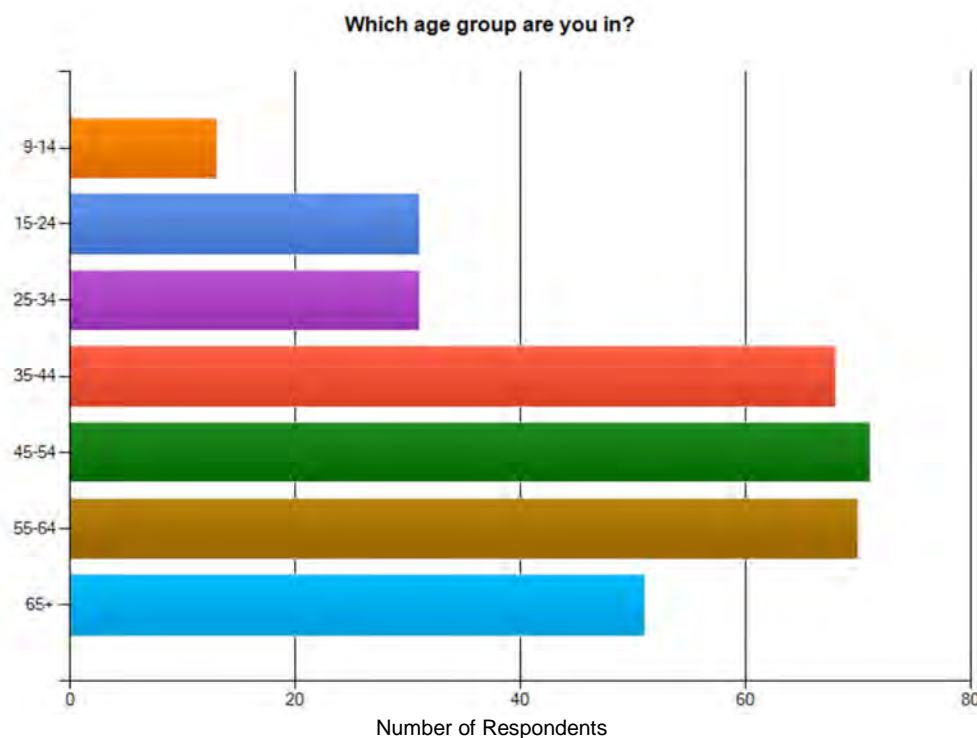
7.1 Final Survey Results

By the September 30, 2012 closing date, a total of 335 surveys were completed which is an excellent community response. Of the 335 respondents starting the survey, 311 (92.8%) finished the survey. Even though more than 90% of surveys started were completed, not all respondents answered every question so results may not represent 100% of the survey respondents in some cases. Some questions allowed for open-ended comments which give good insight into specific concerns, issues or strengths to build upon.

The survey was designed to reflect current fiscal realities and population growth projections in the Township for the next 10 years which preclude Ramara from considering major facility developments, such as arenas.

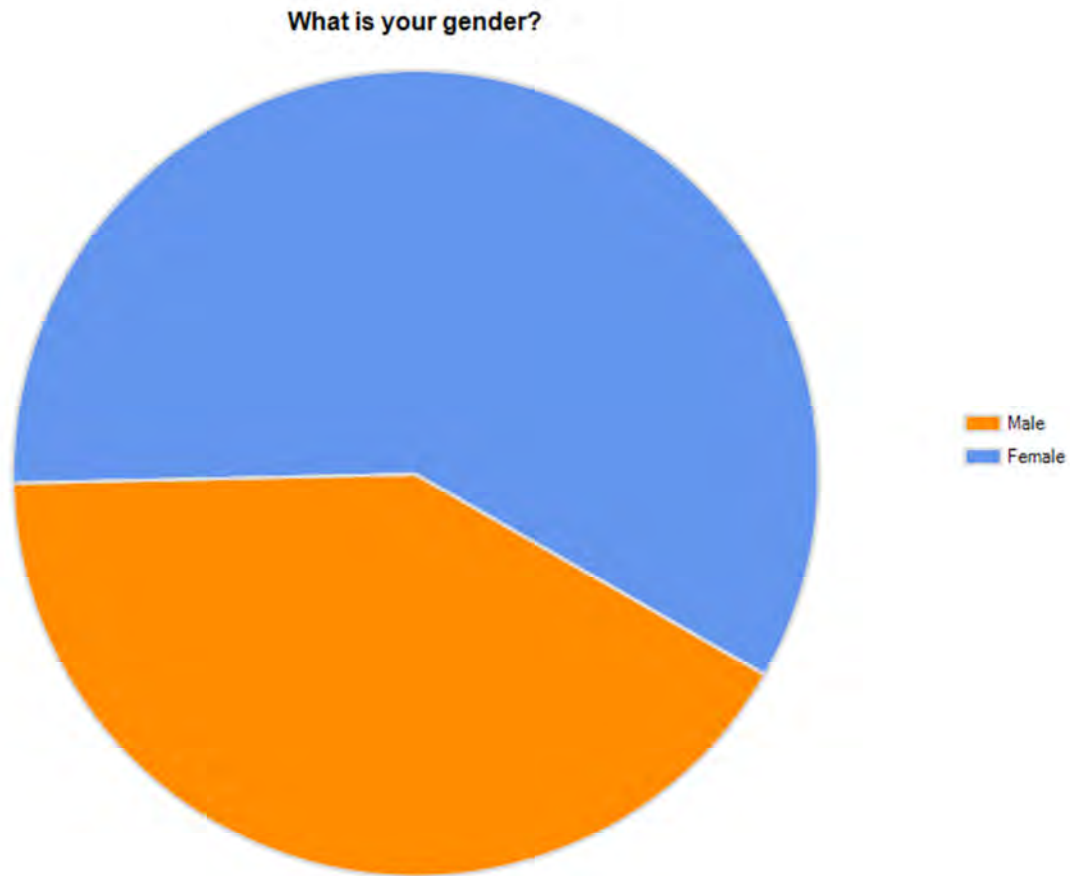
1. Age Profile

The majority of respondents were in the mid-life or 35-64 age groups. The 9-14 age group had a really low response rate with less than 10 individuals completing a survey.



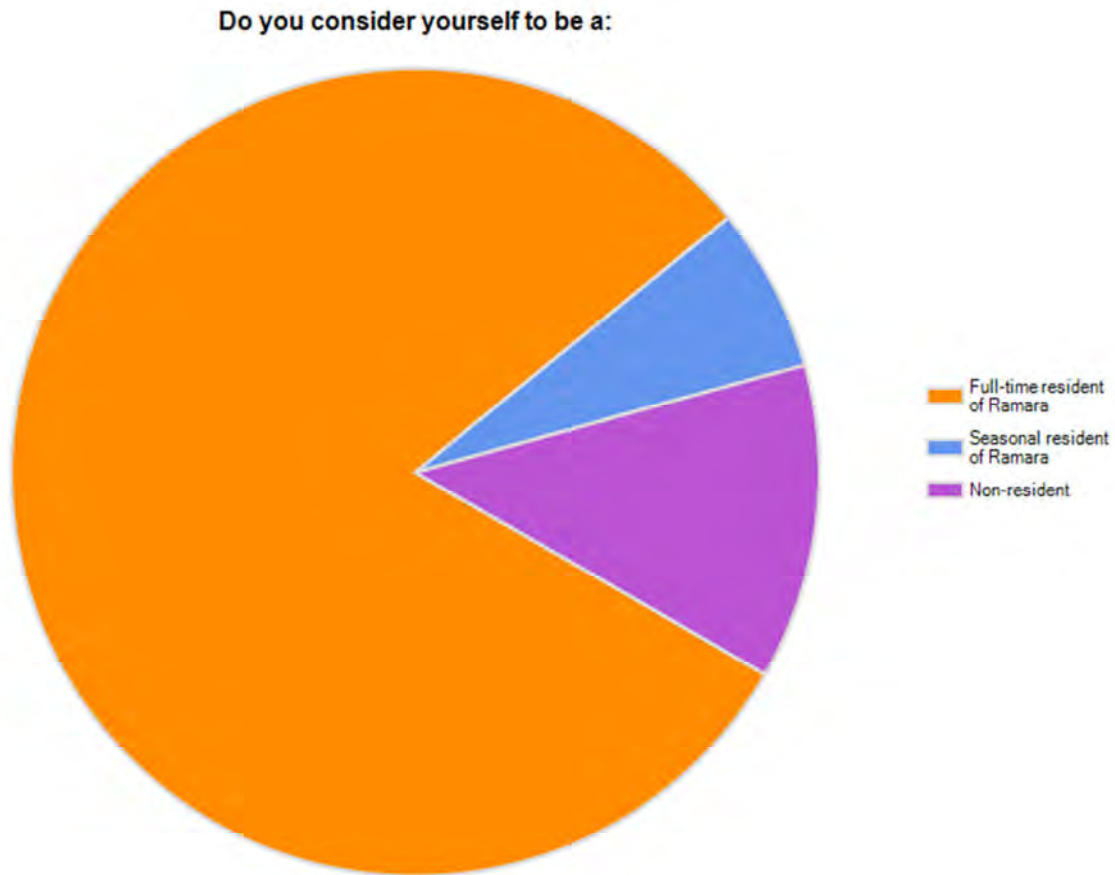
2. Gender Profile

Females (58.7%) completed more surveys than males (41.3%).



3. Residence Profile

The vast majority who completed the surveys are full-time residents. Included in the non-resident category (almost 13%) are residents of Rama (Chippewas of Rama First Nation). The non-resident group also includes individuals who come to Ramara for recreation (e.g. soccer, library programs, hall functions, etc.).

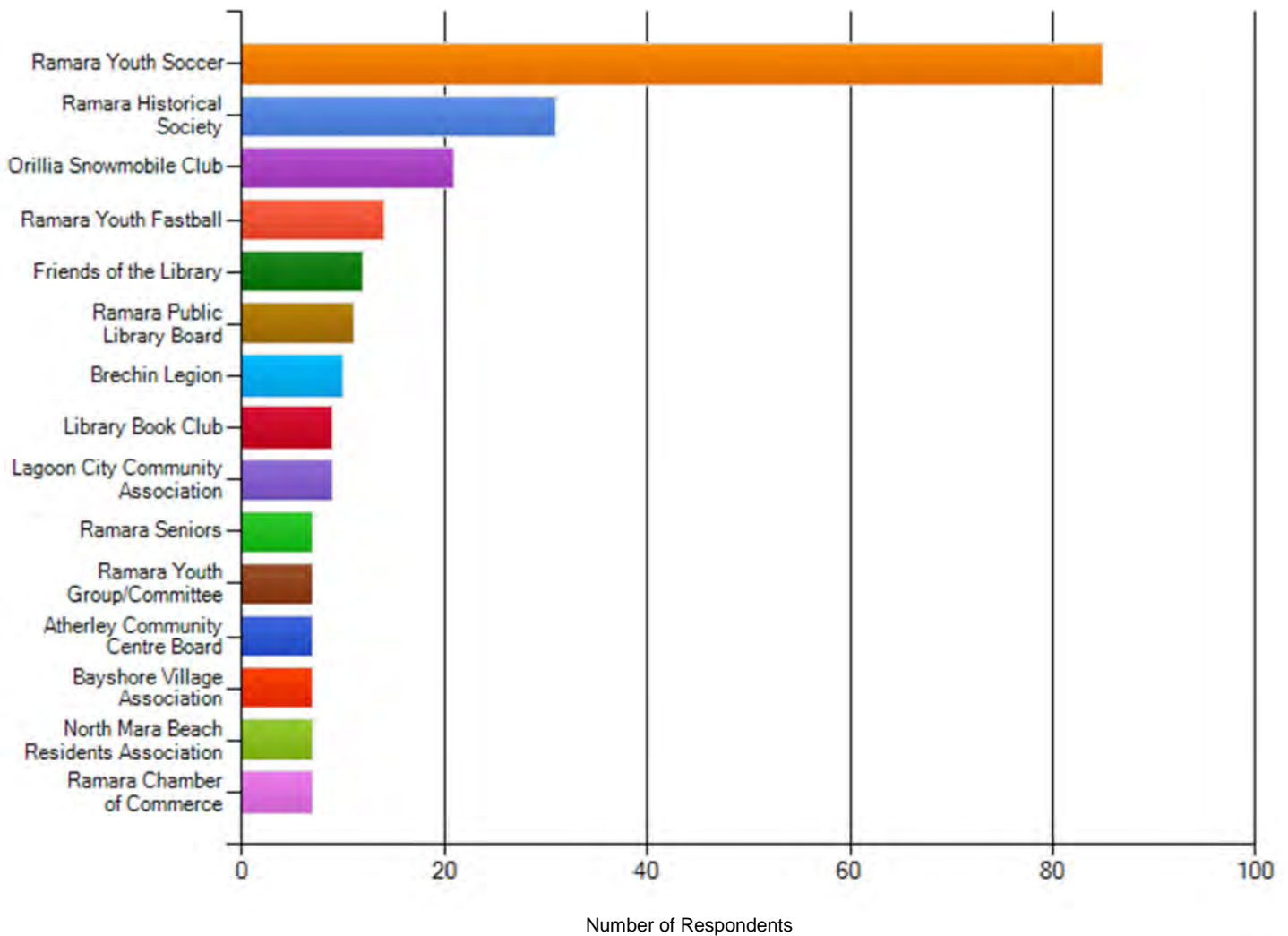


4. Community Group Profile

Almost all groups listed on the survey were represented by those completing surveys, with the exception of Lagoon City Yacht Club and Lagoon City Parks and Waterways Commission. Respondents with an affiliation to Ramara Youth Soccer represent 44% of the total number of respondents saying they belong to a community group. Overall, 141 (42%) of respondents did not indicate having an affiliation to any group.

The following graph shows the 15 groups that were mentioned most frequently by respondents and some individuals belong to more than one group.

Are you a participant in/member of any of these community groups? Please select all that apply.



Some residents (about 16%) travel outside of the township for recreation or participate in other activities not listed on the survey, specifically named was:

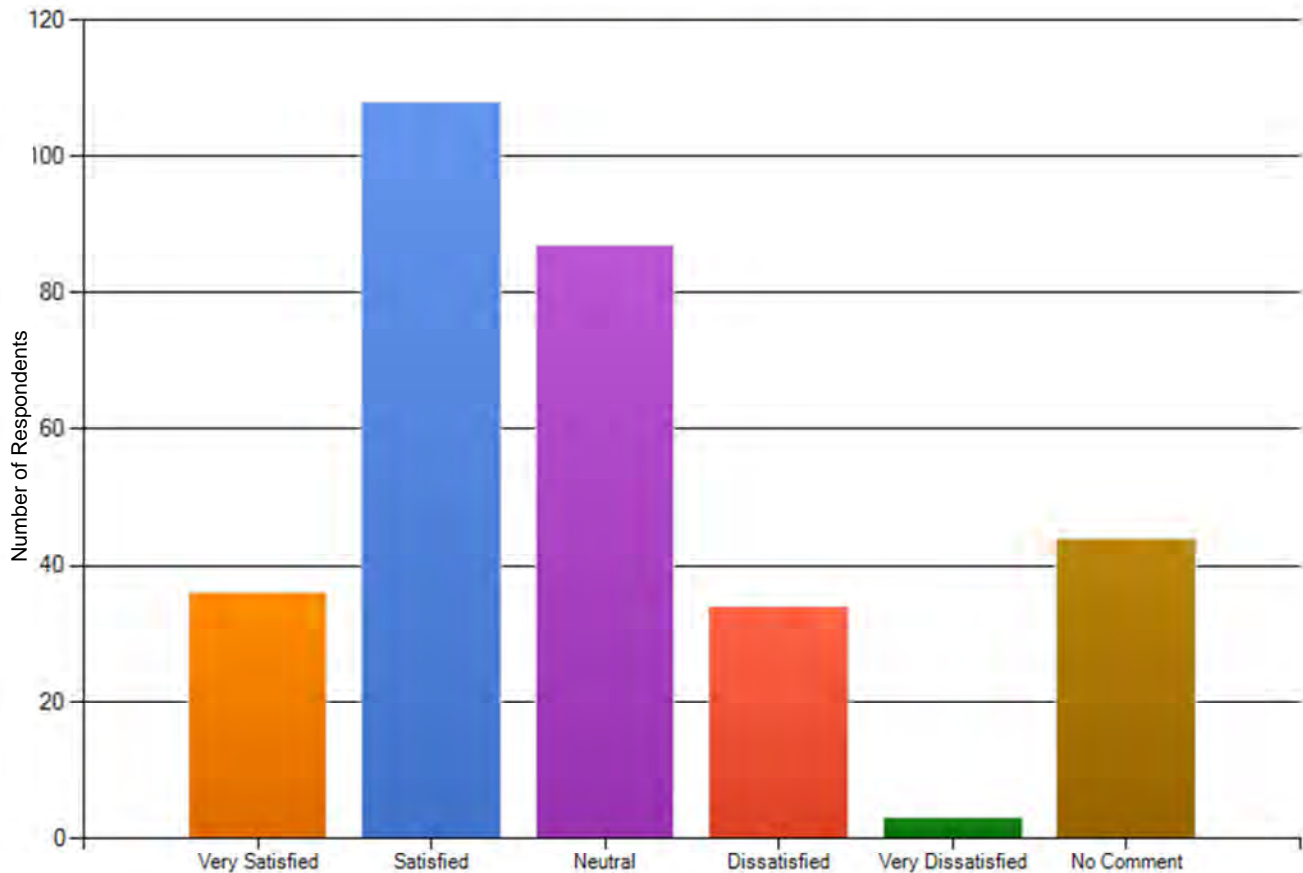
- RC Ramara Club
- Couchiching Conservancy
- Udney Bullets - Orillia District Fastball League
- Orillia Minor hockey
- Orillia Ball hockey
- Orillia girls hockey
- Orillia Zumba
- Orillia Horticultural Society
- Orillia Naturalists

- Orillia Soccer
- Orillia Baseball and Slo-pitch
- Orillia basketball
- Lions Club of Orillia
- Orillia Fish and Game Conservation
- Orillia Community Church
- Orillia Suns Volleyball
- Orillia Shrine Club, Murray Masonic Lodge – Beaverton
- Orillia Wolves volleyball skills
- Orillia figure skating club
- Orillia girls baseball
- Geneology Group in Orillia
- Orillia YMCA
- Helping Hands Orillia
- Drifters singing club at Seniors residence in Orillia
- Classic Car Club in Orillia
- Gautier’s Martial Arts
- Severn River Rowing Club
- Rama First Nation
- Washago Community Centre
- Parks and Rec at Ramara Centre (evening courses)
- Dance
- Horticultural Society (Garden Club)
- Duck Soup Productions
- T-ball
- Ramara T-ball
- Ramara Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee
- Rama Community Garden
- Triathalons, Marathons
- **Swimming**
- Beaverton Horticultural Society
- Beaverton COPE
- Keswick rep hockey
- Washago Seniors
- Washago Community Theatre
- Val Harbour Estate Association
- Brechin Ducks Unlimited
- Severn RC Flying Club
- Kite surfing
- Golf
- Barrie Canoe & Kayak Club

5. Program Satisfaction

Overall, approximately half (46.1%) of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with programs in Ramara. However, almost 30% are neutral and 12% are dissatisfied. 76 people wrote comments which are presented below.

Overall, how satisfied are you with the recreation programs provided by Ramara Township (e.g. day camps, swimming programs, etc.)?



Survey Respondent Comments: Programs are Good

- Soccer is amazing; Library programs in summer are excellent; Kids programs and day camps ran at Ramara Centre are excellent
- The soccer association is fantastic; The library programs for children are fantastic; The programs in summer at Ramara Centre for children are fantastic
- Satisfied with Ramara Rec programs-- Soccer 10 plus years; Baseball 3 plus years
- Programs are sufficient for the size and nature (rural area) of the Municipality and the facilities available
- What a smashing job done in hosting the lumberjack competition! So professional. Well done! Congratulations and thanks to all the volunteers

- Have watched the Day Camp staff during visits to the library -- this year is great. Other years the staff have been very lacking.
- Very satisfied with the kiddie camp programs. The programming is definitely well planned and very well organized. Hats off to the programmer!
- My grandson attends day camp at Ramara Centre -- he appreciates and enjoys the camps and the swimming lessons and the sports activities

Survey Respondent Comments: Better Communication Needed

- If there is risk of a program not running letting participants know as early as possible
- Ramara has camps?
- Ramara needs to advertise in local papers e.g. Soulvine for different community programs available.
- I'm unaware of available programs
- Needs more advertising and the Soulvine is Washago's paper for free. A lot of kids come from Washago.
- Chose no comment because we never see anything that the recreation dept. is doing. We have lived in Heritage Farm since 2003 and we only receive a tax bill. We likely would go looking if retired but our time is limited
- Just moved here; not familiar with activities; haven't heard of any activities
- Need better communication re: what is going on. More for families to do together.
- Programs need higher visibility, better advertised. Once I retire, I will have more time for the programs.
- these programs are not marketed to me effectively so I am hardly aware of them and can give no opinion

Survey Respondent Comments: More Variety, Flexibility Needed

- Wish there was more variety
- Would like more variety and times
- Some additional variety and also levels within programs would be good.
- Swimming programs are not accessible for parents who work. Offer classes evenings/weekends
- While there has been improved programs available through the Ramara Recreation Centre for adults, the times are geared to persons who are retired or not working full time. I would like to see more programs available as well.
- would prefer more convenient times
- There is limited variety of programs for children beyond day camps and swimming. It seems what is offered for young children is offered during the week in the daytime. For a working family this is not an option. This forces us to turn to Orillia Parks and Rec or private sector offerings.
- Day camps need to be better hours for those families that both parents work and commute i.e. 7am-6pm. extended care with an extra fee.

Survey Respondent Comments: Geographic Concerns

- Size of the township is large -- living in the North end (Washago) means a lot of travel to Brechin, Atherley -- few services in Washago
- Would like to see more programs offered throughout Ramara; not just the Ramara centre (i.e. Brechin)
- I understand the limitations in programming due to small community
- What programs? Ramara Rec Centre? Too far away. What about Brechin?
- Do not know of any programs near our home in Heritage Farms
- We use the Washago programs because the Ramara ones are all too far away
- They are too far away
- The programs look to be comprehensive but they are not offered anywhere where I live
- Programs are great -- just too far to travel especially in winter.
- As a seasonal resident I am more involved with the Washago Community Centre, since I live at the north end of the Township. There is none other closer to me.
- Got to go to Orillia for everything
- They are concentrated in certain areas due to where the Ramara Centre is, all outlying areas are ignored. This is not the fault of the township staff at the Ramara Centre but it needs to be addressed.

Survey Respondent Comments: Age-Specific Program Suggestions

- Activities to involve our young people in their home area are very much needed. It will lessen minor criminal acts
- I would love to see gymnastics or dance programs available for the girls and basketball or ball hockey for boys.
- Nothing for men and male teens
- Nothing for teens
- Need facilities for teen sports; Need activities for teens; Need drop-in centre; Need programs like small motors, gun handling, canoeing, cooking for teens
- Not enough in my age group
- There is great recreation programs in Ramara but in Heritage Farms there's a ton of kids here that need something to do and there are very active ones here too. P.S. give us a basketball court please. My road is Suntrac Drive
- Nothing for seniors. I am glad there is lots for young families!
- More for teens (3)

Survey Respondent Comments: General Program Suggestions

- More family community events needed
- I think that some of the programs that exist here are great. The soccer league, which my partner's children were in last year, is outstanding. It is well run and fun for the children. I have little experience with the camps that are offered though I would say that following the calendar each season, I feel there is a good variety of options offered. That said, all of that programming is offered only at the Ramara Centre and totally inaccessible to a large percentage of our population--particularly to youth and seniors of a low socio-economic

status. Baseball and swimming lessons are great options for youth who live in more remote locations or in the hub-communities of the township. I feel very dissatisfied by the swimming program offered by the township. It is contracted out to a non-local provider, who puts caps on the number of participants they will accept each year, and many of those spots are taken by the provider's own clientele or other citizens of Orillia. This is an opportunity lost to ensure that all of our residents have the chance to gain lifesaving skills in a community spattered with open waterways, as well as one lost to create valuable local employment for summer students. Outside of swimming lessons, which are again limited, there are no organized recreational activities for children or youth during the winter months outside of the Ramara Centre. It would be great to see some organized snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, sno-baseball or soccer activities organized in the villages.

- It is acceptable but could be improved with better sports facilities, e.g. outdoor hockey rink could be used both for hockey and ball hockey. Better soccer fields would attract more players and in turn more coaches for our kids.
- The programs are adequate but would love to see the next levels reached. There is room to grow
- Would like to see a large - regulation size soccer field with lights, so older ages can play and have games run past dark, the Township could earn revenue renting this field out.
- Need more, better trails that connect lagoon city to Bayshore village
- Need a volleyball team
- I would like more yoga
- There should be more activities on the waterfront, seeing how we have so much of it. Canoe club, rowing club, lessons for windsurfing and other water sports
- Indoor hockey rink
- More access to canoeing, kayaking, etc. to bring people to Brechin
- Need more trails to connect areas in Ramara i.e. Parks/Community Centres
- Would like to see trails (multit-use) that link community centres, parks and local trails already established.
- I would love to see some "How to" programs available. i.e.: building, renovating, gardening

Swimming

- When the lake is too cold or stiff, it would be great to have a central swimming pool at Rama Mask?
- I feel there needs to be a more involved swimming lessons program. The ones we have taken in the past were seriously lacking professionalism
- Would like a community pool for lessons all year
- Would like more swimming lessons offered
- hope that the winter swim lessons will continue, if not maybe an additional session in the fall
- Love the swim program. Would like it to extend to teens for Bronze qualifications.

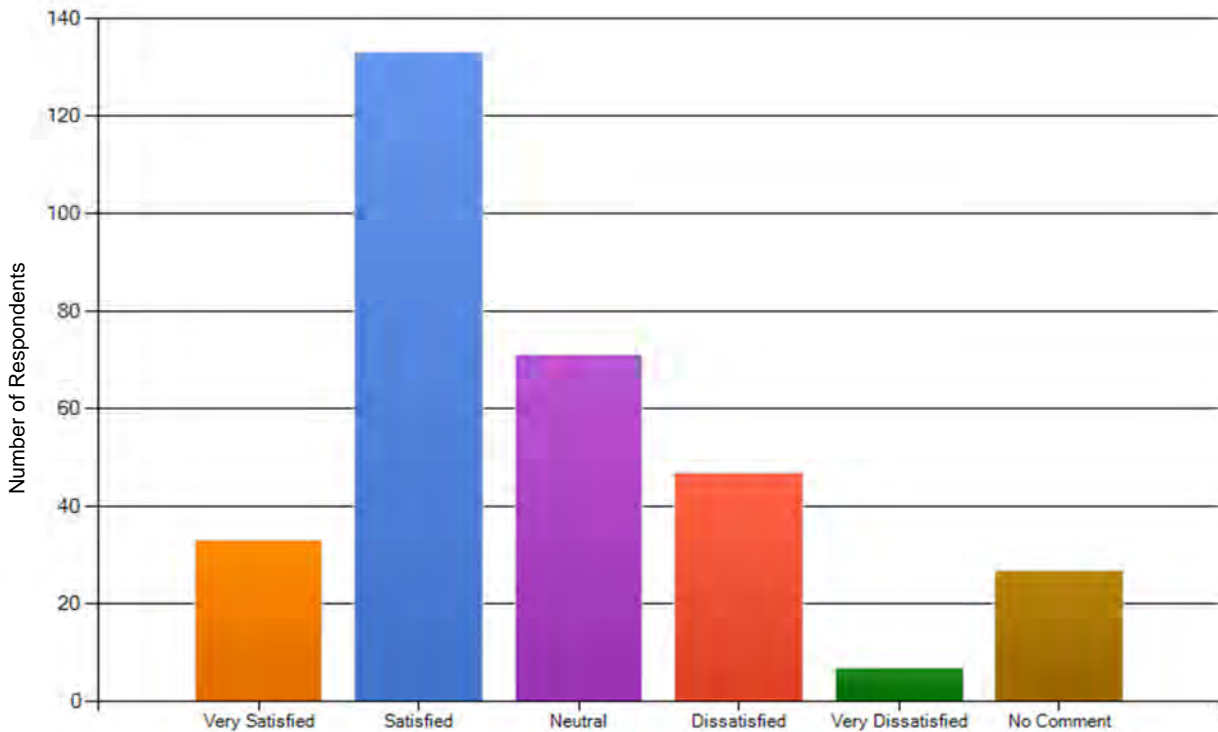
Survey Respondent Comments: Other/Misc.

- Have only participated in library programs
- I have not made use of recreation programs except for dance and exercise
- My son is just turning 2 in October so we haven't used any of the activities yet
- I don't really use any of them but I'm glad to see them available for others
- I don't care about "Recreation" programs. I would rather see my tax dollars spent on water or roads where there is a real benefit. Soft services should not be a priority.
- Now that my kids are older we don't seem to be involved in anything over the past year
- New to area
- I travel a lot and have not yet checked out too much recreation programs.
- Park equipment
- Do not use these programs
- Our playground at Lagoon City - SUCKS!!! It's poorly maintained, old out-dated equipment and very little of it. The sand has mainly disappeared! It would be nice to have a recreation complex in the Brechin area (e.g. ice rink, fitness centre, swimming pool)

6. Facility Satisfaction

Approximately half (52.2%) of respondents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with facilities, while 22.3% feel neutral and 17% are dissatisfied. Suggestions for improvement came from 72 people and include:

Overall, how satisfied are you with recreation facilities in Ramara Township (e.g. community halls, Ramara Centre, etc.)?



Survey Respondent Comments: More/New/Better Facilities

General Comments

- Ramara Centre is nice but needs to be a little larger. Need a larger meeting room for medium sized groups (15-25). This facility is very busy on week nights. Well-kept too.
- I think we REALLY need that recreation centre
- Would like more facilities in Brechin area. Maybe use Legion? Schools? New town centre? (existing, don't build one)
- Our youth group needs a facility!!!!!!!!!!
- Need more recreation centres that cater to sports
- Need one large complex for hockey, pool etc. meeting rooms
- Why does Ramara not have a hockey/ice skating rink? We also have to turn to Orillia for any skating and/or hockey programs.
- No inside ice rink or swimming pool
- None of them can be classified as indoor recreation facilities. What they provide in outdoor facilities is good to a point but should be expanded on, e.g. outdoor rink (since we all know Ramara cannot afford an indoor facility), basketball, skateboard park, lacrosse, tennis, etc.
- Facilities have limitations for other rec activities (i.e. badminton, volleyball, no hockey/skating, etc.)
- No indoor rink. sport side is not big enough

Gym/Indoor Sport Facility

- Basketball court
- Volleyball courts
- You can't even play basketball inside
- Need better indoor space for sports
- Need to use our school gyms for indoor sports
- Need indoor sports space
- No indoor space for team sports
- I would like to see community weightroom/gym
- Udney and Longford service the purposes of a hall in Ramara. There are also Joyland Beach and the Ramona Hall which provide hall services. During the planning stages of the Ramara Centre, I understood it was going to more like a gym which would have accommodated more sporting like activities and I supported. The Ramara Centre turned out to be another hall and that was disappointing. I think it would have been great if more sporting (volleyball, basketball, etc.) activities could be played there.
- Don't use them very much but maybe if centres were available for sports (i.e. basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc.) in the evening to get people out
- No indoor space for sports. Halls other than Ramara Centre not used to potential.
- Need regulation size facilities for indoor activities for youth.
- Should be place for indoor sports.

Outdoor Facilities

- Need a lighted soccer field
- They are ok. But would love to see lit soccer fields.
- Lights at soccer pitch would make us a force to reckon with Basketball court at Ramara Centre -- outdoor volleyball court addition to gym at Ramara Centre skateboard park
- Would love to see more playgrounds for small children
- We require a small children's waterpark
- Outdoor rink (well maintained)
- Baseball Udney-Brechin needs work (tlc)
- Ball diamonds and parks are not the best
- Would like to see playground at Ramara Centre
- Playground needed at Ramara Centre
- Need more baseball diamonds as well as maintenance for existing properties. The Udney baseball diamond is falling apart and has been almost left to deteriorate. Community halls in Ramara are in good repair and I am satisfied with them. Otherwise this would have been rated differently.
- Would be nice to have ice rink indoor for kid
- Ball fields could be better
- I would like to see the grounds around the halls being used better with things like edible and community gardens, butterfly gardens, areas for outdoor recreation such as walking trails, benches, areas of interest.
- Better maintenance on fields and diamonds
- Need new ball diamonds/shelters for soccer fields

Swimming Facility

- I think an indoor pool with swimming lessons year-round would be an asset
- Would like a community indoor pool facility
- Need indoor pool
- Need an ice surface or swimming pool
- We need a swimming complex (like Sutton has). We drive into other townships and use their facilities. We have the population to run a year round indoor facility.
- We need an indoor pool for winter activities, something also with full size gym space and a health centre with weights and exercise equipment

Community Halls/Centres Comments

- Ramara Centre and the Udney Community Centre are great facilities
- Working kitchen at Udney Community Centre Ramara Centre good
- Need transportation for seniors to facilities. Halls need to be used more.
- Halls should be better used
- The Ramara Center is rendering other community halls that were once busy areas obsolete
- Should be more signage on main roads directing folks to community centres and parks.

Library

- I like the library and it's nice to know we have the facilities to accommodate events
- I am happy with the Ramara Centre library and the new renovation to the library in Brechin, I have been in the Udney community centre for a garage sale otherwise I am not attracted to use the centres in any other way
- Like to come out to the free movie afternoon at Ramara Library Centre
- Library completely inadequate. I am a member of Orillia Public Library. I can't even access e-books through Ramara. All Ramara community centres too far from Washago

Survey Respondent Comments: Geographic and Access Concerns

- Ramara hasn't done very much to make sure the residents in the north part have any facilities.
- Nothing up here
- There is nothing in the north end of the Township
- Because there is nothing at the north end
- Need to have more programs at various community halls, not just Ramara Centre
- Ramara Centre is still a great distance to drive. Activities should be made available in local towns. Maybe there are activities going on in Brechin and I don't know about it
- Chose no comment because we never see anything that the recreation dept. is doing. We have lived in Heritage Farm since 2003 and we only receive a tax bill. We likely would go looking if retired but our time is limited
- I think the space is wonderful for those who can access it. Unfortunately any programs of interest to me are offered at times I am unable to participate. Also, because the programming for my age group is predominantly based on volunteers or professionals who want to offer it, there are sometimes few options for me or limited space available to participate. It seems as though there is no staff who are tasked with delivering programming, so it is left to finding external options. I use the space infrequently, if ever, unfortunately. I have attended some private functions and am there for meetings, mostly. I think it would be great if more functions and events were organized out of the space.

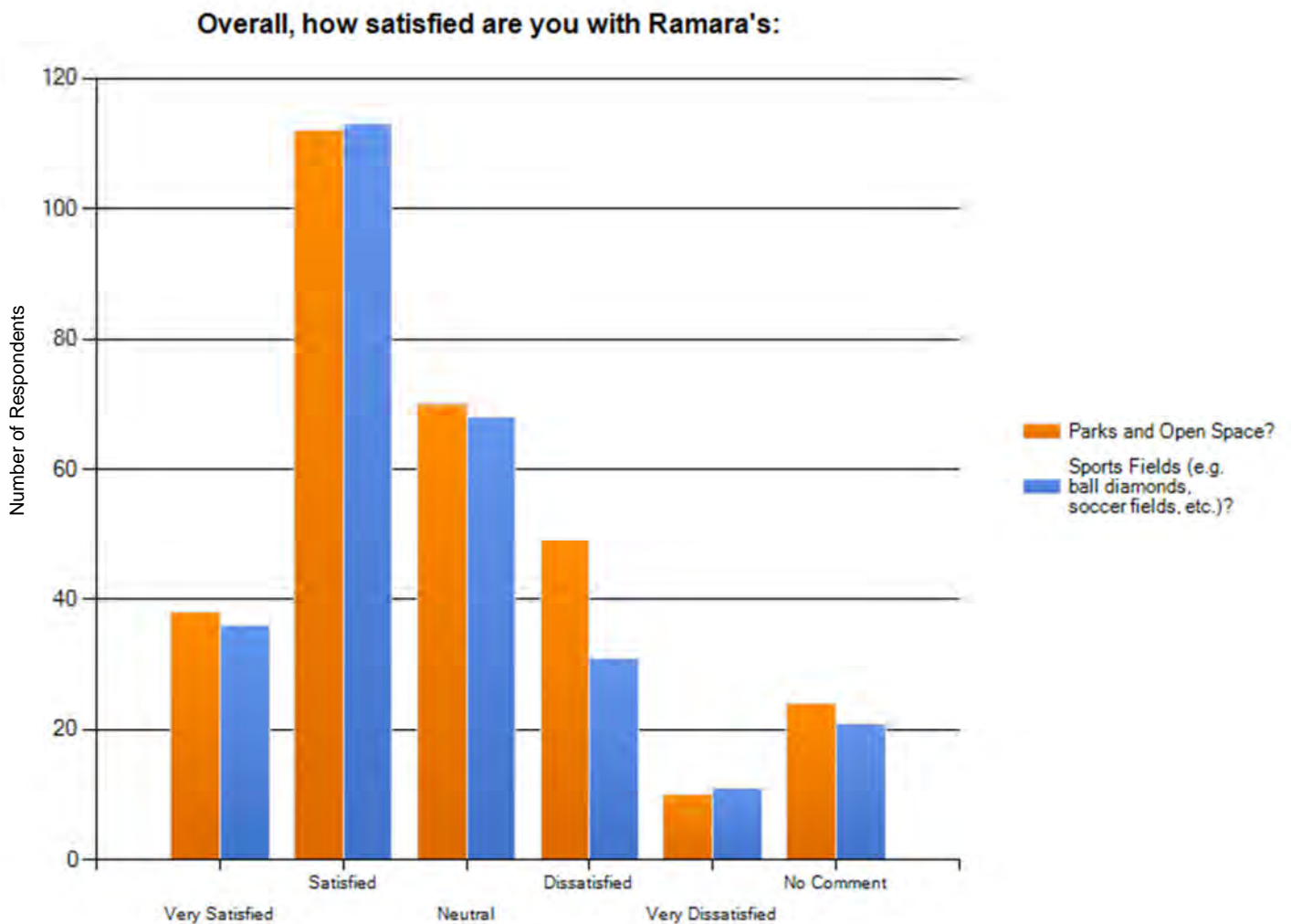
Survey Respondent Comments: Other/Misc.

- A traffic light would help get cars out after games at the soccer field
- We use the lake, biking paths and do not use any facilities
- Have not visited the facilities yet
- Needs to have more options for kids and advertise more
- Live in Orillia but prefer Ramara soccer and fields
- We have more than enough.
- live bait and fishing tackle
- I am past president of Probus Canada in Orillia. We now have 3 clubs, over 200 members each. Soon to start a 4 club, retired professional business seniors. What does Ramara have? No safe place to walk. Walk in Tudhope Park in Orillia.
- Have not really checked things out.
- Enforce no dogs at parks and soccer fields

- Please enforce NO DOG rule and grass cannot be cut the day before soccer games -- too messy, especially if it rains. Sun shelter (trees planted) required.
- We sort of consider the Rama Mask as the arena for skating and hockey, as part of Ramara
- I use the new municipal offices which are great for accessibility, don't know about others?
- I feel that there has to be a better compromise for the use of Ramara Centre between the children and the seniors. I am sure there is a way that both groups could utilize the centre to accommodate each of their wishes. I think someone from Council, Library and seniors group should come together to solve this problem.

7. Satisfaction with Parks, Open Space and Sports Fields

Sports fields and parks and open space show similar levels of satisfaction (about 48-49% satisfied or very satisfied). However, parks and open space show a much higher level of dissatisfaction (19%) than sports fields (13%).



Eighty-two respondents chose to comment on this question. A few residents drive outside of the Township to use playgrounds.

Survey Respondent Comments: Suggested Improvements for Sports Fields

Soccer Fields

- Need a lighted soccer field
- Lights for soccer pitch!
- I would like to see a regulation size soccer field with lights!!!
- We need a full regulation length field with lights. It is needed because we should not have to use a field in Orillia to represent Ramara
- I would like to see the soccer pitch looked after a bit better (e.g. holes in the field)
- Soccer fields need more maintenance
- Soccer fields needed holes filled, and the lines re-painted mid way through season
- Soccer field needs trees. The soccer fields are always well maintained.
I think if the soccer fields were better maintained -- Sprinklers and holes filled in—As well as lights for games at night
- I would like if we could have a bigger facilities with lights and a sprinkler.
- A regulation size soccer field with lighting would be ideal and revenue could be generated for the Township by renting it out.
- No dogs allowed on Soccer fields. Shelters or shade trees.
- We need better fields for all
- Soccer fields need more bleachers and covered seating

Ball Diamonds

- We need benches and lights at the Washago baseball field
- Not maintained well enough (e.g. ball diamonds)
- The baseball diamonds are terrible... So bad that we cannot even host softball tournaments which Orillia host a lot of and don't even ask to use our diamonds because of the condition they are in... Instead we go out to Rama and other surrounding diamonds for these events
- Ball diamonds need work
- Ball diamonds and soccer fields could use more regular maintenance
- I see that the baseball diamond is used in Brechin but I don't see any other fields with kids playing
- Baseball diamond posts are right beside a soccer field. Dangerous to all children playing. No trees for shade anywhere during hot Saturdays, any day for that fact. The mounds and surrounding the baseball diamond (get rid of the one never used), should have some shade. The outhouses are a nice convenience, but should be shaded so they don't smell so bad in the summer. All other trails and community halls seem very nice. Longford Community Centre needs work.
- The township makes almost no effort to maintain the ball diamonds either then cutting grass

Other Comments/Suggestions About Fields

- I would like to see a partnership with the local schools to improve soccer and baseball fields. This would benefit both and make field accessible in other areas
- Satisfied with the Ramara Centre current facilities; Baseball Udney-Brechin needs work (tlc) Would love to see more playgrounds for small children
- Would like to see outdoor skating rink
- Ramara doesn't see the volunteers that it used to in maintaining the sports fields, in particular, the ball diamonds. Therefore, more regular municipal maintenance is required.
- I would only rate the ball diamonds as neutral but the soccer fields are great
- Sports fields need cleanup and upgrading
- There is no outdoor ice rink
- More sport space is needed and need to build some sitting and picnic areas in park areas to encourage better use of our trails and forested areas.

Survey Respondent Comments: Suggested Improvements to Parks, Open SpaceTrails

- Ramara trail could be better maintained
- Would like to see a walking trail up in the town of Washago and a dog park!!
- No walking parks. Seniors need indoor and outdoor safe places to walk
- More bike/walking trails
- I don't use sports fields but I do use cycling or running paths. I would like more trails or paths.

Parks

- More trees
- Wish there more parks and trails within parks
- I think we need more parks, open space, sports fields
- Very beautiful and well looked after
- More park/garden land is needed. We have a beautiful township and parks/gardens showcase our pride
- Big problem with geese and ducks in Atherley park (droppings, smell)
- Would use an off-leash dog area
- I'm really dissatisfied with the Atherley community park. There needs to be more garbage pails put in place. Every time my son and I go there we are constantly picking up garbage and it's disgusting
- Parks are old and embarrassing. They're outdated. The soccer field need water and back stops to stop the ball from going onto the road ways. Kids don't stop and look for cars!!!
- Could be better. More work is needed in Atherley Park
- We feel there is a need to develop neighbourhood parks. We live in Heritage Farm - wonderful potential opportunities for recreation (passive and active) and a group of residents who are ready to be engaged. Municipality should consider matching funds that are raised or donated by residents. Need leadership at Municipal level to allow volunteers to help by working around the typical red tape in municipal government.
- Need more parks

- We should have more green space prior to development swallowing us up
- Need more space
- Needs benches and picnic areas; tables. Signs to where parks are

Play Areas

- Need playgrounds; only one at Brechin
- Very lacking in parks for children so we drive into Orillia
- Parks (Atherley) need to be brought up-to-date (they're very old) A splash pad would be a great addition.
- Not very many up-to-date play structures. We usually travel to Orillia to play on playgrounds
- More parks would be beneficial; maybe a splash pad so residents wouldn't have to travel into Orillia
- Play grounds are falling apart. The sand around the play area is more often than not full of weeds.
- Outdoor great; indoor extremely poor; Need playgrounds in our parks especially at soccer pitch
- They need improved play area
- Brechin's ball park seems adequate but what about the rest of the park. The layout and play centre/slides etc. need some serious upgrading.
- The park in Heritage Farms is large enough for basketball nets/volleyball courts etc. Right now it's a waste of space and needs to be useful.
- In Heritage Farms, Suntrac Drive, we have a large open park that could be developed; right now kids on 4-wheelers tear around so nobody can enjoy it! Please think about basketball court, volleyball court, etc. We could entertain weekend games, etc.
- Again these areas can be used better to promote physical activity for all. E.g., when parents and siblings are watching the children, they too could utilize the time to be active.
- It would be nice to have a playground at the Ramara Centre for younger kids when older kids are involved in sports, or for a break when visiting the library. It is quite a drive and it would help make the drive more useful. Also, I know the Washago Centennial Park is technically Severn... but lots of Ramara resident use it, and washrooms would be good. Could we have a ball diamond nearer the Washago end of the township - at Ramona or somewhere more accessible?

Lake Access

- Very limited public access to the lakes
- I ride the fence on this one. I think we have incredibly beautiful space in Ramara. Unfortunately, some of our most beautiful park/beach space in our community is fenced off and made private for certain residents. I find it unfortunately elitist and I'm made to feel like I'm a poor and dirty town folk who isn't allowed in to the privileged ranks of tourists and seasonal dwellers who enjoy our natural resources. As for the public parks and sports fields that are open to the townies, I think we have a lot to be grateful for. We have great space and useful land and committed volunteer boards who go over and above to manage them well. It would be great to have more integration of services and programming between community boards and recreational staff. As well, there is

considerable difficulty for the boards in managing the parks and facilities as there are no clear guidelines or policies from the township as to who is responsible for what. I hope that this study recommends a strategy for synchronizing board work and sharing costs and duties reasonably.

- Require more waterfront areas
- Some residents on Florida Avenue believe that the lake access/beach is for them only, when I am led to believe it is township property. We frequently use the Florida Avenue beach as we are residents of the North side of Heritage Farms. (We are likely closer to the access on Florida Avenue than we are to the one within Heritage Farms) Another reason we do not use the lake access/beach in Heritage Farms is the beach can only be accessed via a small steep treacherous path to the lake. The Township could easily make it easier to access with little cost.
- We need a nice waterfront park
- We could make better use of small public parks along the lake
- Improved upgrades at Sandy Beach adjacent to Mara Prov Park. 1 picnic table and 1 toilet for the summer season
- The beach access to heritage farms has been inaccessible for several years; no one has come to fix it, even though many complaints have be registered by the residents. People have fallen trying to access the beach

Survey Respondent Comments: Geographic Concerns

- Again, nothing close to Washago
- Living in Ward 1 there are not many facilities for young people or adults to enjoy, if any; we live in such a beautiful area, it's a shame that there isn't more for all to get out and enjoy!
- There are no facilities in Ward 1 to comment on or utilize that I am aware of
- I use the ones in Severn and Orillia
- Again, nothing in the North end
- Too far

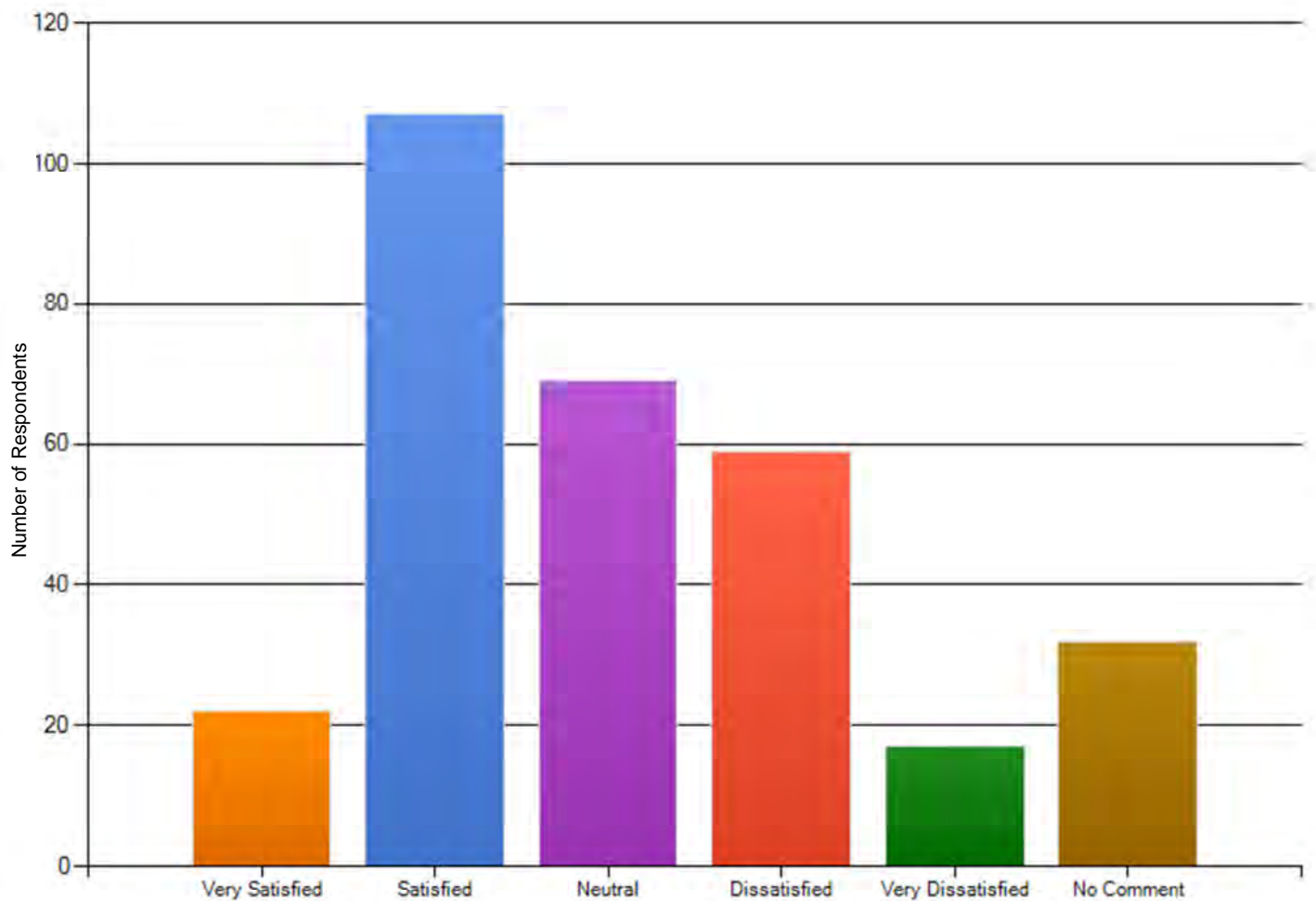
Survey Respondent Comments: Other/Misc.

- There really needs to be a traffic light for all users to get in and out of Ramara Centre, especially the children on Sat am
- No idea where the parks are. Do any of them have tennis courts?
- I wish that the parking at the Ramara Centre was larger and that entering back out onto the highway was easier and safer.
- Not really engaged or attracted to use of either
- See previous comment about sports fields, and other parks should be better maintained and monitored

8. Satisfaction with Trails

As with the other questions, respondents (42.2%) showed a high level of satisfaction with trails, but there is also a large number who are neutral (22.5%) and a quarter (25%) of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, perhaps indicating that while things are on the right track, there is more work to be done. This question drew the most comments with 95 individuals who described their reasons for the trail rating. Many people were unaware of the trails.

How satisfied are you with trails for walking and cycling in Ramara Township?



Survey Respondent Comments: Improve Communication About Trails

- Not sure where that is
- You should send maps of trails in the mail because I was not aware of too many trails in Ramara
- Where are they?
- No use; unaware of trails
- There isn't a lot of trails around other than the one that runs down Rama Road
- Not enough groomed trails and advertising of such
- Where is the walking trail in Washago??
- What trails and where are they? Maybe the residents should be made aware of them... Because I don't know of any... Me and my family go to Orillia to use the trails
- What trails?
- Maybe they are out there, but where?
- Where are they? I live on Suntrac Drive, I don't see any trails. I cycle along roads but there isn't a safe bit of shoulder so very dangerous. (i.e.: County Rd #47). I would like to see 2 feet shoulder from the white line. There isn't even a white line! This is a busy road and is in need of upgrading!!
- Never see anything promoting. Real opportunity for affordable recreation -- should be explored further. Volunteers should be recruited to help. Many of us have extensive municipal and recreation experience. You need to reach out. Small municipalities can have it all by leveraging efforts of volunteers
- Would like trails to be better advertised
- No idea where the trails are, but would like to know as I almost got run over by cars going too fast on Switch Rd.
- Is there any outside of the trail along the road? If there is you should publish info on them.
- I don't know where they are.
- Where are the walking and cycling trail? I know the ones in Orillia and Tudhope Park. Where are the Ramara ones?

Survey Respondent Comments: Increase Number/Type of Trails

- We need cycling trails in Ramara
- The trails at McRae Provincial Park are excellent but other than that I feel this is an area the Township is lacking in
- All the existing trails are located in the North end. Would love to see more widespread throughout Township.
- Not enough
- Hope continue to expand
- Need to be expanded
- I am glad to see the trails expanding
- Need multiuse trails including ATVs
- Need more hike and walking trails
- Would like to see expanded throughout Township
- More nature trails

- Need more walking paths
- There are no facilities in Ward 1 to comment on or utilize that I am aware of
- Not much for biking trails.
- They are coming along and I love to see the progress. I am hoping they will continue to develop. We use them regularly.
- Need more in the outside communities (smaller communities)
- We need walking and cycling trails

Survey Respondent Comments: Make Existing Trails Better

- Would like to have a paved trail for rollerblading
- Trails should be a spot surrounded by nature, not abutting a roadway
- Ramara Trail could be improved
- More trimmed and groomed
- Getting better -- would like to be able to keep entirely off Rama Rd. and on trails when heading to Washago
- Portion of trail between Brechin and Lagoon City has now been made wide enough to drive a car down it. While the remaining part looks like an overgrown cattle trail. Where is the logic here?
- The Ramara Trail is great, and is a reflection of a lot of hard volunteer work and time. Unfortunately, for the trail in Brechin, which lacks a volunteer group's care, the trail is a disaster most times. For bikers, it is practically unusable, especially after winter or any substantial rains. I hope to see it paved in years, and more trails built to allow for cycling and access to other corners of the township.
- The trail from Brechin into Lagoon City is terrible! I've biked it numerous times and ran along it. It goes from an uneven mess of tarmac to an itty bitty almost unusable trail. I've heard several people comment on this and how they stick to using the road.
- If more trails are coming, we require better signage.
- Again, regular maintenance is required. It would be nice to see more off road trails.
- Bridge required at old train bridge at the Narrows
- Too isolated. Not open. Bushes, trees, uneven trails
- Road sides should be paved, as new road surfaces are done. Should look to improve such as Oro Medonte has.
- The trail that starts at the narrows is very uncomfortable for female users. I have tried it a couple of times and find it to closed in and isolated. No sense of security, so I don't use it
- The walking trail (If that is what you call it) from Brechin to Lagoon city is a huge disappointment. It's way too rough for biking and in my opinion is an accident waiting to happen. Someone will trip and fall for sure.
- I live on Simcoe Road and the trail to Brechin is awful and the one to Lagoon City you are in a ditch- below the road very scary and unsafe- would be KILLED if a car went off the road think about it!!!!
- Are they wheelchair accessible?
- It's not marked very well

Survey Respondent Comments: Trail Connection Ideas

- Need to be connected to Orillia's trail via bridge over narrows
- We need to connect Ramara with Orillia over Narrows Bridge
- Connections between communities even if not formal trails would be good for biking
- Great use of rail system. Cycling could be improved by adding a paved shoulder or larger paved section outside the paved shoulder line -- like on County Rd 169- especially for kids to ride bikes to school safely.
- You can't ride a bike from Washago to Rama Central School. Rama Road is poor. Access to Washago Park is dangerous
- In Floral Park we started to have a walking path but a subsequent road contractor cut it and it has never been reconnected.
- Trails should interlock throughout the Township and 5 foot bike lane on all roads
- There should be more of a network of interconnecting trails
- Need to be connected to Washago from current one south of townline Have a section north Rama Road
- Would like to see trail continued to Washago
- No "loop" to take. It is one way and then retrace back to beginning. Should be connection from Ramara trail on Rama Road to hook up and do trail to connect in Coopers Falls, north into Gravenhurst. Or from Atherley, eastward toward Bayshore or Lagoon City.
- They do not go anywhere
- Could have more connections to somewhere
- I think the new trail built from Lagoon City to Brechin is great. We need better linkages to Beaverton as well (trailwise). I realize Brock would be necessary for this, but trails (offroad or beside road) for bikes, walkers should link communities.
- More connected route from Monk Road, Washago and Orillia. Some paved trails
- The trails are fragmented. There should be continual trails for walking and cycling former Hwy 12 to Washago -- both sides
- Are they connected
- Need to have trails that link parks and community facilities (halls, sports fields)
- Should link community centres, parks and municipal offices
- They need to be linked to communities and community centres and parks. Need to form network throughout Township using our forested areas also.
- They don't lead anywhere of interest. Need more. Need to be linked
- Don't go anywhere
- Need to be more and link towns and halls
- Need to link communities and halls
- They need to link to parks, halls and villages
- Would like to see trails connect parks
- There are no trail links for the south end of Ramara (Gamebridge area) and no link bike/hiking trail linking Brechin to Orillia. I would like to see a trail down this side of Simcoe as the west side does.
- There should be more to connect places like Udney and outlying areas such as Bolsover and out that way. I know Bolsover isn't in the township but there should be trails out there to contact that part of the community. Also, there should be a bike path going into

Washago, crossing all the bridges, it would be nice to connect the trails to others in neighbouring communities

- We need to complete a cycling trail from the Atherley Narrows to Lagoon City. (link missing between Conc 7 & Brechin)

Survey Respondent Comments: Other/Misc.

- None of the local roads should be paved
- I appreciate the efforts so far with trails
- Haven't been on them
- Trails around my house are awesome to walk everyday
- I have used the trail on the former railway line between the Casino and the town of Orillia
- I've not used the trails
- Don't use
- Trails are boring
- Nothing here
- Need a dog park
- Biking trails are kept in very good condition and are very enjoyable to use
- None near me.
- Don't do anything different. very peaceful to walk

Summary of Satisfaction Levels

Overall satisfaction levels with programs, facilities, parks, trails, and sport fields are low. Interpretation of these results is similar to reading a school report card. While marks of 80% or above are “A’s” or excellent, marks that slip to mid or low 70’s, or low “B’s”, warrant attention as do levels of dissatisfaction greater than 10% . Proper intervention and correction can turn the B’s, C’s and D’s into excellent grades, while lack of attention will only result in increased levels of dissatisfaction.

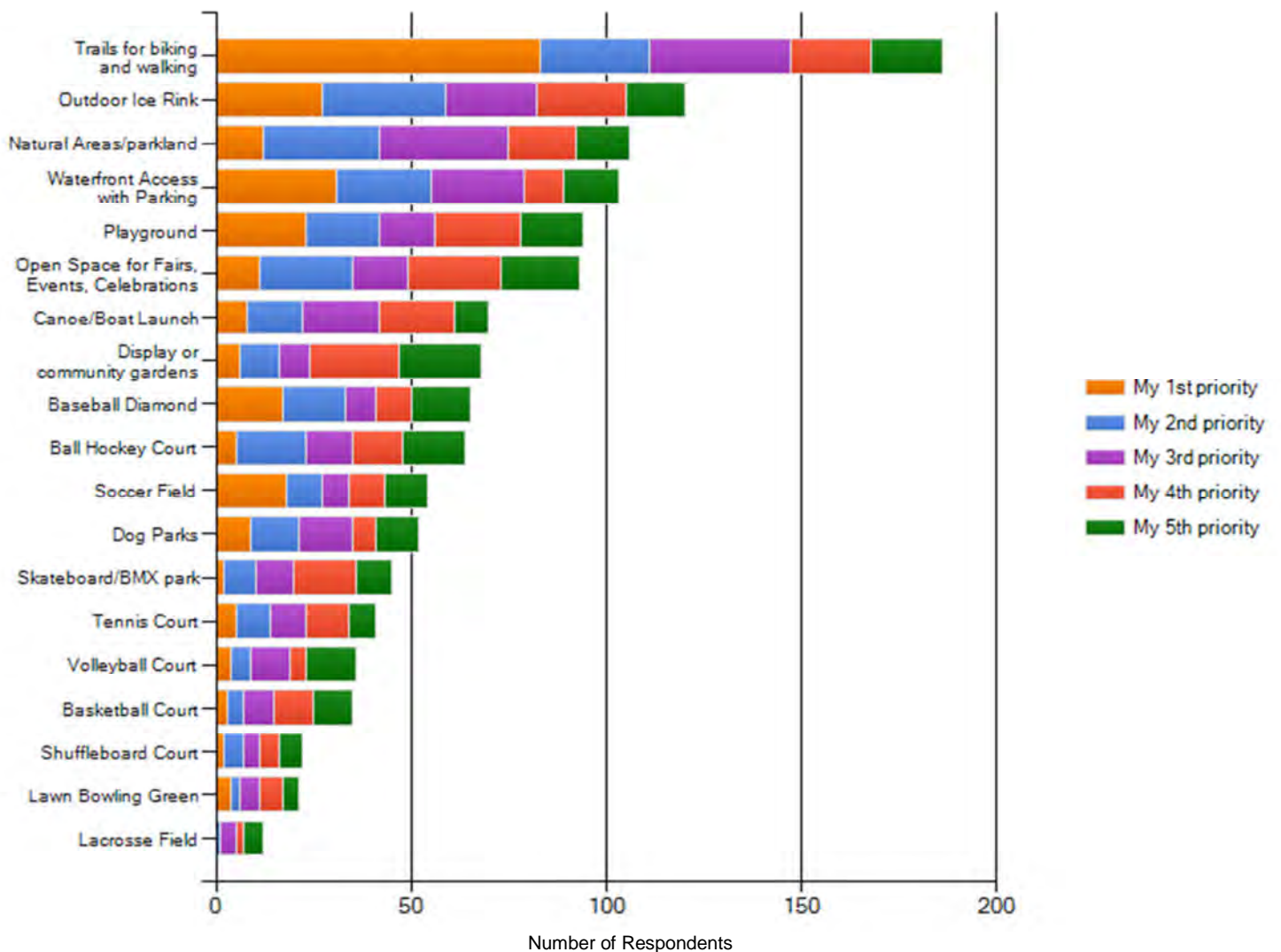
	# Respondents*	% satisfied/very satisfied	% neutral	% dissatisfied/very dissatisfied
Current Programs	312	46.2%	27.9%	12%
Current Facilities	318	52.2%	22.3%	17%
Current Parks & Open Space	308	48.7%	22.7%	19.1%
Current Sports Fields	308	48.3%	22%	13.6%
Current Trails	306	42.1%	22.5%	24.8%

*Total survey respondents is 335, however not everyone answered every question, so 312 for example, means 312 respondents (from a total of 335) answered this question. Those with “no comment” are not included in the above chart.

9. Facilities Desired in the Future

The following bar graph shows, in descending order of number of times selected as a top-five priority, what facilities respondents would like to see in Ramara. The top ten are:

- Trails for biking and walking
- Outdoor ice rink
- Natural areas/parkland
- Waterfront access with parking
- Playgrounds
- Open space for fairs, events, etc.
- Canoe/boat launch
- Display/community gardens
- Baseball diamond
- Ball hockey court



Additional ideas and comments came from 69 individuals.

Survey Respondent Comments: Soccer Field

- Soccer fields are very important to our family and we find that the Ramara soccer fields are fairly well maintained and it would be nice to see them continuously maintained.
- regulation size soccer field with lights
- Regulation size soccer field for ages 18+ with lights, Township could rent it out to earn revenue
- Soccer field serves open space for fairs, events etc.

Survey Respondent Comments: Multi-Purpose Facility (and/or gym space, pool, arena)

- Addition to gym at Ramara Centre
- Recreational facility (pool, ice rink)
- Indoor soccer facilities for winter
- Indoor weight room/fitness centre with coffee shop and tables where geezers like me could meet and shoot the breeze after a walk on the tread mill and high speed internet café
- A facility with outdoor exercise equipment; a splash pad as part of playground equipment; an outdoor ice-rink and ball hockey court would be great, well-used additions to the Township; would be nice to start leagues for this in our own area
- First priority is workout gym; second is pool
- Swimming Pool, Indoor Hockey Arena.
- Some things mentioned above could be combined i.e. volleyball/basketball courts and ball hockey/ice rink;
- How about looking into the future and start planning a multi-use rec centre including a pool and ice rink
- Indoor basketball court, indoor hockey arena
- My first would be indoor sports space
- #1 Indoor sports facilities
- Indoor recreation facility (hockey rink, pool)
- Community Centre/swimming pool, gym, soccer field
- Indoor sport areas should be #1
- Buildings for indoor sports (winter) basketball, volleyball, etc.
- You haven't listed a fitness centre!!!!!!!!!! It would be my first choice!
- In Heritage Farms there is plenty of room for volleyball/basketball courts. Many kids/teens/and adults would use these as this is a very active community. (like the facility in Sutton). We need a swimming indoor complex!! for winter swimming lessons/lane swimmers, etc.!!

Pool

- Indoor pool
- Indoor swimming pool
- Indoor pool for water aerobics and exercise

- Indoor swimming pool with aquafit program
- Outdoor or indoor swimming facility
- An indoor swimming pool
- Indoor swimming with lanes.
- Public swimming pool #1
- Community pool (indoor) first priority
- Swimming pool (year round)

Indoor Rink

- Hockey, skating arena
- First priority is indoor ice facility -- winters here are now too mild to sustain outdoor ice for any length of time. Could attract hockey, skating, curling enthusiasts.
- A indoor ice rink would the first priority
- Indoor ice
- Indoor hockey rink
- #2 indoor ice rink
- Indoor ice rink
- #1 priority - Indoor ice skating rink.

Survey Respondent Comments: Programs in Facilities

- Ref clinic, yoga, Pilates
- Gymnastics or dance clubs for young girls reasonably priced
- Drop in centre for teens
- More places for young people to get together and hang out (dances)

Survey Respondent Comments: Trails

- 4 wheeler trails
- Trails for biking. Bike lanes on roads
- Trails should connect with community centre
- A bridge (walking and wheelchair) from Ramara Township to City of Orillia in Atherley
- Too many kids/ residents have to ride along the road to get to the Ramara Centre. Where is the trail for people to get there safely and avoid highway 12?

Survey Respondent Comments: Waterfront

- Need proper boat launch in Ramara to access Lake Simcoe
- Beaches with swimming and washrooms
- Moving the two dump sites away from waterfront area
- There are so few beaches available. Please work with Sylvan Glen Beach Association to keep their beach as is. Many from all over come to enjoy that beach.
- Waterfront access/canoe/boat launch.
- Signage at all open spaces/park land denoting "Township Property" and available to all residents (not just immediate neighbours.)
- Walkway/signs along water's edge

- Would like to see swimming at the park on Creighton St. More picnic tables. New playground for the children. Something to bring the families to the park more -- ice rinks, fairs, etc.
- The boat launches are terrible here, we have to go to Brock to launch or remove our boats from the lake
- Waterfront park for events
- Beaches -- access to waterfront with beach
- We would love to have a volleyball (beach) court built on our community open space (Heritage Farm)

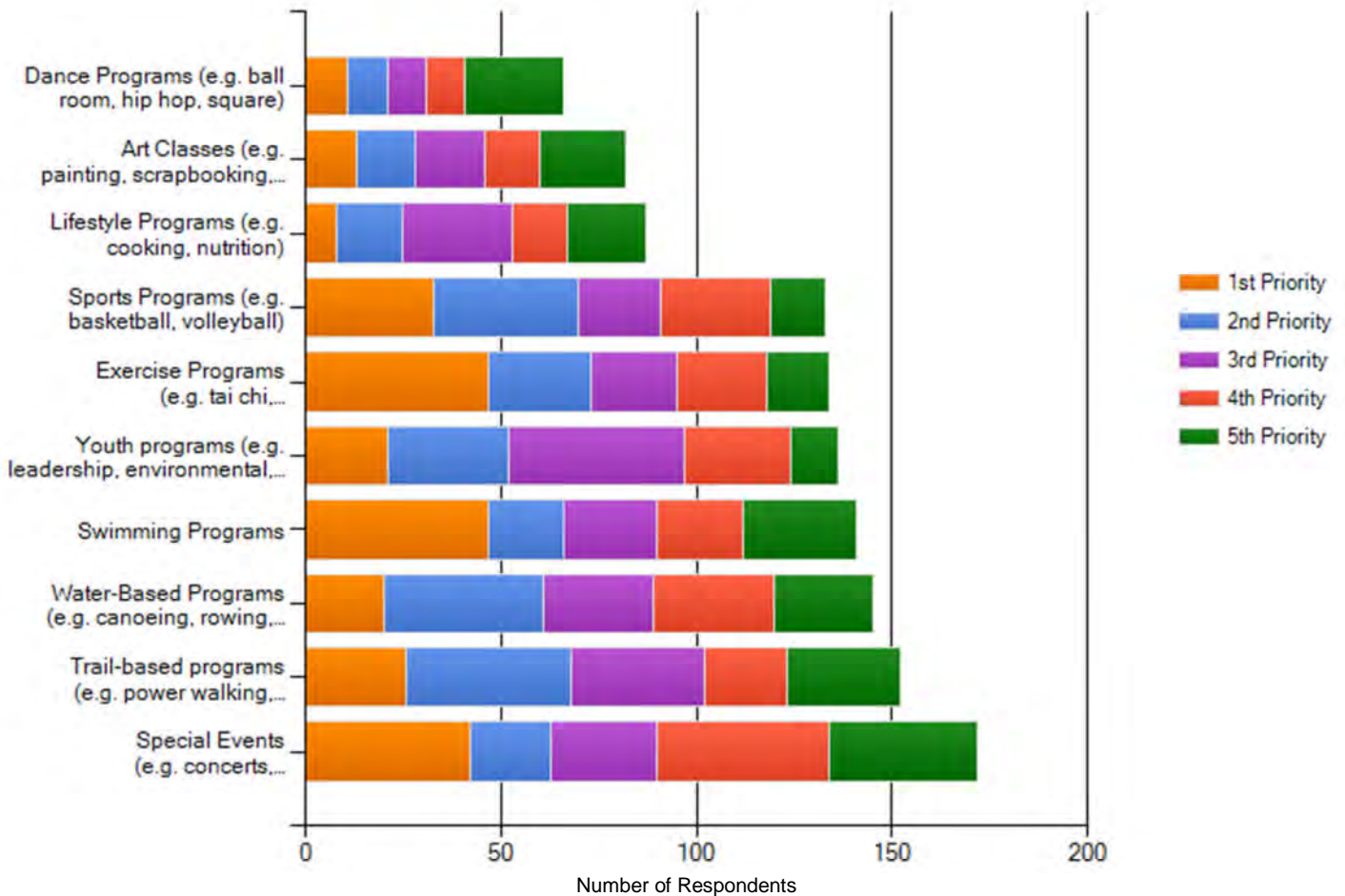
Survey Respondent Comments: Other/Misc.

- A playground should be built at the Ramara Centre. Space is there.
- Camping
- Expand BCC ball park
- The effort around hanging baskets and planters in 2012 (Brechin) was great! What a great start to beautifying the town.
- We need a basketball court in Heritage Farms. There's tons of space to do so! P.S. I mean fields and fields.
- Hall needed for young people to meet (14-18 years)
- Something in the North end of the Township
- Whatever you do think of your full time Senior population

10. Programs Desired in the Future

Except for lifestyle programs, art classes and dance programs, all other types of programs are equally desirable with the most interest being shown for special event programming. The conclusion here may be that people want a variety and desire a well-rounded set of program offerings.

In the future, what recreation programs should Ramara Township offer? From this list of potential parks and recreation programs, choose your top five priorities. Rank ONLY your top five choices, by indicating which one is your 1st priority, 2nd priority, 3rd priority, 4th priority and 5th priority.



Only nineteen comments were made regarding programs, but give good insight.

Survey Respondent Comments: Make Programs Convenient and Accessible

- Scheduled times make the programs available to working families.
- Who cares -- all of them are too far away
- Again -- something up here please!
- Since Washago has an outdoor rink could Ramara share this rink for a fee? Perhaps Ramara could run programs out of Washago Centre when space is a problem for Ramara. There would be a fee. Washago Centre has about 50% of participants from Ramara and there is no funding for the Centre from Ramara since the building is owned by Severn Township. There should be partnership
- Ramara Centre is not centralized and is run in a Mickey Mouse manner. I prefer to go to Gravenhurst, Washago or Orillia for recreation.

Survey Respondent Comments: Specific Program Suggestions

- Water aerobics. I need to go to Orillia and pay more money than Orillia residents because I'm a non-resident
- Local history/heritage preservation
- Adult singles dances/socials
- Children's
- Hockey program
- Focus on teen sports and activities not grade school
- Seniors
- Aqua fit for seniors
- Karate
- I have a hard time prioritizing between indoor programming. I've suggested sports but feel strongly that all programming should be holistic and reflective of all of the needs and faces of our community, not simply those who took the time to fill out this survey. I have prioritized swimming lessons because I believe as a water rich community it is our due diligence to ensure that all people can swim and keep themselves safe in or around the water. However, I believe that the Special Events is also highly important. What I noticed is not mentioned anywhere in this survey is culture or heritage related activities. I recognize this is a Recreational Master Plan, but our reality is that the Recreation department was initially intended to encompass culture, as well. Most, if not all, relevant cultural activities are volunteer organized and led. It should be a priority of the township to celebrate and acknowledge the diversity in our community. Most people think our community is completely white, which is untrue. It is a failure on all of our behalf not to create a welcoming and safe community, and that starts with acknowledging the people who make up your community at a town level. Instead, I'm often witness to remarks, gestures, or activities that create barriers to civic engagement for all people, and which are often discriminatory and hateful. If our township could take on some leadership in this area of celebrating cultural diversity they could realize huge potential. Equally important is the need to diversify and grow our local economy. Special event planning needs to be very strategic and focus on attracting tourists and outside business or interests to our community. Too often, thousands of dollars are spent organizing community events which benefit only our own community members and don't showcase our community or lead to impactful economic development for the area.

Survey Respondent Comments: Facilities for Programs

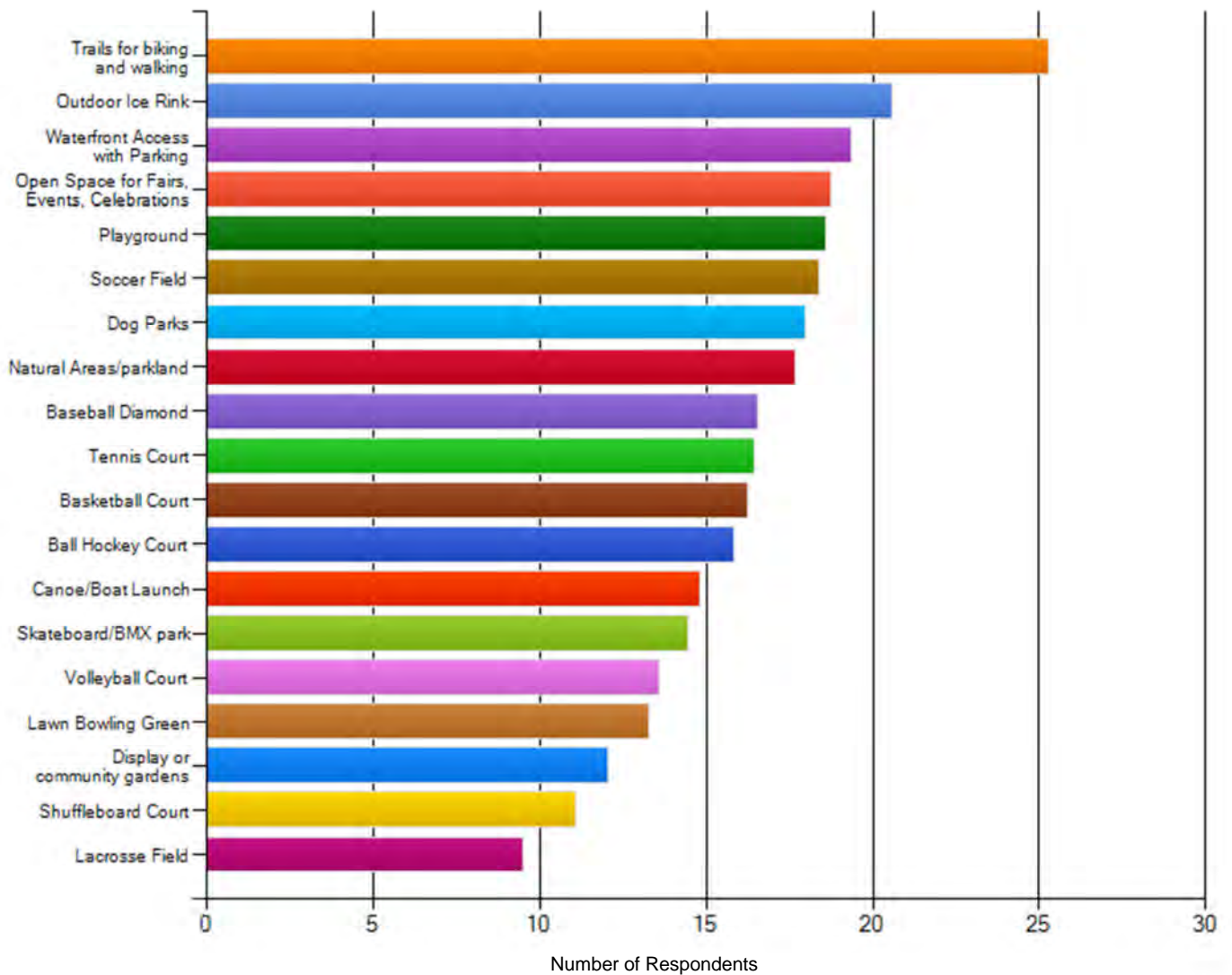
- Again, developing the little parks along the lake with community input and community volunteers would be great!
- Indoor swimming facility like Sutton has. I drive there for my kids -- too far! Winters are long and people here need to have something to do. The Harbour Inn is not set up for real swimmers.
- Wouldn't an arena/fitness facility be nice
- We have an excellent Youth Group run by Adam but they need a place to hold meeting I am embarrassed by our community for not supporting this

11. Budget Allocation to Facilities

The following bar chart (on the next page) shows how respondents would allocate the recreation budget. Note that this list of priorities differs from the priority list of desired facilities. Although trails and an outdoor ice rink remain as the top priorities, dog parks and soccer fields, as well as basketball and tennis courts become higher priorities when allocating dollars and items such as display gardens and the canoe/boat launch drop in priority. Therefore, care must be taken in interpretation as a large number of people can allocate a small percentage of funds to each item, or a small number of people can allocate large percentage of funds to each item, *so both number of respondents and the amount they are spending should be considered*. To demonstrate, the following list shows priorities by number of respondents allocating funds, rather than by the amount they allocate.

Facility	Number of Respondents	Average Percent Allocated
Trails	178	25.27
Outdoor Ice Rink	108	20.57
Playground	102	18.62
Natural Areas/Parkland	101	17.65
Open Space for Events	97	18.75
Baseball Diamond	92	16.55
Waterfront Access	85	19.35
Soccer Field	82	18.39
Canoe/Boat Launch	67	14.84
Ball Hockey Court	64	15.86

Allocation of Budget to Facilities

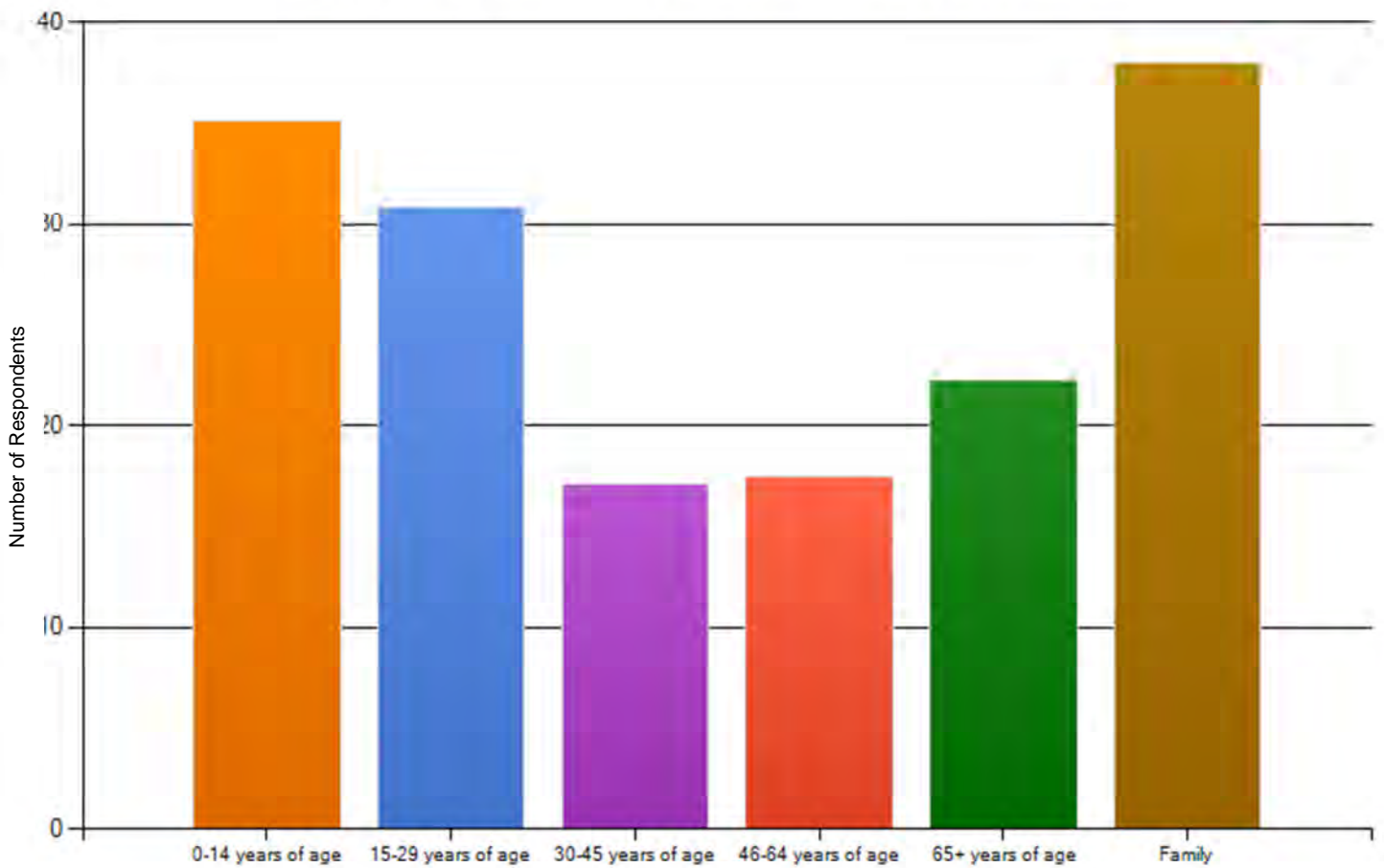


Ninety people did not complete this question which is a higher non-response rate than for all of the other questions. This may be attributed to the fact that the question was placed later on in the survey and it required more effort and time to complete than some were willing to give.

12. Dollar Allocation by Age Group

When asked to distribute the recreation budget among the various age groups, most respondents would allocate the most funds to youth and families. 162 respondents (60%) would give \$38.01 and 209 (70%) respondents would give \$35.15 of every \$100 to children under 14 years of age.

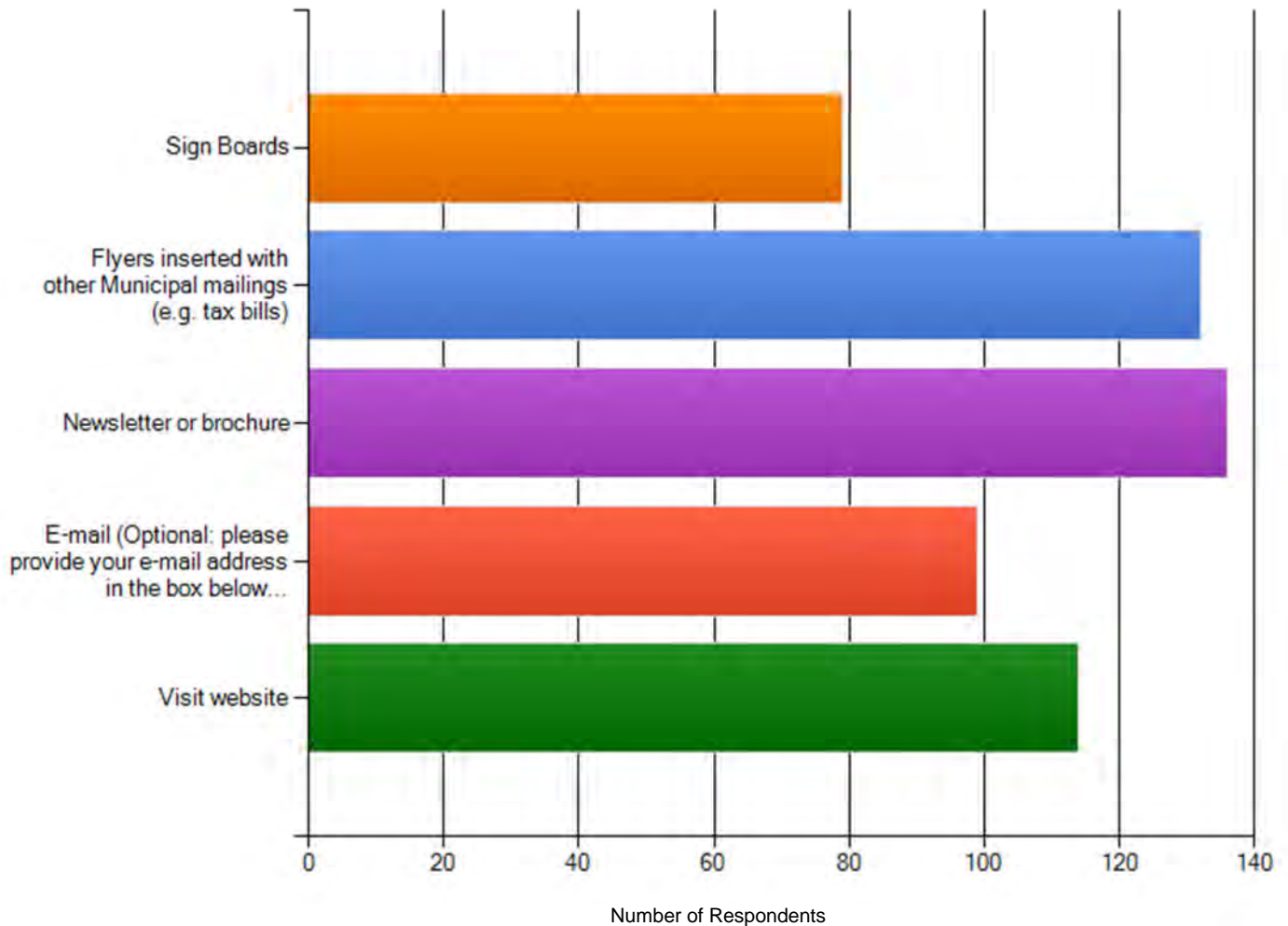
If you were given \$100 to spend on parks and recreation in Ramara Township, how would you distribute the money among the following age groups? You may spend all \$100 on one age group, or divide it among several age groups, as long as you only spend \$100 in total. Please do not add decimal points or dollar signs to your answer. Use only whole numbers, such as 10, 80, 35, etc.



13. Preferred Method of Communication

Almost equal numbers of respondents would like to access information about Ramara parks and recreation programs via flyers inserted in Municipal mailings as by a newsletter or brochure, Visiting the Township website was also preferred. There were 28 comments to this question and most of those were e-mail addresses. Other suggestions were to make use of available media (e.g. CTV news events, free community papers, the Washago area newsletter Soulvine), producing a recreation/community guide two times/year and placing a sign board at all halls and community parks.

How would you like to receive information about Ramara Township Parks and Recreation programs and services?



7.2 Opportunities and Challenges for Parks and Recreation in the Township of Ramara

During Phase II: Community Consultation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Study, the Consulting Team conducted interviews and/or meetings with Municipal staff, volunteers, Councillors, Mayor Duffy and key community leaders, Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee members, and partners representing various interests in Ramara. The purpose of these discussions was to understand issues and challenges that the study needs to address, to get suggestions and ideas for the future and to build on the qualities and assets that are most valued. The information collected was used to refine the study process and prepare for extensive consultation with the community through focus groups, the on-line survey, and public open house.

Ramara has a number of strengths which are particularly compelling, such as its 104 kilometres of shoreline and natural environment, the trails and active transportation plan, the rich history and culture, and the rural lifestyle. These attractive qualities hold great potential for affordable, accessible, and integrated recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. Communities exhibiting many of these qualities thrive and grow and recreation and leisure programs, services and facilities are integral to a higher standard of living, to which residents aspire. While Ramara has great potential, it also faces numerous challenges. Some of these challenges are also faced by neighbouring municipalities and, in some cases, together neighbouring municipalities can provide the array of parks and recreation services their residents and visitors want most.

The charts that follow summarize Ramara's opportunities, challenges and ideas for moving forward as they were raised through the community consultation process.

Please note, these charts provide a diverse number of opinions and viewpoints as they were collected from everyone participating in the Master Plan study process. Not all ideas or opportunities will, or can, be acted upon in the context of this study, but they serve to give a well-rounded perspective on which to make relevant and beneficial recommendations.

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
COMMUNITY IMAGE AND CHARACTER		
<p>Renew Ramara: Vibrant, healthy, active community that provides active transportation; has environmentally sensitive design</p> <p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend:</i> <i>People desire walkable, healthy, active communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart and Stroke Foundation poll reports 48% of respondents thought that their community could be more activity-friendly. 	<p>Downtown Brechin needs a facelift to present a better image</p> <p>Attract and retain residents and businesses and improve tax base</p> <p>Increased expectations for good roads, more recreation activities, etc. as more retirees from GTA move to Ramara</p>	<p>Explore future scenarios (e.g. status quo, potential improvements and change)</p> <p>Create visible “gateways” to the community with attractive signage at key entry/exit points and a welcoming (floral) display</p>
<p>Bring the communities of Ramara together: A Community of Communities with people places and family-oriented gathering spots such as community halls, large outdoor areas for special events like festivals, agricultural fairs, and historical displays</p>	<p>Ramara Township does not have a centre, hub or focal point and needs fairgrounds space</p> <p>Ramara lacks a sense of action/ momentum</p> <p>Seasonal residents are not in Ramara year round</p> <p>Our Ramara Project lost momentum and volunteers and the Funfest event ended</p>	<p>Find ways to get communities working together; link communities with annual event (e.g. Fair)</p> <p>Develop a focal point for communication and information, i.e. the Ramara Centre</p> <p>Look at best practices in other rural communities</p> <p>Bring back “Funfest” under the leadership of the Township</p>
<p>Preserve the rural community and way of life</p>	<p>Balance development and change with the rural nature of Ramara</p> <p>Include Ramara’s cultural and historic assets</p>	<p>Define the desired parks, recreation, culture and tourism role of the Township</p> <p>Support multi-aged, family-oriented events</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
	<p>Increase development and tax base in a sustainable manner that doesn't erode rural heritage</p> <p>Growth is coming, but will likely be slow for the next 3-5 years. <i>(1.9% growth rate projected to 2016 will occur near or at the waterfront)</i></p>	<p>Create a large, outdoor facility/park to host large exhibits and special events</p> <p>Incorporate culture into Ramara's recreation plan – acknowledge, welcome and celebrate the cultural diversity in Ramara</p>
<p>Create desirable products and attractions for residents and visitors to Ramara</p>	<p>Few attractions or overnight accommodations to encourage visitors to stay longer in Ramara</p> <p>Excess, affordable land lacking</p> <p>Cannot use sports fields for large community events as it ruins the fields.</p>	<p>Attain more parcels of land (e.g. near baseball diamond in Brechin or waterfront parcel) for special events (e.g. Lumberjack event)</p> <p>Build a major park (43 hectares/106 acres zoned parkland across Highway 12 from the Ramara Centre)</p> <p>Look at properties owned by municipality and reorganize/consolidate/swap/sell off lands in order to accumulate properties that have the best potential for recreation use</p> <p>Assemble one large park at Brechin</p> <p>Work toward a trail loop around Lake Couchiching for tourism</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>TRAILS</p> <p>Develop trails for active transportation, healthy lifestyles, affordable recreation, safe travel for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trails are accessible, affordable and convenient to most residents and visitors and offer an unstructured opportunity for family outings, fitness, or cycle tours. 	<p>Be mindful of the fact that while trails are valued, programs for youth are a higher priority</p> <p>Trail connections may be difficult in some areas (e.g. Rama Reserve lands, deep ditches along road in Lagoon City) so will need creative solutions to overcome</p> <p>Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey clearly shows strong desire for trails in Ramara and it is evident this need will continue to grow</p> <p>Largely rural community makes walkability and connectivity challenging</p> <p>Trails need to be better promoted and advertised</p>	<p>Develop municipal trail policy</p> <p>Connect Rama Central School to Washago with 10 km trail</p> <p>Connect Lagoon City to Bayshore Village with a 0.5 km boardwalk through the wetlands</p> <p>Build a trail loop around Lake Couchiching</p> <p>Complete walking trail from Atherley to Rama/Mara Boundary Road and join with trail that comes from Gravenhurst</p> <p>View trails as an essential component to be included in planning of new developments, subdivisions and existing town centres.</p> <p>Map out trail links and connections throughout the Township to make a cohesive system that joins facilities, parks, municipal buildings and places of interest.</p> <p>Particularly relevant to Ramara is longer trail systems for cycling and hiking.</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
PARKS AND FACILITIES		
<p>Investigate the possibility of new facilities in Ramara (e.g. tennis courts, lease-free zones for dogs, community gardens, ice surface, gym, splash pads)</p>	<p>Soccer fields too small for regulation/older youth play</p> <p>Lack of natural outdoor ice rink for all children, especially those who cannot afford to play expensive ice sports in Orillia and other locations</p> <p>Lack of gymnasium space for sports (e.g. basketball, volleyball, and badminton); interior size of halls is too small to play sports</p> <p>Ramara Centre lacks a larger meeting space for bigger groups (15-25 people)</p> <p>Lack of Parks and Recreation staff or volunteer base to operate and maintain any new facilities</p> <p>There is no land left at Ramara Centre for new facilities (e.g. tennis courts, playground)</p> <p>Youth are really lacking places to hang out and things to do, like skateboarding</p> <p>Potential demand for a splash pad in Lagoon City and tennis courts in Brechin.</p>	<p>Move younger soccer players (ages 4-6) to smaller fields</p> <p>Investigate potential for a covered ice surface and a partnership with community college at Barrie to build a portable facility for change rooms (i.e. combo soccer, outdoor ice, tennis facility)</p> <p>Develop site planning protocols</p> <p>Expand the Ramara Centre large room for a full sized gymnasium</p> <p>Acquire more parkland at Brechin, perhaps through parkland dedication for a soccer pitch and playground</p> <p>Community Centre Boards could work together to acquire a mobile skateboard park to move from community to community in the good weather</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>Improve and strengthen existing parks and facilities: Maintain and sustain existing municipal assets and strive for safe and satisfying user experiences</p>	<p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend: Aging infrastructure and need for upgrades</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health said that “the aging of sports and recreation infrastructure is a major trend that is occurring and proving to be a challenge: Cash-strapped governments at all levels are finding it hard to finance replacement of older facilities.” • The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires municipalities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to full participation in the life of the province. This means upgrades and renovations to bring older buildings up to code. <p>Make the most and best use of all existing facilities, halls, parks, etc.</p> <p>Maintain what Ramara has; better park care and routine inspection of drainage, electrical, etc. should be done at parks</p> <p>Lack of standardized inspection and maintenance practices</p> <p>Play structures and parks are not inspected on a regular basis (e.g. play sand is full of weeds, not enough garbage cans, litter)</p>	<p>Establish capital budgets and plan for eventual upgrades and new facilities</p> <p>Do yearly risk management inspections of all Township properties (e.g. hydro compliance, playground standards, double buoy lines for lake swimming lessons, etc.)</p> <p>Provide Canadian Standards Association training for playground inspections and maintenance</p> <p>Ensure AODA and legislative compliance (e.g. Municipal Act, Conflict of Interest, Occupier’s Liability Act, etc.)</p> <p>Consider forming a community board to look after the Lovely Day park at Atherley</p> <p>Maintain Udney ball diamond to a standard for both adult and youth players and add a playground to the site</p> <p>Develop maintenance standards for ball diamonds, soccer pitches, playgrounds, parks, halls and facilities, and trails</p> <p>Install automated lighting controls at ball diamonds</p> <p>Prepare Capital Asset Management plans for parks and recreation facilities</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
	<p>Concern for risk management and escalation of insurance costs if an accident occurs</p> <p>Lack of consistency in/dependency on volunteers for ball diamonds lighting at night leads to ball diamond user dissatisfaction and vandalism when the lights are not turned on</p> <p>New siding needed on the Ramara Centre</p>	
<p>Prepare to take advantage of new opportunities for parkland/facilities when they arise</p>	<p>Lack of consistent or standard interactions with developers -- parkland dedication, cash-in-lieu, DC's</p> <p>Plans for future growth are needed</p> <p>Plan for aging population which enjoys access to nature/wetlands (e.g. birdwatching)</p>	<p>Put parkland acceptance and development bylaw in place</p> <p>Anticipate government grants and private partnership opportunities and be shovel-ready for new parks and facilities</p> <p>Establish protocol for working with developers; plan for and expand parklands as adjacent subdivision developments are approved</p> <p>Set parkland standards</p> <p>Protect wetlands/nature areas (e.g. lands on 20th Sideroad) Ensure proper language and practices are in place for protection</p> <p>Make policies to keep/retain road allowances and access to water lots; determine use plans for all vacant parklands</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
HUMAN RESOURCES		
<p>Build on the excellent volunteer base: Ramara volunteers are the lifeblood and reflect the true character of the community</p>	<p>Volunteer base in Ramara is aging</p> <p>Volunteers are not necessarily trained and may not feel comfortable doing some jobs, such as installing playground equipment</p>	<p>Identify the Municipality’s role in coordinating volunteers, working with ratepayers associations, hall boards, committees, etc.</p> <p>Assign a coordinating person for central booking, accountability for spending, asset management to maximize efficiencies</p> <p>Expand the municipal role to support the work of volunteer boards and to keep administrative costs down.</p> <p>Provide or sponsor volunteer training</p>
<p>Position the Municipality to respond to change and growth</p>	<p>Recreation requires a higher level of support from/coordination with other departments (e.g. Clerks, Finance, Risk Management, by-laws, etc.) to meet future needs</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Department needed</p>	<p>Develop an organizational chart</p> <p>Perform an organizational needs assessment against Township priorities and the likelihood of increased demands from new and increased populations</p> <p>Perform a job evaluation for permanent recreation/parks staff</p> <p>Establish more direct reporting relationship between Recreation and CAO for matters of coordination, policy, adjudication of issues</p> <p>Train staff to do park, facility and equipment inspections</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>Plan for success: Develop a step-by-step process</p>	<p>Ensure the plan is attainable, achievable, financially feasible and fosters a positive community feeling</p>	<p>Start small and take the time and patience to do it right – a reasonable plan to move forward cautiously</p> <p>Develop a plan for the immediate next steps and ten years out</p> <p>Continue to seek and support partnerships and volunteerism</p>
FINANCES		
<p>Maximize efficiencies and effectiveness with minimal resources: Already doing much with limited resources (e.g. master plan, trails, summer/seasonal programs at Ramara Centre, field investments, shared purchasing, cleaning at halls, consolidated security system contracts)</p>	<p>Recreation is often seen as a low priority; always competing priorities (e.g. fire services, roads, etc.)</p> <p>Paying for recreation services (e.g. taxpayer responsibility, subsidization, pay as you go, fair user fee structures, etc.)</p> <p>Understand recreation implications of the privately funded services by lakeshore communities (e.g. Lagoon City, Joyland, Bayshore etc.)</p> <p>Adding more recreation expenses to the Township’s stretched operations budget</p>	<p>Prepare formal fees and dues schedule as per Municipal Act</p> <p>Prepare five or ten year budgets with annual operating and capital budgets for recreation and a 10-year Capital Plan</p> <p>Open four specific recreation accounts for Capital, Repairs and Maintenance, Training, Staff</p> <p>Start reserve funding budgets for hall or fieldhouse replacements</p> <p>Break even on operational costs with exception of swimming (outdoor lake and indoor pool at Lagoon City)</p> <p>Set budget standards and comparison of service levels and rates between halls, parks/diamonds etc.</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>Increase funding and revenue for parks and recreation</p>	<p>Strategies needed for building partnerships, getting grants, donations, etc.</p>	<p>Provide options to Council for financially feasible plan</p> <p>Look into getting EPC (Elderly Persons Act) funding from Province.</p> <p>Expand finance functions to collect Trillium grants through partner organizations</p>
<p>RECREATION SERVICES AND AMENITIES</p>		
<p>Provide the best customer/resident services and amenities possible for positive recreation experiences</p> <p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend</i> <i>Greater use of technology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based information is an easy and cost effective way to communicate with the far reaches of the municipality (e.g. rental forms, registration, information) 	<p>Lack of information about what is available for residents (e.g. partnerships for residents' access to Rama Library. maps, contact information)</p> <p>High-speed/internet access is currently fragmented and expensive and unavailable to many so information dissemination is difficult, especially to youth who largely rely on this form of communication</p> <p>Aging demographic in Ramara means that demand for technology has not yet peaked; however this will change as more older adults become computer literate.</p> <p>There will be more demands placed on having important information, such as rental forms, program registrations etc. on-line to service time-strapped families that may not have time to register in person</p>	<p>Stay abreast of high speed technology advancements in the Township and strategize ways to use it.</p> <p>Establish a strong web page presence to provide municipal information to tourists and residents.</p> <p>Install standard/consistent Township signage for all properties; signage on major roads directing to Community Centres.</p> <p>Adopt consistent policies and procedures, rules and rental forms for all parks and recreation facilities</p> <p>Research best practices of other small shoreline and/or rural municipalities in terms of organization structure, committee structure, user fees, policies and procedures, communication methods, etc.</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
	<p>Lack of consistent user experiences across the Municipality</p> <p>Lack of parking and amenities (signage, washrooms) at sport fields and water access areas</p>	
<p>Make the most of Community Halls: Maximize their potential</p>	<p>Changes in provincial legislation re: liquor licenses have reduced fundraising ability</p> <p>Halls work in isolation from one another so there are inconsistencies in practices</p> <p>Information about hall events is poorly communicated across the Township</p>	<p>Coordinate community halls calendar of events (e.g. central booking database)</p> <p>Work on better communication across the municipality about what is happening when and where</p> <p>Standardize rental fees/forms across the Township, but have flexibility for individual hall circumstances</p> <p>Look at weekends and daytime programming to increase hall use and targeted program opportunities for seniors, adults, children and youth</p> <p>Develop orderly practices and routines, across the Township for such as things as hall inspection and maintenance, snow clearing, signage, rules and regulations</p>
RECREATION PROGRAMS		
<p>Provide programs that are responsive to the changing and growing needs of the community and that offer positive recreation opportunities for all residents.</p>	<p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend:</i> <i>Inactivity leading to poor health in all age groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgency in meeting youth needs 	<p>Use simple survey tools through web contacts or other means for Ramara residents on a regular basis (e.g. fall/winter and spring/summer) to receive input on desired programs and services</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend: Changing interests and types of programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends, fads and emerging interests (e.g. paddleboarding, bmx parks) • Increasing female participation • Increase in year-round sport specialization e.g. indoor soccer • Desire of busy families for more options and ability to self-schedule <p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend: Aging population with diverse needs and interests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some will be affluent, others on fixed incomes; some will be fit and mobile, others will have disabilities and mobility issues; some will be computer literate and technologically savvy, others will prefer more traditional forms of communication; some will participate in vigorous activity and sport, others will want more passive leisure choices. <p><i>Although the population is aging, the Township’s overall population is expected to grow and so the total number of children, youth and other age groups will increase and there will be a need to continue to focus on family and child-centred activities too.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics about child and youth obesity and inactivity are startling. Aside from excessive amounts of time spent in front of a tv, computer or other electronics, youth today may be home alone a good portion of the time as their parents work and commute. Often they do not have a parent who engages in regular physical activity to be a role model for health and fitness. And the number of young adults living at home is increasing. • Being a rural community, there are barriers, such as transportation and poor internet service that further isolate the youth. <p>Continue to create more programs for youth in Ramara; consider more winter activities/programs for youth, such as snowbaseball, cross country skiing and snow shoeing</p> <p>More needs to be offered to teens</p> <p><i>The average household income in Ramara is \$66,702, which is lower than both the County and Provincial average incomes. Rural communities often have less disposable income for recreation.</i></p>	<p>Look at alternative ways of providing programs and services that are not dependent on costly facilities (Heart and Stroke Foundation Report finds that people don’t need facilities to be healthy and fit)</p> <p>Continue to ensure youth voice is heard in Master Planning process (Ramara Youth Survey showed a wide array of interests, which demonstrates how engaged they wish to be in recreation)</p> <p>Tackle inactivity with a multi-faceted approach that may include building flexibility and convenience into programs to make it easy for busy families to participate; looking at ways to reduce the transportation barrier; being creative in ways of motivating kids to participate, etc.</p> <p>Offer small engine, snowmobile safety, BMX or motor cross courses for teens</p> <p>Keep a pulse on Ramara’s older adults’ diverse interests and expectations. Include them in decision making to best serve their needs.</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
	<p>Programs in some community centres are not subscribed to</p> <p>Winter indoor swimming location is a private resort pool which is up for sale currently and, if sold, may not be available for indoor swimming lessons</p> <p><i>The median age in Ramara Township is 49.7 years of age, much higher than the provincial (40.4) median age. There will be a growing number of adults requiring various types of support to enable them to participate in recreation, such as handrails, ramps, larger print, and adapted programs.</i></p> <p><i>About 47% of Ramara’s residents are working-age residents, between the ages of 15 and 54, who likely face a time crunch in meeting all their obligations. They want recreation to be convenient and adaptable to their individual circumstances.</i></p>	<p>Choose new activities that are most likely to appeal to Ramara residents (e.g. not all new activity trends will be relevant in Ramara). Those that appeal to an aging population, are water-based, or geared toward youth and families will be most relevant in Ramara, such as paddle boarding, bmx/skateboard facilities, sports fields, community events and gathering areas, trails and nature areas, gardening programs, cultural programs, fitness programs for older adults such as yoga, outreach programs for youth, etc.</p> <p>Offer programs and activities that can be self-scheduled or spontaneous or provide numerous options for working families. Working adults tend to look for flexible, affordable, easily accessible recreation because their work commitments, travel, family responsibilities and so on, take up large amounts of their time.</p>
<p>Improve water access and enable community members to enjoy one of the Municipality’s most attractive recreation assets</p> <p><i>Big Picture/Societal Trend: Enhanced quality of life with water based recreation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramara offers a wealth of opportunities for water-based 	<p>Boat ramps are in poor condition and ineffective due to lower water levels</p> <p>By-law enforcement and vehicle permits is a challenge</p> <p>Conflicting uses on the water</p>	<p>Update boat launches, provide parking, standardized signage for beach access, and other amenities</p> <p>Consider the end of Fern Resort Road where there is a municipal dock facility as an initial water access point for improvement and assess how to better organize other beach areas</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>recreation on Lakes Simcoe, Couchiching, Dalrymple, St. John and Mud and on the Black and Talbot Rivers and the nearby Trent-Severn Waterway. With over 104 kilometres of shoreline, angling, boating, sunbathing, swimming, paddle boarding and so on are important to the quality of life in Ramara and to its many visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though numbers suggest that the overall boating and angling population is declining in Canada, the Ramara area is a highly sought destination for water-based pursuits. 		<p>Ensure public access to the water for residents, docking facilities and programs that enable residents to participate in water-based activities</p> <p>Consolidate waterfront access to 3 waterfront sites, north, central and south Ramara</p> <p>Conduct a Waterfront Study to set quality standards and address parking, public access, signage, and other amenities, e.g. washrooms</p> <p>Look for creative ways (e.g. partnerships, joint initiatives) to offer more or improved water-based activities or services to residents and visitors</p> <p>Access to a park similar to Centennial Park in Brock Township would be ideal for windsurfing, paddle boarding, etc.</p> <p>Resolve conflicts among swimmers, non-motorized and motorized water traffic by marking off swimming areas</p>
PARTNERSHIPS		
<p>Build on the positive cooperation among the Province, Federal government, Ramara, Orillia and First Nation regarding the fishing weirs project</p>	<p>Dealing with various authorities (e.g. MNR, Conservation Authority) about waterfront/water issues</p>	<p>Continue building relationship with First Nation and look for other mutually beneficial projects</p>

Summary of ideas collected for discussion, not necessarily recommendation

Opportunities and Strengths	Challenges and Issues to Address	Ideas for Moving Forward
<p>Continue joint efforts with the School Boards</p>		<p>Maximize joint use agreements with School Boards and work toward joint use agreements at the Board level</p> <p>Take advantage of the Y in-school day care program after/before school when full day kindergarten is introduced so children can have more opportunities for recreation programs in schools</p> <p>Explore a partnership with the schools to improve soccer and baseball fields</p>
<p>Look to attract new partners</p>	<p>Many north Ramara residents are using Severn Township facilities</p> <p>Form solid relationships with partners, municipalities, etc. (e.g. Kawartha Lakes, Severn, Orillia, First Nation, ratepayers associations, hall boards, volunteers, committees, etc.) to better serve Township residents.</p>	<p>Investigate potential partnership with Severn Township (e.g. Washago)</p> <p>Seek updated partnership protocols for Ramara Township on how to engage multi-party funders.</p> <p>Develop relationship with churches and church groups to encourage sharing of resources, space and volunteers.</p> <p>Look for any partnership opportunities with Provincial Parks and MNR</p>

8. Emerging Vision and Themes

Six key themes emerged through the synthesis of all information collected by the Consulting Team. These six themes crystallize how best the Township of Ramara can shape the future of Ramara parks and recreation. Over the next ten years, Ramara Township can use these themes to focus their work and, in doing so, will meet the most pressing parks and recreation needs of its residents and communities. This goal is in keeping with the recent and forward-looking Ontario Recreation Framework which likewise strives to provide equitable, safe and quality recreation opportunities in Ontario.

A 2009 Parks and Recreation Ontario Public Opinion Survey found that “98% of Ontarians believe that recreation and parks are essential services that benefit their entire community.” So in 2011, “the Government of Ontario and recreation leaders recognized the need for a forward-looking framework that would unite partners and solidify the importance of recreation in contributing to healthy citizens and building a stronger Ontario. The Ontario Recreation Framework is a guiding document for all those with a commitment to the health and wellbeing of Ontario’s citizens and communities. It publicly recognizes the value and benefits that recreation, trails, community sport and culture provide and indicates a commitment to ensuring that all Ontarians benefit from equitable access to safe, quality recreation opportunities.”

Parks and Recreation Ontario, Ontario Trails Council, the Government of Ontario, and Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport

8.1 Embrace a New Future Vision for Parks and Amenities

The Township will provide services and amenities meeting current Ontario standards and levels in a highly consultative manner with its citizens. It will make use of survey techniques to engage citizens and provide many more opportunities for people of all ages to become engaged in the suggestions toward, operation of and guidance of recreation and parks facilities in the Township.

Ramara has the opportunity to maximize citizen awareness of all its assets by an aggressive web-based strategy to communicate a full inventory of existing programs, facilities and services available to residents either by direct provision by the Township or through partnerships and facilitative efforts involving third parties.

Ramara Township will invest in a youth plan for involving youth in each area of the Township by using their energy and skills to plan events, fundraisers, suggest new activities and promote sponsorships and assistance from both public sector and private sector allies.

A Supervisor of Recreation will assure that standards of provision and strategies, formal budgets and land use plans are in place using immediate, short term (<5 years) and long term (5 > 10 years) time frames. Professional development and inter-disciplinary approaches will be used to ensure proper engineering, financing, policies, regulatory mechanisms and compliance with regulations are undertaken by municipal staff.

Finally, more people will want to move to Ramara Township and be proud of their home within the municipality as a chosen destination over other municipalities to live.

8.2 Prepare Capital Asset Plans

The use of capital asset planning in a municipality requires compliance with PSAB legislation through the Public Sector Accounting Board submissions of a municipal corporation's balance sheet.

All assets appear on a municipal balance sheet – assets and liabilities, with cash values and depreciation. Such assets include thresholds for valuation, with lower value assets placed into operational budgets under a stated threshold.

Capital asset plans take into account the lifecycle of each asset and determination of strategies that are supported by preventative and demand maintenance to allow the asset to reach an optimum service life. The asset plans would typically use land values and valuations from a number of sources including insurers, development charge studies and current realty valuations.

Ideally a corporation, would ensure all long-term requirements of each municipal department or service would look well into the future to determine the likely timing and scope of each asset need and to determine potential savings or efficiencies by coordinating actions around assets such as declaration of end of life cycles, major repairs to extend service life or sale/disposal of assets at end-of-life and acquisition strategies of new assets. Each municipal service or department therefore must have accurate and meaningful forward looking assessments of their capital asset needs for this process to be optimized.

The Township of Ramara is in compliance with PSAB 3150; all assets are reported on the audited financial statements. Capitalization thresholds are employed in the valuation of all assets included in the asset inventory. For many years, Ramara has utilized a 10-year forecast for water, sewer, roads and bridges to assess capital needs from year to year.

In 2013, the Township will be implementing an Asset Management Plan that will help to establish a budget for the sustainability of its capital assets to insure the integrity of its infrastructure for future years.

8.3 Comply With Legislation and Provincial Quality Assurance Guidelines

Each Canadian corporation and its Directors are subject to legislation requirements for those persons taking office; similarly under the Municipal Act, Council and its civic officers (CAO, Township Clerk, Municipal Engineer, etc.) have statutory requirements to ensure that they are aware and comply with applicable legislation. A handy web site which is a typical resource for awareness and compliance with legislation can be found at: <http://lin.ca/legislation-search> relating to legislation relevant to parks, recreation, sports and tourism.

Compliance with legislation often requires documentation that must be maintained by corporate records. Such legislation typically extends well beyond meeting awareness; documentation and actions must be accessible to legislative/regulatory bodies. An example is posting AGCO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) licensing and regulations that need to be followed in order to operate a facility with either a permanent liquor license or allow special occasion permits.

Corporate officers and Councillors can be subject to jail terms and fines for non-compliance in particular pieces of legislation; particularly those relating to worker safety, construction activity, facilities and property maintenance, human resources and the Occupier's Liability Act requiring that all lands and facilities owned by a municipal entity must be regularly inspected and be in a safe condition for the public or employees.

8.4 Enhance Recreation Facilities

Municipal recreation facilities can be viewed either in a very narrow definition or broadly. In terms of expressing a municipal role of coordinating, facilitating and providing leisure time opportunities, the Municipality may choose to use a variety of strategies to enhance leisure opportunities for its residents.

The Municipality must understand that a strategic approach must now be taken to provision of current and future recreation facilities matched against measurement of citizen satisfaction, input from professional land use consultants in terms of land assembly and development charge options. Elected councillors must have a documented basis provided by municipal staff for the level of investment in parks and recreation facilities to assure accountability to the electorate.

8.5 Treasure and Sustain Rural Life

Rural life has meant a balance between determination of “wants” and “needs”. The rural community has a proud tradition of self-determination by predominantly entrepreneurial business persons and the farming community. Leisure was something to have only after all the chores were complete.

The roots of ORSA, (Ontario Rural Softball Association) came about in the 60’s as a result of a desire to provide some sport and leisure amenities to rural youth. So it isn’t surprising that softball, soccer and waterfront/picnic area parks are common in rural areas along with hamlets each having a community hall to support bingos, senior’s activities, wedding showers and the like.

A few carefully chosen amenities, such as trails, skateboard pads and improved parks with lake access could augment current offerings and still preserve the rural “feel” within Ramara Township. Ramara has avoided high cost amenities such as indoor arenas and indoor pools. Such decisions may be made when Ramara has substantially higher population levels at the 15,000 to 20,000 level.

8.6 Create Community Linkages for Trails

Community trails need activation in order to be successful in all times of the year! Trails need points of interest along with at least the four “D’s” of trails, **Distance, Direction, Destination** and for winter use or in cases of slopes **Difficulty**. The recognition of the need to make trails a part of regular daily walks or rides would therefore mandate the desirability to make trails a point-to-point way to make walks to school, a local variety store, a park area, a waterfront stroll or to a community event more enjoyable and more likely to attract volumes of use.

As well, leash-free areas, community gardens, heritage or artistic sites may be chosen to augment points of interest along a trail. The importance of recognition of vistas and natural heritage is also a prime concern in having trails highlight the beauty and desirability of such preservation strategies.

“97% of Ontario households receive benefits from local parks and trails and 93% said that recreation participation contributes to an individual’s health and wellbeing.”

*Recreation and Parks Essential for Quality of Life,
Parks and Recreation Ontario, 2009, at:
http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3674.htm*

Finally, if trail surfaces can be hard-surfaced, with thoughtful “turn-back” loops, mobility no longer becomes as much of an issue for seniors on their own or with family members also attempting to stay mobile and active outdoors.

8.7 A New Direction For Ramara

These six themes form a solid foundation on which to build a new, forward-looking direction for Ramara Parks and Recreation.

Vision

The Township of Ramara will continue to be a vibrant, healthy, active community in which all people of Ramara may participate, thrive and enjoy accessible, equitable, and safe parks and recreation opportunities.

Mission

Ramara Parks and Recreation is committed to delivering parks and recreation programs and services to its residents in a cost effective, fiscally responsible, legislatively compliant, and consultative manner that promotes sense of community, health and well-being and that protects and celebrates its rich history, rural lifestyle and bountiful water resources.

9. Facility, Sport Field and Parkland Analysis and Recommendations

Recreation facilities, sport fields, parks, trails and programs within Ramara Township were evaluated through a variety of means, including site visits, interviews and discussion, available reports and literature, and the public survey. Identified challenges and opportunities served as a springboard to analyze both the current and desired state of parks and recreation in Ramara Township. In this section, a summary of the analysis is provided as well as recommendations for future facilities, sport fields and parklands.

9.1 Facility, Sport Field and Parkland Observations and Operational Context

The Township of Ramara has maximized its use of available financial and land resources to this point. However, it is clear that residents are now requesting provision of more leisure and recreation options in keeping with greater diversity of incomes, ages, and choice between active and passive lifestyles.

The town will be soon at an important threshold as a greater proportion of taxpayers will arrive from urban backgrounds and will be predominantly weighted in favour of retirement ages. This has important implications for establishing capital budgets, assembly of land, relationships with the development community, and strategic timing of investment in various new amenities and facilities.

Current facilities must be evaluated for their potential to continue to serve the public, to determine the point at which each facility is in its lifespan and whether to continue to invest in such facilities.

Municipalities in rural areas have choices whether to invest in more major facilities themselves or whether to provide access to more expensive facilities in cooperation and partnership with adjoining municipalities. Typical opportunities for such partnerships involve indoor arenas or indoor swimming pools usually in combination with other facilities such as community libraries to save on overhead costs.

As well, as diversity of population increases, children and youth may wish to access splash pads and skateboard facilities. Young families may wish to have options by using elementary gymnasiums and classrooms in a “community use of schools” partnership. Older adults may wish

to have more opportunities and space to socialize and request indoor pool facilities that include therapy pools.

Assessment of the physical condition and readiness to serve the public within a 10-year horizon is the stated objective of the Peter Dunbar & Associates RFP for this Master Plan and all facilities were reviewed in that context.

Outdoor Recreation Facilities and Sport Fields

The Township of Ramara has a typical range of facilities and services for a rural township of a population of under 10,000 that has a proud farming history and emergent growth in cottage-area retirement surroundings. The structure and facilities to date have served the Township well and the Township is to be congratulated for the manner in which the rural spirit has carried forth in the many partnerships fostered in all areas of the municipality.

Typical of rural municipalities, the township halls and parks act as focal points for each area and have spawned adjoining amenities such as picnic areas, ball diamonds, playgrounds and parks with access to trails and lakes.

The 2010 Hemson Development Charges Study completed for Ramara Township (at: <http://www.ramara.ca/images/CorporateServices/Finances/DevCharges/2010/2010-02devchrgsbackgroundstudy.pdf>) identified capital assets in recreation and parks that encompassed over 13,000 sq. ft. (1207.7 sq. metres) of recreation building space and over 14.5 acres (5.88 ha) of associated park space used primarily for sport fields and picnic areas.

There are four areas with playgrounds, Atherley Park, Lake Avenue Park, Longford Community Centre and Brechin Park.

Three areas have outdoor basketball courts, Longford Mills Community Centre, Udney Community Centre and Brechin Ball park.

There are three Community Centre Boards of Management – Longford Mills, Udney and Brechin.

Formal openings and parking at municipal rights of way to lake areas should be considered facilities as they represent a cost and liability to Ramara Township.

Atherley – Ramara Centre – Capacity 200 (main hall)

The Ramara Centre built in 2001 – Community Centre and Park areas include a community centre with main gymnasium, community meeting rooms and a library. The facility has a replacement cost of just over \$2 million including the storage building, generator shed and

water treatment system. The facility has a paved area of over 16,000 sq. ft. or enough spaces for approximately 50 vehicles plus unpaved overflow areas.

The facility location is on a major highway that makes the facility accessible to residents travelling back and forth from work or shopping in Orillia.

The facility has an attractive wood and stone exterior. The sloped roof does limit the height and some functionality of the gymnasium/main community hall. The sports amenities at the Ramara Centre are also of a good quality and functionality with a major and two minor soccer pitches along with two full-size baseball diamonds. The portable washrooms at the Centre are accessible from outdoors, a useful and appreciated additional feature of the Centre.

Also in Atherley, in partnership with the Fire Department, access to Fire Station No. 2 is provided to host recreational activities, rentals and programs. The facility also has a small kitchenette to allow light snacks and refreshments to be served.

As well, at Kurtis Drive and Balsam Road, the current multi-use open space area is currently provided. No parking facilities exist for this area.

Atherley “Lovely Day” Community Park provides lake access and has 1.06 ha (2.6 acres) of multi-use space for picnics, a playground and a shoreline revitalization project in conjunction with the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, County of Simcoe and LEAP. There are a number of components of the playground that require replacement at the site however. The washrooms on site are very basic and along with the storage building could require replacement within the 10-year capital program.

Longford Mills Community Hall – Capacity 150 persons

This community hall and adjacent parkland was acquired in 1959 and was a former variety store. The building roof, fascia and HVAC system are in good condition. The hall is one of two halls operated through a community centre board structure. The seniors club is located at the Centre and facility rentals are active. Recent efforts to enhance the facilities accessibility including sound and light-based accessibility components as well as an expanded front door to an automatic double door are planned.

The Centre has full kitchen facilities and has sufficient seniors programming and rentals to allow continued operation and investments for improvements in the future.

The primary concern for this Centre is to better consolidate and provide for a “lay by” area strictly for drop off and pick up of passengers to the Centre. A challenge at this Centre is the severe grades from the parking lot to the Centre and this affects elderly facility users in particular. As well, the west side of the building provides a second means of egress however it is not at grade level limiting use by clients with a disability in such an emergency.

The Township should prepare for eventual replacement of this facility as the site conditions and slope do not warrant future additions or capital improvements to meet future needs.

Udney Community Hall – Capacity 250 persons

The Udney Community Hall has recently received major hardwood floor renovations and painting along with alarm systems, hall furniture and upgraded kitchen facilities. There is a ball diamond on the property.

The Community Centre Board should be congratulated for full enactment of AODA disabled accessibility compliance.

This facility has the challenge of ensuring that a local hall caretaker can be found in the future and that there is a succession plan in place for future community centre board members.

The ball park and open space, parking and maintenance of the Centre are of good quality and the facility has appropriate parking and amenities.

Brechin Community Hall, Picnic Shelter and Sports Field

The Brechin Community Centre complex is comprised of a small community room, police station office and washrooms servicing the ball park, playground and pavilion/picnic area at Brechin.

The Ontario Lumberjack Championships were hosted at the park earlier in 2012 and represented an example of how this pavilion and sports field site could hold regular events. The playground areas on site are well constructed and serve the need of a variety of ages; however more regular maintenance would enhance the attractiveness and usability of the facilities.

The basketball nets allow full size court play and augment the multi-age capabilities of this park area. The volleyball nets are useful only for casual “picnic or family gathering” volleyball or badminton activity.

Brechin Park and Beach access is adjacent to Lagoon City lands. Access to the lake is well maintained and a large playground area with sand surfacing is provided. Again, a number of playground components require removal due to inoperative or dangerous elements.

Consideration should be given to setting up a permit parking system for local residents and visitors at beach locations serviced by Ramara Township. As well, Ramara should receive remuneration from Canada Post for the mailbox infrastructure within Brechin Beach Park.

Cemeteries

There are four active cemeteries within Ramara Township (Atherley, is maintained by the Works department and three others are maintained by contract). The cemeteries fall under the Cemeteries Act which requires the municipality to operate such facilities. The Clerk's department handles contact with funeral directors and hence is outside of the scope of this report save and except for the cost of grass maintenance.

Municipal Right of Way – Mara to Lake Couchiching

There is an access adjacent to Mara Provincial Park to Lake Simcoe through a municipal road right of way. The area needs improved signage and defined parking area but is useful as the beach area is very gradual and appropriate for casual wading/swimming.

Municipal Right of Way – Fern Resort Road (Access to Heron, Bird and Garnet Islands)

The right of way, parking and docks provided by the Municipality facilitate boat travel to Heron, Bird and Garnet Islands. Docking permits should be continued to provide a cost offset for provision of docks and vehicle/boat trailer parking at this site.

Outdoor Skating Rink

The Washago outdoor rink should receive continued support and sufficient community awareness to optimize use. Opportunities for joint use agreements and partnership with Severn Township should be explored. Ice rinks are also set up each year by volunteers at Lovely Day Park in Atherley and the Brechin Community Centre.

The **Ramona Hall** is just outside Washago. It is a private hall with ball diamond.

Bluebird Park

The park 1.02 ha (2.5 acres) has potential for additional amenities and improvement to the current boat launch ramp which is only suitable for light boats (12 feet or shorter). The site is generally limited to passive use and lack of parking locations limits functionality of the park for picnics.

Geneva Park – YMCA

The park provides amenities suitable for outdoor swimming lessons and recreational swimming under supervision and should be continued as a partnership between Ramara Township and the YMCA at this location.

TOWNSHIP OF RAMARA - INVENTORY OF CAPITAL ASSETS**PARKS (ha/ac)**

Udney Community Centre Park	1.43/3.53
3758 Harry's Lane	1.62/4.0
Kurtis Dr	0.42/1.03
Atherley Park	1.01/2.5
166A Bayshore Dr	0.45/1.11
44 Thicketwood Place	0.79/1.95
128A Bayshore Dr	0.45/1.11
Brechin Community Centre Park	3.43/8.48
Brechin Beach	0.72/1.78
Laguna Parkway	0.95/2.34
Lake Ave	0.96/2.37
Coral Beach	0.32/0.79
2961 Suntrac Dr	1.55/3.83
Florida Ave	0.59/1.46
2820 Furniss Cr	0.65/1.6
Bluebird Park	1.02/2.52
Ridge Ave	≥ 0.10/0.25
Ramara Centre	6.26/15.47
Longford Community Centre	1.25/3.09
Total (Ha/Ac)	23.97 Ha/59.23 Ac

Parkland Grass Maintenance Locations

Area	Name	Location
Municipal Works	Works Yards Municipal Administration Building	#1, 2, 3 Brechin
Atherley Area	Atherley ball park Atherley cemetery Kurtis Drive Ramara Center Sports Complex	Lovely Day Park across from 60 Balsam Road lot across from 4705 Kurtis Drive Highway 12
Central	Val Harbour Bayshore Village Bayshore Village Bayshore Village 7th Lakeshore 7th Lakeshore Udney ball diamond 7th Lakeshore	dead end at Harry's Lane across from 163 Bayshore Dr. dead end at Thicketwood Place across from 127 Bayshore Drive across from 3785 Glenrest Drive between 3746/3740 Glenrest Drive 2347 Concession Road 10 dead end across 3620 Amilia Dr.
South	The Rink Medical Center Brechin ball diamond Lagoon City entrance park Water treatment plant Lagoon City beach Lakeshore lot Lakeshore lot Lakeshore lot – The Steps Lakeshore swim lot Lakeshore lot Lakeshore lot Lakeshore lot Lakeshore lot Heritage Farm Heritage Farm water plant Florida Avenue Mara Shores water plant Gamebridge	across 2229 O'Neil Str., Brechin 3242 Ramara Rd. 47, Brechin 3227 Ramara Rd. 47, Brechin 3 Laguna Parkway 155 Paradise Boulevard 103 and 116 Lake Avenue across from 57 Lake Avenue across from 23 Lake Avenue across from 3 Ridge Avenue 2648 and 2641 Lakeshore Drive across 2463 Lakeshore Drive across 2383 Lakeshore Drive across 2331 Lakeshore Drive beside 1790 Lakeshore Drive lots beside/across 2978 Suntrac 3001 Suntrac Drive Across/beside 1409 Florida Ave. 1396 Ramara Road 47 across/beside 2236 Concession
North	Davy Drive water plant Park Lane water plant Beaver Road Park Poplar Lane boat launch Bluebird park	7230 Davy Drive 7992 Park Lane 7962 Beaver Road – Washago beside 7884 Poplar Lane Across/beside 6314 Bluebird St.

9.2 Facility and Sport Field Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

- Review facility expansion options at Ramara Centre with “shovel-ready” plans to allow greater utility for all ages at the centre; particularly a full-size gymnasium and provision of lighting for the major soccer pitch. The current multi-purpose room could be used for expanded program and rental opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

- Ensure all entrances to facilities have consistent Township of Ramara logo/signage situated at roadways leading to the facility. Major facilities should have a floral arrangement (perennial/annual mix) and a consistent major sign at each location showing Township of Ramara logo and identifier.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Immediate

- Follow recommendations in the Frank Cowan insurance report including immediate action on all Priority #1 recommendations that could endanger life (ie absent GFI circuits, non-CSA (Canadian Standards Association) compliant playground equipment, unprotected outdoor electrical circuits, Brechin Park stub-outs, frayed fencing). Ensure consistent levels of maintenance for all recreational facilities to avoid liability claims and less participation (avoidance of use of facilities due to poor conditions) by residents.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Immediate

- Ensure that there is a standard format for facility, park and equipment inspections in Ramara Township using generally accepted facility inspection templates (OMRA – Ontario Municipal Recreation Association or equivalent) Prepare and document annual maintenance inspections for the Ramara Township CAO two months in advance of budget review sessions by Ramara Council to allow prioritized capital and capital maintenance project requests to be properly documented with budget-ready costing. An example of a playground inspection checklist and park criteria checklist is in Appendices 5 and 6.

RECOMMENDATION 5

- Continue research into best practices in recreation facilities, sport fields and parklands to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation .

RECOMMENDATION 6

- Establish a formal “damage covered” policy for any liabilities or breakage that may occur as a result of recreational program access to schools; maintain such access with an intent of establishment of a formal community access agreement with both County of Simcoe school board locations in Ramara Township and provide access by schools to municipal facilities (in joint use agreements).

RECOMMENDATION 7

- Seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnerships with Severn Township for the Washago outdoor rink.

RECOMMENDATION 8

- Publicize all recreation facilities, trails, access points to lake and parks within Township on Ramara website (after completion of inventory work) and provide a limited publication of a full inventory of available community programs, clubs, recreation events and offerings for the entire Township of Ramara with sections devoted to each geographic area.

RECOMMENDATION 9

- Prepare an inventory of all community assets including government facilities, agencies, churches, historic sites, private and public facilities to allow maximum publication and utilization by Ramara residents. This could be accomplished by hiring a student to work with volunteer committees and boards.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Immediate

- Provide appropriate vehicular and bicycle parking at all major facilities and Township road “right of way” access points to lakeshore swimming.

RECOMMENDATION 11

- Establish and/or expand three multi-use sport pads at Udney, Ramara Centre and Brechin to allow installation of moveable skateboard ramps. The sport pads should be a continuous smooth cement surface which allows use of “Solo” or equivalent cement skateboard ramps or wooden/metal edge skateboard ramps. Such ramps could be rotated amongst the three (or other) locations to allow diversity year to year of the skateboard experience.

RECOMMENDATION 12

- Add a playground to Udney ball diamond.

RECOMMENDATION 13

- Establish unit cost measures (cost per acre for park maintenance, cost per sq. ft. for indoor recreation facilities, cost per person in recreation programs, etc.) to allow benchmarking, best practices and continuous improvement and to document budget efficiencies to Township Council and taxpayers.

RECOMMENDATION 14

- Involve planning, recreation and parks staff with the Township Treasurer and CAO to map out a development charges strategy within land holdings and acquisitions along with 10 year capital planning. Such a strategy should be formally reviewed and submitted to Ramara Council.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Immediate

- Develop capital asset plans for all community centres, parks, recreation and culture amenities using a 10-year capital project plan timeline, and:
 1. Provide Council with annual capital projects with a minimum of a 3-year outlook
 2. Prioritize all capital projects each year by using the following categories:
 - Mandatory** – locked in commitments by prior contract or legally binding commitments and have a minimum legal, safety, regulatory or mandated requirement that will lead to legal action, fines, penalties or high risk of liability to Ramara Township
 - Critical** – funding need to maintain critical components in a state of good repair or would be considered mandatory within 3 years. If not undertaken, these capital items would place the municipality at a high risk of service disruption or breakdown.
 - Efficiency or Cost Savings** – these projects have a break even or ROI (return on investment) within at minimum the capital life of the project due to operational savings or cost avoidance.
 - State of Good Repair** – these projects are not mandatory, but funding is needed to keep the service at targeted standards.
 3. Show all projects in each year's capital project listing which clearly outlines the "cut-line" where projects are funded or not funded and whether proposals are carried over if not funded for re-examination in a future capital budget year.

9.3 Parkland, Waterfront and Land Consolidation Planning Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 16

Immediate

- Eliminate use of all boat ramps until such ramps can meet an acceptable service standard through the Township's insurer.

RECOMMENDATION 17

- Select one waterfront site to establish a fishing platform to further expand the range of recreational opportunities to residents.

RECOMMENDATION 18

- Separate water treatment facilities from public viewing on public parkland where possible or locate such facilities on separate land areas where possible.

RECOMMENDATION 19

- Develop a long-term Municipal land strategy with all Township Departments working together. This strategy would:
 - a) Dedicate a purpose to each land holding
 - b) Declare properties that have no logical parkland or municipal use as surplus
 - c) Test the desirability to "hold" or "sell" with a landlocked site having the least potential for parkland or municipal use
 - d) Determine feasibility of land swaps where sale is not an option
 - e) Seek to engage regional planners
 - f) Consult with the public and be open and transparent.

RECOMMENDATION 20

- Consolidate existing parcels of parkland into five recreation areas: Brechin, Udney, Atherley, Washago area and Ramara Centre. If new land parcels are offered that do not fit the plan, take cash in lieu to fund the long-term park planning strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 21

- Involve the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (formerly Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee, see Section 12.2) in all future 5% in lieu of parkland discussions with Planning Department.

RECOMMENDATION 22

- Improve public access to the waterfront by:
 - a) Making access to waterfront lands and facilities part of the parks and recreation system in Ramara
 - b) Developing appropriate water access facilities at north, central and south waterfront locations.
 - c) Creating a focused, long term strategy to assemble road end allotments, waterfront access and parklands. This may require completing a waterfront study.

RECOMMENDATION 23**Immediate**

- Review Township grass cutting policies and procedures in light of Species at Risk legislation and identify environmentally sensitive locations (e.g. nesting areas) for later scheduled grass cutting.

10. Recreation Program, Community Development & Partnerships Analysis and Recommendations

This section analyzes Ramara Township's recreation programs, community development and partnerships and makes recommendations for future initiatives to address community needs.

10.1 Recreation Program Observations and Operational Context

Ramara Township recreation program services receive a well-deserved good overall rating from residents. The types of recreation programs offered have been historically geared to children and youth, as the top priority, and to adults/older adults. Adult/older adult programs currently operate at capacity and some programs have waiting lists. Children and youth programs other than day camps are not filled to capacity. However, Ramara youth soccer is a thriving community-based sport organization, drawing children from neighbouring municipalities and from which many Ramara children benefit.

The demographics of the township are weighted heavily toward adults and older adults with 40% of the Ramara population over the age of 55 and 53% of families without children. These demographics explain the popularity of recreation programs that are designed for adults/older adults.

The children and youth ages 0 to 14 comprise a small percentage of about 13% of the total population and this proportion will continue as the municipality grows in the future. In addition to the small percentage of the total population, children and youth who live in Ramara are distributed over a large geographic area and are mostly dependent on adults for transportation to and from recreation program activities.

Despite the fact that children and youth make up a small percentage of the population, Ramara residents support the continued priority for municipal recreation spending on this age group. Support for children and youth recreation is consistent with the views of residents of other local and Ontario municipalities. Residents embrace the research findings that healthy development of children and youth is facilitated by participation in quality leisure and recreation skill development programs that lead to the many benefits from participation such as physical activity and social competence. Children and youth who have many different leisure and recreation skills are more resilient when faced with life's challenges, do better academically, and perform positively in social situations.

Residents recognized the importance of more youth opportunities for positive youth development such as ball hockey, ice skating, skateboarding and/or basketball on outdoor pads/natural ice rinks and equipment that should be provided in key locations throughout the township. These youth oriented amenities are beneficial to children and youth of all family-income levels since no user fees are required for participation. Physical activity, sport and recreation contribute to health and wellbeing and work to mitigate the trend toward epidemic levels of inactivity and obesity among young Canadians.

Some additional program ideas for children and youth provided by residents include extended hours for day camps and early evening programming hours for younger children to facilitate participation of working parents, gymnastics and dance for children and youth, and youth programs and facilities such as gymnasium-based sports, teen cooking, small engine repair, snowmobiling safety, BMX riding courses, and youth drop-in location(s).

Ramara residents also support growth in adult/older adult recreation program opportunities that take place both indoors and outdoors. Adult/older adult recreational pursuits foster social interaction, health and wellbeing, and enjoyment of Ramara's beautiful environment year round. Some skill-based program ideas that are recommended by residents include introductory summer water-based sports instruction, e.g., paddle boarding, kayaking, and winter introductory snow-based instructional activities, e.g., snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and gardening.

Family recreation opportunities are also a priority for Ramara residents. Research shows that families that participate in leisure and recreation activities together experience greater family unity. Township residents are interested in community events that bring together residents of all ages, and build community spirit and a positive municipal image. Trail-based activities such as cycling, walking, and/or jogging clubs are popular in other Simcoe County municipalities and provide peer-to-peer support and social interaction based on residents' interests in certain types of physical activity.

Communication with residents about recreation programs and services is a significant challenge in Ramara. High-speed internet service is lacking throughout the township. Currently, it is available to residences near Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching but not available to other areas of the municipality. The lack of online communication leaves many residents unaware of recreation programs and unable to easily access the online registration system from their homes.

It is anticipated that new and reputedly affordable commercial high-speed internet providers are expanding into the Ramara area and, as this expansion occurs, the township should capitalize on the convenience of internet-based communication about parks and recreation programs and services.

In the meantime, other communication methods that residents favour include:

- Flyers inserted in Municipal mailings as by a newsletter or brochure,
- The Township website
- Available media, e.g., CTV news events, free community papers, the Washago area newsletter Soulvine
- A recreation/community guide two times/year
- Electronic signs at community centres and parks, especially locations adjacent to travel routes such as Hwy 12 and Rama Road.

10.2 Recreation Program Recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 24

- Support continued efforts to provide high quality, innovative children and youth recreation programs in locations throughout the municipality that are convenient for these age groups and the caregivers who transport children and youth to various activities.

RECOMMENDATION 25

- Implement quality assurance measures for children and youth recreation programs by implementing provincially-recognized programs such as the Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) “High Five” program and the Ontario Partnership for Active and Engaged Youth (Play Works Partnership) “Play Works” guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION 26

- Measure annual resident recreation program satisfaction levels to improve current overall rating of “good” to “very good” and “excellent” over the decade ahead. Use surveys to monitor and review program demands or priorities and to change program offerings when necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 27

Immediate

- Support expansion of adult/older adult programs (e.g. Georgian College Outreach), given the demand for programs from this age group and the importance of recreation to the residents’ quality of life. Programs should be designed for men and women, and make full use of the outdoor amenities of the township including the lakes, trails, parks, and public lands during all seasons.

RECOMMENDATION 28

- Support the funding of additional signs at strategic locations across the vast geographic area of the municipality to inform residents and increase participation in the parks and recreation opportunities in their community.

RECOMMENDATION 29

- Make full use of the township mailings, press releases to media, community newspapers and newsletters, and other electronic, computer-based methods to improve communication about and participation in recreation program opportunities and events.

RECOMMENDATION 30

- Authorize Ramara Township recreation staff to pursue additional partners within and on the borders of the municipality to create mutually beneficial joint recreation programs and services for Ramara children and youth, families, older adults and other resident age groups that meet their vital leisure and recreation developmental needs. For example, the Recreation Supervisor (formerly Recreation Coordinator, see Section 12) could work with counterparts in Kawartha Lakes, Brock, Severn, Orillia to jointly market and run programs, recruit participants, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 31

- Support expansion of parks and recreation programs and services that enhance the quality of life for residents as a key strategy to improve the tax base of the municipality by making Ramara a desirable community for residents and by achieving a wealth of proven social, economic and environmental benefits.

RECOMMENDATION 32

- Continue research into best practices in leisure and recreation to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation programs and services (e.g. free yoga in Brock Township) Other rural municipalities in Simcoe County and Muskoka District as well as across southern Ontario and further afield have much to offer. See Section 6 .

RECOMMENDATION 33

- Add components of physical activity to leisure and recreation programs and community events as a means to heighten community awareness of its vital health benefits.

RECOMMENDATION 34

- Build upon staff's current success with recreation programs and develop a plan based on the Master Plan survey findings to incorporate feasible residents' ideas about new and existing programs, locations, and other suggestions for the future of recreation programs and services.

10.3 Partnership Observations and Operational Context

Today Ramara residents, especially children and youth are benefitting from partnerships with private facility owners such as camps and resorts, and community-based voluntary and faith-based organizations within the township boundaries. Many Ramara residents benefit from programs and services that would otherwise not be available close to home.

Many residents travel to locations that are outside the municipality to participate in parks and recreation programs and services that they value. Residents in the north utilize recreation programs and services in Severn Township, especially Washago. Residents across the township travel to Orillia for many parks and recreation opportunities including hockey, girls' hockey, and a variety of other sports and recreation programs. Residents living in the south travel to the Beaverton area for parks and recreation opportunities available there, for example, to access a pleasant waterfront park.

The Master Plan survey findings illustrate that nearby residents also cross municipal and First Nation boundaries to enjoy leisure and recreation opportunities within the township. The flow of residents from inside Ramara to neighbouring areas, and from outside Ramara to inside the township boundaries to engage in parks and recreation opportunities provides evidence that the township should engage in coordination, cooperation and joint planning with other recreation, facility and service providers to build recreation participation rates that mutually benefit Ramara residents and their neighbours, especially for programs that would otherwise not be feasible or sustainable.

Partnerships with the YMCA, local schools, neighbouring municipalities, agencies, and other levels of government are common among municipalities in Simcoe County because these partnerships fulfill leisure and recreation needs and overcome participation barriers that are costly or not affordable by a smaller municipality when it acts alone.

In the future, Ramara Township should continue to actively identify new, emerging opportunities and create additional partnerships, for example, with neighbouring municipalities like Severn Township and Orillia, the two school boards, the YMCA, Provincial Parks, and the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

Cooperative planning, joint funding, and coordinated program promotion are required to support a mutually beneficial partnership with bordering municipalities and/or multiple partners, such as the school board and the YMCA. Such partnerships have great potential to improve recreation program participation rates and benefits, particularly for children and youth, and to foster positive working relationships among partner organizations and neighbours.

Note: Master Plan recommendations for partnerships that are relevant to join program and facility development are found within the appropriate sections of this report.

10.4 Community Development Observations and Analysis

Ramara Township has an active volunteer citizenry that is instrumental in the provision of parks and recreation services in the municipality. Many volunteer recreational interest clubs and boards provide hundreds, if not thousands of recreational opportunities including sports programs such as soccer and baseball, special events such as the Lumberjack competition and the annual Craft Fair, and senior's activities, for example, through the seniors club in the Longford Mills Community Centre. In addition volunteer groups provide leadership for parks, trails, and historical conservation and education. Municipal volunteer leadership is vital in the provision of a well-rounded and affordable recreation system in the decade ahead.

Ramara community centre and park boards will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of the parks and recreation system in the township. Board members contribute thousands of volunteer hours for the operation and conservation of valued parks and recreation facilities, amenities, and special events. In turn, their vital contribution supports the efforts of additional volunteers who run programs for all ages of Ramara residents.

The Master Plan survey results identify additional resident interest and enthusiasm about needed parks and recreation programs, facilities, and services. The township can benefit from the momentum created by the Master Plan study and recruit and mobilize volunteers in areas like Heritage Farm and Lovely Day Park area to work together to improve recreation opportunities for residents, especially children and youth. Community residents could also be engaged in development and stewardship of waterfront parks (e.g. Friends of the Park).

Volunteer development is a critical part of the future of recreation programs in the next ten years. Organizations that are based on volunteers are experiencing similar critical challenges with volunteer recruitment, training, leadership development, financial management, and implementation of mandatory legislative requirements, risk management plans, and litigation cost avoidance.

Times have changed for voluntary organizations. One member of a Ramara community centre board stated recently: "We have experienced our first legal liability case in 35 years." Ramara Township is instrumental in strengthening its volunteer base, especially community centre board leadership as volunteerism is threatened by declining interest and an aging volunteer population.

10.5 Community Development Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 35

- Ensure that Recreation staff play a key role in developing Ramara's parks and recreation volunteer leadership by drafting a volunteer policy for adoption by Council. This policy will solidify the township's role and commitment to its vital parks and recreation volunteer base over the next ten years. The Township's role in volunteer recruitment, training, recognition and retention are vital elements of volunteer development and should be addressed in the policy.

RECOMMENDATION 36

Immediate

- Conduct research into grant and other funding opportunities for Centre maintenance, and capital projects, e.g., Elderly Persons Act funding, the Canadian Tire Foundation's Jump Start funding for low-income families, and for other Ramara voluntary leisure and recreation organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 37

- Work with the municipality's insurance agency to assess risks associated with voluntary Community Centre board-managed properties and voluntary organizations that offer programs and events for Ramara residents and visitors.

RECOMMENDATION 38

- Keep abreast of legislative requirements affecting voluntary Community Centre board managed properties and voluntary leisure and recreation organizations, and inform volunteer leaders about compliance requirements regarding such things as health and safety, rentals, serving alcohol, and accessibility for persons with a disability.

RECOMMENDATION 39

- Keep the Township's parks and recreation website information up-to-date including the Community Centre board-managed properties and other voluntary leisure and recreation organizations with the objective of increasing participation in programs and services. Website-based information should include a photo gallery, Centre and organization descriptions, general and contact information.

RECOMMENDATION 40

- Provide more training and orientation opportunities for all councillors and community centre boards and volunteer committees.

RECOMMENDATION 41

- Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and the Municipality over five years. Refer to Section 12, Human Resources for specific recommendations on this initiative and a chart detailing how to phase them in over a five-year period.

11. Trails Analysis and Recommendations

Ramara has a rich landscape ideal for trail development with miles of waterfront, Provincial Parklands, abandoned railway lines, historic travel corridors and natural wetlands. At present, only a small part of this resource has been developed. A focused trail development plan will create two benefits for Ramara Township:

1. Recreational trails that promote healthy, active lifestyles for Township residents
2. Connection of Ramara Trails to the Simcoe County Trails network – a well-designed trail system positioned as a world-class tourism amenity.

For the past three years, Simcoe County has been planning this county-wide system. The County supports these trails through the Planning Department guiding statements and via a strong financial programme. The County provides funding up to \$30,000 per year for trails that are connected to or support the Simcoe County Trails network. This funding program has been active for three years now and is scheduled to be continued in 2013. By developing a trail plan, Ramara Township can access County, Provincial and Federal grant opportunities to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers to build trails. More information about the County Trail Strategy is in Appendix 7.

The purpose of the Simcoe County Trails Strategy is really twofold. It will strive to:

- 1. Develop local, community-based or municipal trail amenities for residents and,*
- 2. Create a vibrant County trails network for the tourist population.*

With County planning leadership and support from municipal staff, each region of the County will be able to focus on its unique natural features while connecting with the larger trails system. New ways of working with land developers and other partners can be established that emphasize using trails to meet the goals of healthy lifestyle planning, active transportation, regional tourism and other initiatives.

Simcoe County Trails Strategy, 2011

11.1 Trails Observations and Operational Context

The Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey results show that survey respondents place a very high priority on improving existing trails, enhancing trail qualities and amenities, and extending trail connections within the Township of Ramara as well as to neighbouring Townships and communities. Survey respondents also want more trails for a variety of

purposes (e.g. cycling, walking, roller blading, etc.) and better promotion of trails. Of all the open ended questions on the survey, respondents contributed the most comments about trail improvements and over half of all survey respondents would allocate 25%, on average, of the total parks and recreation budget to trails.

At present, Ramara has many trail users. Population growth projections, demographic trends toward a growing older adult population, as well as social, health and recreation trends all point to many more trail users in the near future.

Provincial and Municipal land-use planning documents, such as the Planning Act, the Simcoe County Transportation Plan and Official Plan, and the Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe to name a few, indicate that

Communities designed with an active transportation infrastructure that prioritizes the pedestrian and cyclist while reducing automobile dependency support daily physical activity. Active transportation can also lead to economic and environmental sustainability and improved tourism.
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

communities are placing, and are expected to place, more emphasis on planning for active, healthy communities. Trails and active transportation corridors are central to this shift in planning priorities.

Developing a trails system requires a multi-disciplinary, coordinated approach. There are many opportunities for Ramara and Simcoe County to collaborate in this vein. The trail planning recommendations for Ramara propose to upgrade and develop the Town's trail system in three major veins.

1. Trails for Active Transportation

These trails transport residents to school, work, businesses, stores, public facilities, and various destinations around the Township. Such trails may require higher capital investments especially if they are on/along roadways (e.g. hard trail surfacing, lighting, plowing in the winter, pedestrian activated crossing lights, etc.) and also higher standards of care.

2. Trails for Recreation

Recreation trails are used for pleasure and fitness. They often cross many different types of terrain and travel through various built and natural environments. Users typically prefer variety and circular loops that range in length from 20 minutes to two hours.

3. Trails for Tourism

Trails that invite tourists are connected with other communities and provide options for a 150 km or two to three-day ride. Tourists are looking for a quality experience which implies good

signage and trail standards, significant natural, cultural and historic sites of interest and necessary support services, such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, hotels/motels, bike shops, etc. Regional coordination and tour packages are a must.

Currently, residents have expressed concern with the lack of consistent signage for navigating the Ramara trails, as well as trail upkeep and desirable trail connections. Some of the qualities that trail users expect are a wayfinding system that indicates distance, direction, destination and difficulty and routine trail inspection and maintenance. All trails should enable safe, accessible and convenient pedestrian flow and provide links to neighbourhoods, parks and open space, parking areas, sidewalks, bus stops, schools, employment, commercial centres, and building entrances and other places that people want to go.

Hard surface trails generate more trail use and accommodate a wide variety of trail users (e.g. walk, bike, strollers, wheelchairs, etc.). Although hard surface trails may attract unwanted vehicular use, simple pole or gate systems can restrict undesirable use. If pedestrian routes cross roads, there should be visual and textural surface treatment as well as signage to mark the pedestrian crossing and prevent conflict with motorized vehicles. A good resource and model for Ramara is the Georgian Trail Formal Agreement and Trail Standards (2011), which can be found at:

http://www.thebluemountains.ca/public_docs/events/C.4%20DOR.11.73%20Georgian%20Trail%20Agreement.pdf

The Township of Ramara is to be commended for being “committed to providing its residents with accessible facilities and services,” as stated in their Accessibility Plan which addresses trails, parks and open spaces as well as bicycle safety in its long term objectives and will act on recommendations from the Ramara Active Transportation Plan. Successful implementation of active transportation relies on many Municipal departments working together. For example, Public Works may assist in upgrading road surfaces, edges and expanding the useable width on the outside of the white lines. This support from Public Works would provide tremendous benefit to Share the Road programs, for example. Another instance would be working collaboratively with Planning to protect environmentally sensitive areas along trails.

11.2 Trails Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 42

- Upgrade and develop Ramara trail and active transportation system using a two-phase strategy:
 - Phase 1**
 - Connect trails to neighbouring municipalities (i.e. Orillia, Severn Township, Beaverton and Muskoka) over the next five to ten years; By doing so, a strong spine or main corridor will be built, from which all other trails can branch off. This will result in a trail system that encourages tourism and visitors from outside the municipality and gives residents more options for trail use.
 - Phase 2**
 - Connect existing trails within Ramara Township into a cohesive system of looping or circular routes over the next 10+ years. Preferably, loops will be a variety of lengths, providing options for 20 minute to two- hour rides. See following maps showing phased development of trail networks.

RECOMMENDATION 43

Immediate

- Review and upgrade existing trails and build new trails to meet the following standards:
 - Hard surface (either stone dust, asphalt)
 - 10 feet/3 metres wide
 - 2 feet/1.5 metres clear cut zones on each side.

RECOMMENDATION 44

- Be proactive in Township planning department to create new trail connections within all new site developments.

RECOMMENDATION 45

- Coordinate efforts between the Trails Committee and Ramara Planning Department to work with Share the Road initiatives when possible and develop a trails master plan for Ramara with wayfinding system.

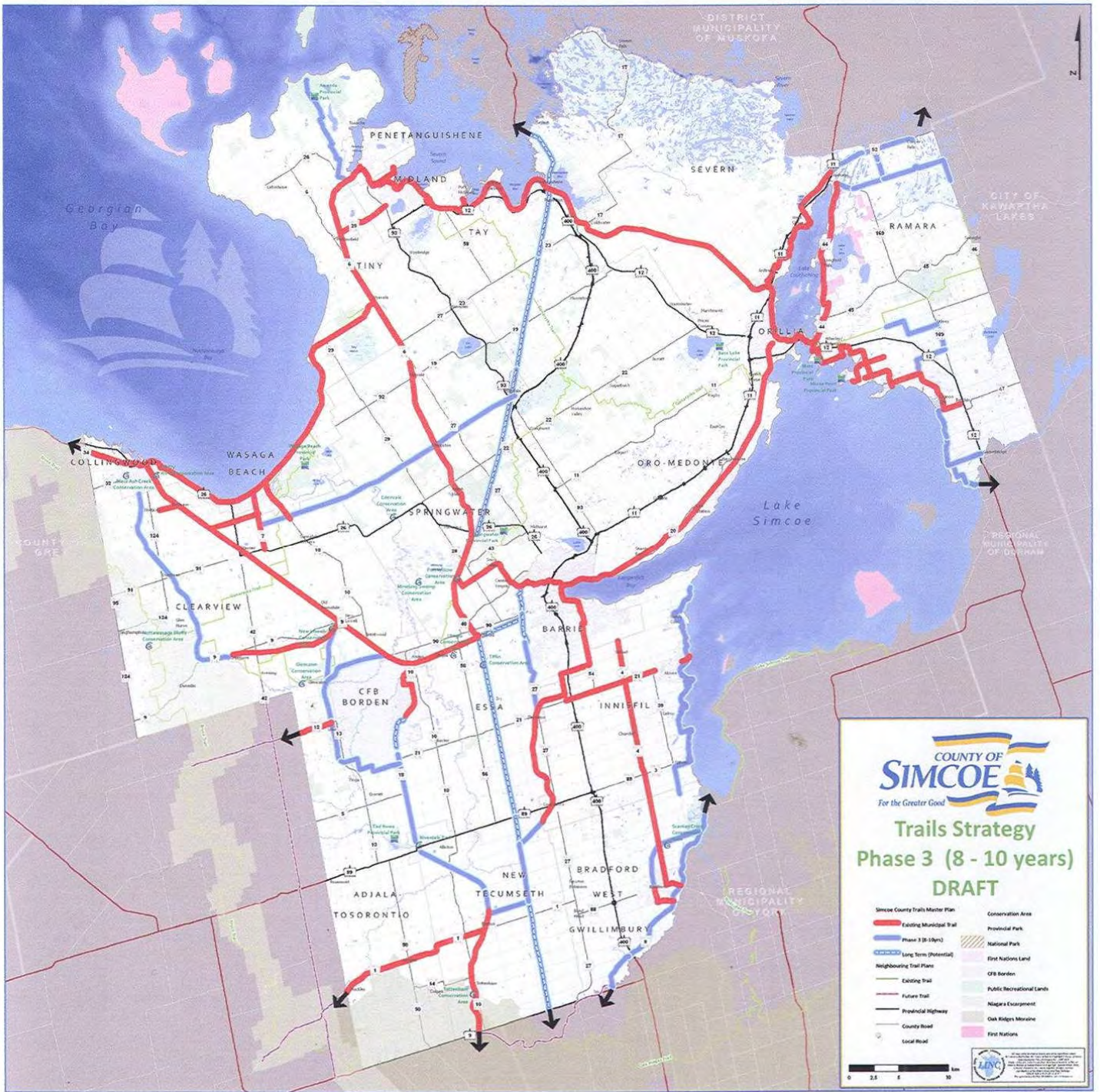
RECOMMENDATION 46

- Promote 1.5 m edge to all new County and Municipal roads.

RECOMMENDATION 47

- Connect trails with community facilities and places people want to go, such as schools, parks, shops, businesses, restaurants and food concessions, etc. to establish more “point- to- point” connections to ensure that trails all have the 4 D’s – distance, direction, difficulty level and destination.

Simcoe County Proposed Trail Network 8-10 Years



Ramara Township Existing Trails



LEGEND

- Existing Connections
- Proposed County of Simcoe Trails

NOTES

1. Base Plan supplied by Simcoe County
2. Trail Development Areas Not to Scale

NO.	NAME	DATE
2	MP	11/05/2012
1	MP	10/21/2012

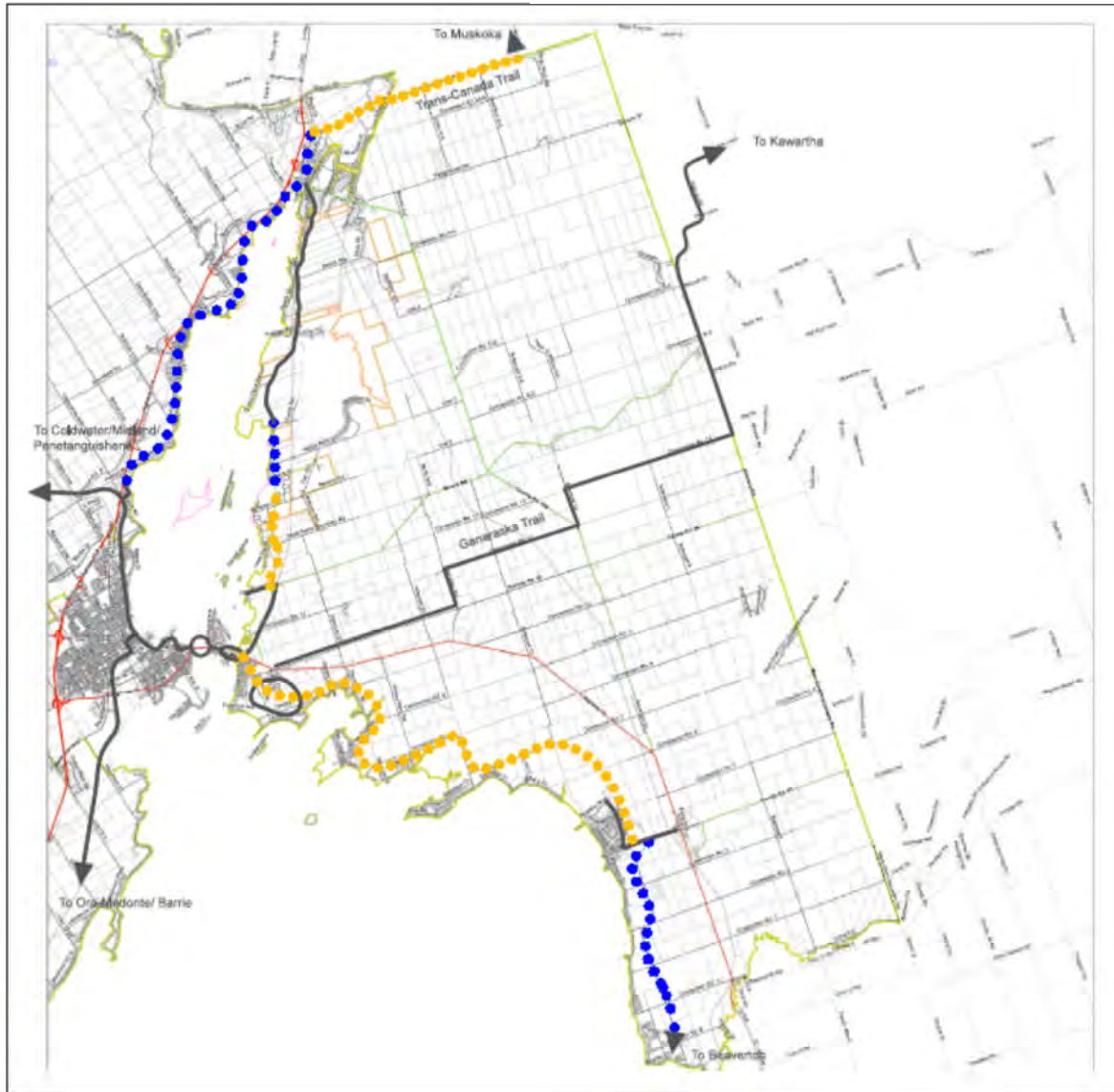
PROJECT
**Ramara Township
Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

DATE	10/21/2012	DRAWN BY	L. BLACK
SCALE	NTS	CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO.			

DRAWING
Existing Connections

Dunbar & Associates Recreation Consultants	SHEET L1
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Ramara Township Proposed 5 Year



LEGEND		
	Existing Connections	
	Proposed County of Simcoe Trails	
	Proposed Trail Area Existing to 5 Years	

NOTES

1. Base Plan supplied by Simcoe County
2. Trail Development Areas Not to Scale

NO.	NAME	DATE
2	MP	11/05/2012
NO.	NAME	DATE
1	MP	10/21/2012

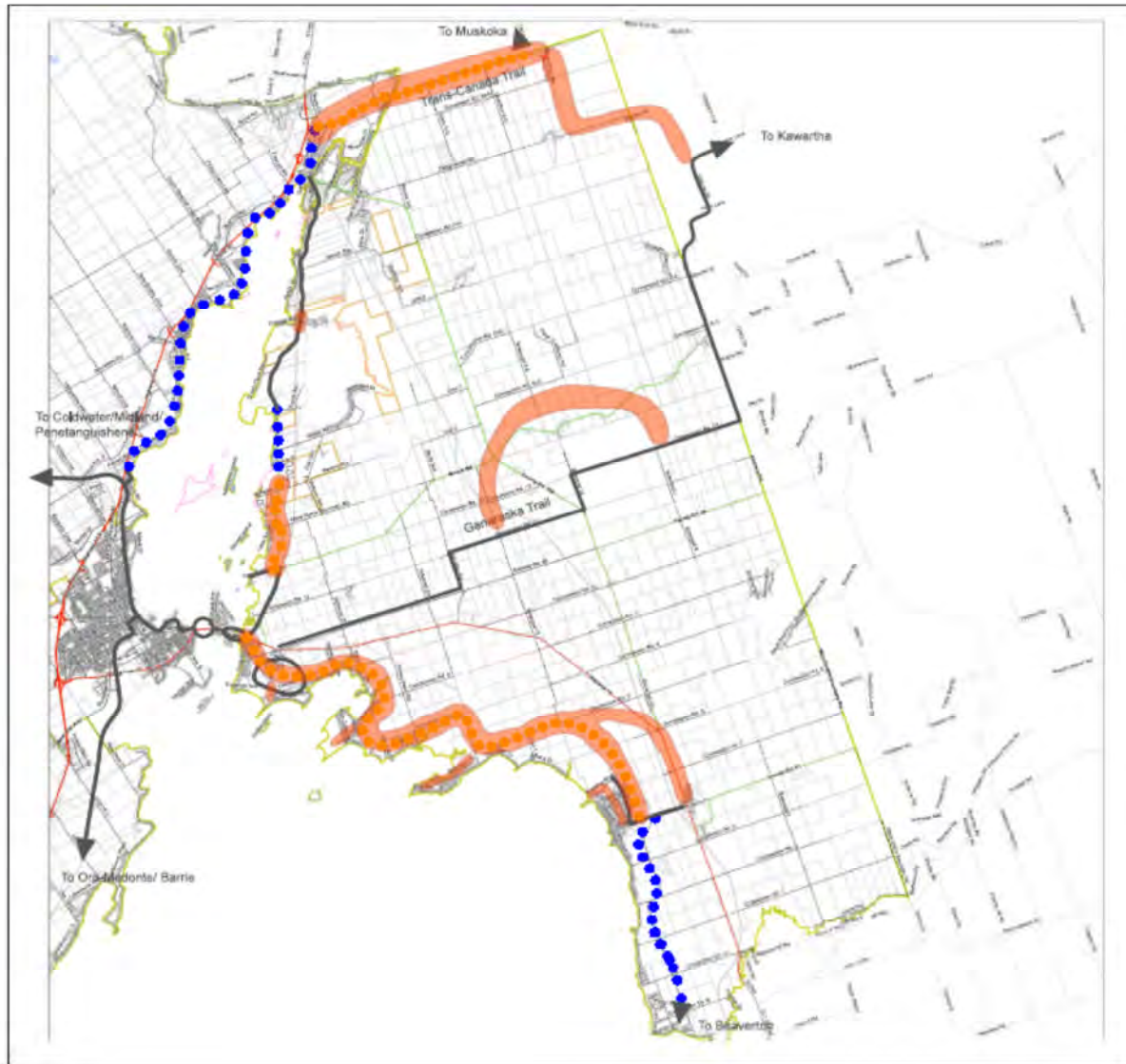
PROJECT
**Ramara Township
Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

DATE	10/21/2012	DRAWN BY	L. BLACK
SCALE	NTS	CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO.			

DRAWING
Existing to 5 Years

	Dunbar & Associates Recreation Consultants	SHEET	L2
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Ramara Township Proposed 5-12 Year



LEGEND

- Existing Connections
- Proposed County of Simcoe Trails
- Proposed Trail Area Existing to 5 Years
- Proposed Trail Area 5-12 Years

NOTES

1. Base Plan supplied by Simcoe County
2. Trail Development Areas Not to Scale

NO.	NAME	DATE
2	MP	11/05/2012
1	MP	10/21/2012

PROJECT

**Ramara Township
Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

DATE	10/21/2012	DRAWN BY	L. BLACK
SCALE	NTS	CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO.			

DRAWING

5-12 Year Development

<p>Dunbar & Associates Recreation Consultants</p>	<p>SHEET</p> <h1 style="font-size: 2em;">L3</h1>
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RECOMMENDATION 48

- Review existing subdivisions, making improvements to trail accessibility and safety where possible. Consider the opportunities within Lagoon City to promote bike lanes along main connecting roads.

RECOMMENDATION 49

- Require all new subdivisions, commercial and public areas to connect their on-site pedestrian routes to offsite sidewalks and trail access points. Design pedestrian routes to allow clear and unobstructed passage, with a minimum width of 1.5 metres with no abrupt side slopes, and a minimum overhead clearance of 2.5 metres. All street furniture should be off the pedestrian route of travel and storm sewers should be placed where they won't interfere with active transportation.

RECOMMENDATION 50

- Provide the following conditions on all pedestrian routes to promote and enable walking:
 - Pedestrian routes should be placed within 150 metres (or closer) of all residential areas.
 - Cul-de-sacs and other types of dead ends need to provide connection of a minimum of 3 meters wide which should be hard surface (compacted gravel as a minimum).

RECOMMENDATION 51

Immediate

- Incorporate changes to the current job description of Recreation/Community Development Coordinator (renamed Recreation Supervisor in Section 12) to include the following trails responsibilities:
 - Interact with and provide support to volunteer groups working on trail initiatives.
 - Begin and maintain a basic and regular trails standards inspection system by a qualified person (See Appendix 8 for sample trail inspection forms).
 - Coordinate trail budget plans with volunteers and seek financial support from available funding sources and grant opportunities.
 - Work with North Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to seek assistance in increasing the awareness of trails and their importance in moving Ramara toward a more active, healthy community.

RECOMMENDATION 52

Immediate

- Change the reporting methods of the Trails Committee as follows:
 - Report on a monthly basis to the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC), formerly Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee, see Section 12.
 - Vet all projects, activities, grant applications with RPCAC and adoption by Council prior to commencement.

RECOMMENDATION 53

- Comply with AODA legislation for accessible trails and practice principles of universal and sustainable design.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) has been guiding the province-wide upgrades to all public sector facilities (of which trails is a subcategory) and the Township of Ramara has completed an Accessibility Study. The intent is that all new facilities will provide barrier-free access while older facilities will need upgrades as a long term goal. In Ramara, all amenities (e.g. parks, play spaces, sidewalks, trails, rest areas, trail heads, etc.) will need barrier-free design with appropriate parking spaces as close as possible for easier discharge of individuals.

From a wayfinding or signage perspective, it is recommended that large posted maps show areas of minimal width, steep grades or troublesome side slopes. The key is to inform the trail user and let them know what challenges or restrictions are on the trail route. Where possible, these restrictive areas should be corrected or minimized. The following excerpt from the Trails for All Canadians Collaborative gives more detail on principles of universal design:

Trails designers and builders should always strive to design, construct and maintain their trail according to the principles of universal and sustainable design. However, in situations where it is not feasible to meet all of these guidelines and best practices through the full length of a trail, the trail should be designed and constructed to comply to the greatest extent possible. Keep the sections that do not fully comply with these guidelines as short and infrequent as possible. The more that trail conditions vary from these guidelines, the less sustainable the trail will be and the larger the proportion of people who will not have access to the trail experience. For example:

- *The trail should be free of constructed barriers, and natural barriers should be removed if feasible (that is, if the barrier can be removed with the available resources and without damaging a significant natural element of the environment).*
- *If trail cross slope must exceed 5 percent, the steep segment should be as short as possible and the remainder of the trail should comply with the recommendations.*
- *Provide level rest intervals regularly (e.g., 30 metres or 100 feet) on sections of trail with a grade exceeding 5 percent.*
- *If the trail travels along a cliff, and a drop-off creates a tread width less than 1.0 metre (3 feet), the narrow section should be made as wide as possible and the length of the narrow section should be minimized.*
- *Soft surfaces on the trail tread should be stabilized, supplemented or replaced to enhance access for users of all abilities, discourage users from creating ad hoc trails on more stable surfaces and minimize the erosive damage resulting from trail use.*

(pg. 29, Ontario's Best Trails Guidelines and Best Practices for the Design, Construction and Maintenance of Sustainable Trails for All Ontarians, Trails for All Canadians Collaborative, 2006.)

12. Human Resources: Staff and Volunteer Analysis and Recommendations

In this section, the Township of Ramara human resources, staffing and volunteerism are examined as it relates to parks and recreation, specifically the Community Centre Boards, the Recreation/Community Development Coordinator position and the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee and how they interact with municipal departments, volunteers and the community. The purpose of this review is to put into place practical measures that will prepare the Township for inevitable growth and change as well as advance and improve parks and recreation opportunities for its residents by working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

12.1 Human Resources: Staff and Volunteer Observations and Operational Context

The current recreation staff has done a commendable job in fulfilling role expectations as well as assuming numerous additional responsibilities required to maintain current and expected levels of service to the community. The survey commended many of the programs and activities offered in Ramara and survey respondents are aware of the challenges that face Ramara given its geography, dispersed population and fiscal realities.

However, to position the Municipality to respond to change and future growth, parks and recreation in Ramara requires a higher degree of support from/coordination with other departments and disciplines (e.g. Clerks, Finance, By-laws, Public Works, Planning, etc.). In turn, there needs to be a more coordinated, formalized and focused interaction with community groups and volunteers, such as ratepayers associations, community centre boards, committees, potential partners and relevant agencies and organizations. Goals to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness can more readily be met when all parties are focused and organized toward achieving common objectives.

Ramara has reached a point in its growth and development in which change is required to meet the needs and expectations of its residents. This evolution is common to all small, but growing, municipalities and in Section 6 a number of best practices and models taken from similar communities may prove useful as Ramara makes its transition.

The following recommendations pinpoint key strategies to adapt the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee, Community Centre Boards and the Recreation/Community Development position and some required training.

12.2 Human Resources: Staff and Volunteer Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 54

Immediate

- Reclassify existing Recreation/Community Development Coordinator position to Recreation Supervisor
- Write new job descriptions with additional responsibilities (including but not limited to duties in support of the trails committee, community centre boards, youth activities and playground equipment maintenance.)
- Identify additional compensation required.

RECOMMENDATION 55

Immediate

- Create a staff flow chart outlining responsibilities and relationships between CAO and Recreation Supervisor.

RECOMMENDATION 56

Immediate

- Reflect costs and proposed additional costs per recreation sector in new detailed budget accounts as follows: Ramara Recreation Centre, Staff, Building Maintenance, Field Maintenance, Equipment Maintenance, Staff Training
- Prepare capital asset management plans for all recreation sites (i.e. parks, buildings, trails) in order to make long term capital forecasts to manage the future costs of each facility (see also Recommendation 15, Section 9, Facilities).

RECOMMENDATION 57

Immediate

- Commence CSA (Canadian Standards Association) approved staff training in playground equipment and trails maintenance as first priority. Consult training@ontarioparksassociation.ca for additional information on types of training available (e.g. chainsaw safety, registered playground practitioner, parks equipment and safe operations, ball diamond maintenance, chipper safety training, parks equipment operations and hazard analysis, irrigation workshop, park supervisor and lead hand competency, etc.).

RECOMMENDATION 58

Immediate

- Include Planning staff, Recreation Supervisor and Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (see Recommendation 60 below) on future parkland acquisitions and/or 5% in lieu park land dedication decision making.

RECOMMENDATION 59

Immediate

- Present Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC) meeting minutes to Council for adoption to formalize their relationship and also to mandate a closer tie between Council and RPCAC goals and objectives
 - Share regular budget printouts with RPCAC at monthly meetings
 - Present five-year forecasts, prepared jointly by RPCAC and Recreation Supervisor to Council to set budget parameters.

RECOMMENDATION 60

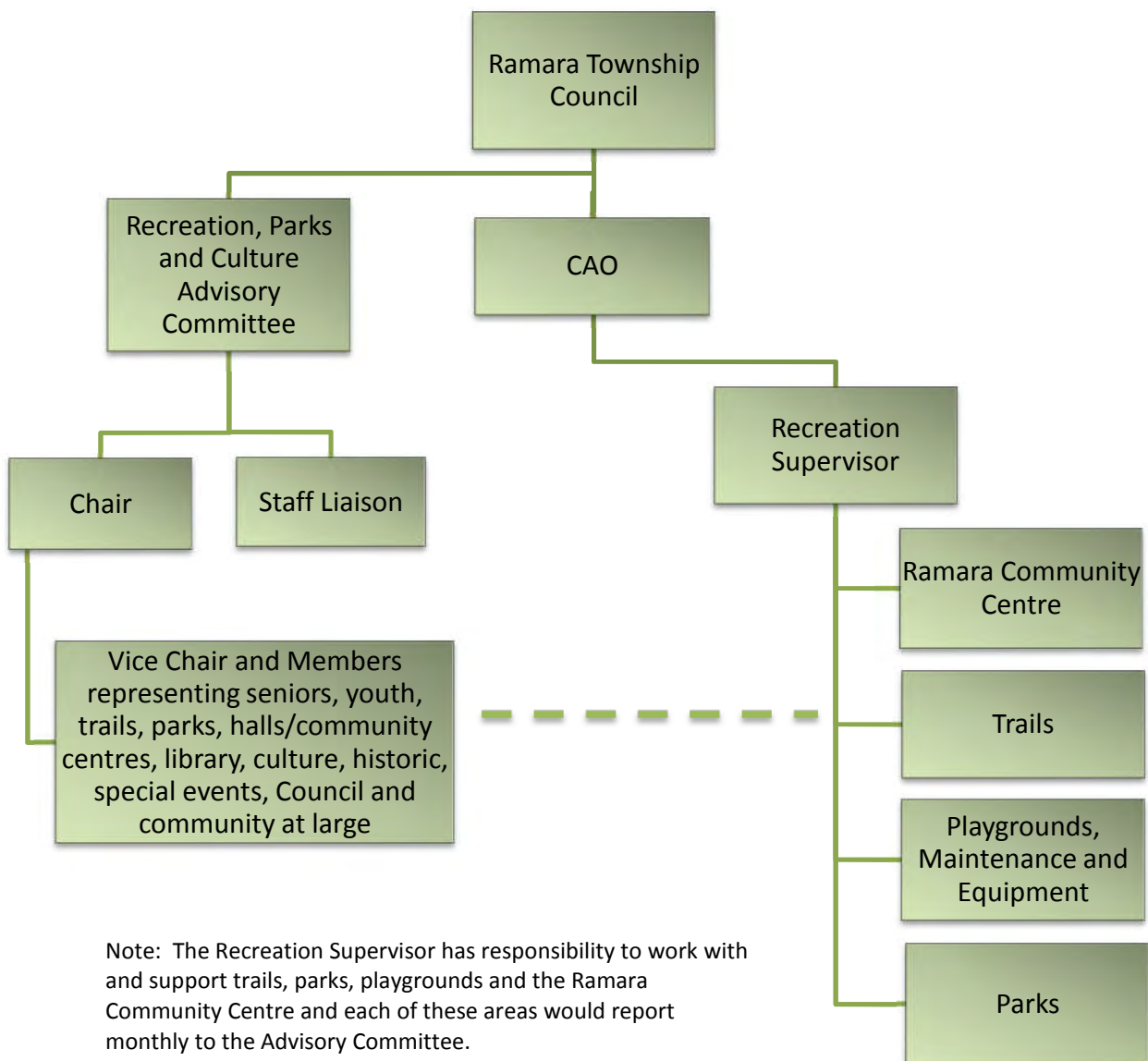
Immediate

- Rename Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC).

RECOMMENDATION 61

Immediate

- Restructure the relationship of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC) to the Township (see chart) and formalize by:
 - Having Council appoint RPCAC members who serve maximum of 3 terms (4 years per term)
 - Recruiting members who represent a broad cross section of recreation needs in the community
 - Presenting meeting minutes to Council for formal adoption.



Note: The Recreation Supervisor has responsibility to work with and support trails, parks, playgrounds and the Ramara Community Centre and each of these areas would report monthly to the Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 62

•Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and the Municipality over five years. (see chart)

	Municipal Staff Role	Community Centre Board Role	Township Council Role
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research into grant opportunities for Centre maintenance, capital projects, etc. • Work with Municipal insurance agent to assess risks • Inform Centre Boards of legislative compliance requirements affecting Centre facilities, health and safety, rentals, serving alcohol, accessibility, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and operate Centres • Present annual budgets to Municipality • Do minor repairs and cleaning • Seek approval for installation of equipment or structural changes from Municipal staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint all members to each Centre Board • Assign a Council member to each Board • Approve annual Centre budgets
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage website (e.g. photo gallery, Centre descriptions, general information) • Work with Centre Boards to create standard rental forms, unique pricing based on amenities, rules and regulations • Prepare 10-year budget forecasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Municipal staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- create standard forms, unique pricing, regulations for all parks and facility rental -- promote through Municipal website to increase rental revenues -- create 10-year budget forecasts for Centre facility maintenance and repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 10-year plan to bring Centre facilities and properties up to full standards and ensure maintenance standards are maintained • Supply grass cutting, grading, snow removal, etc. and ensure routine health and safety inspections
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide volunteer training seminars and workshops • Prepare Capital Asset Management Plan • Work with Centre Boards to develop policy and procedure manual, create consistent Centre signage across Township, and develop on-line rental and payment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Municipal staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --create common/consistent Centre signage across Township, -- develop website to include an on-line rental and payment process, --identify volunteer training needs, and --develop a policy and procedures manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with staff and Centre Boards to adopt consistent signage across the Township
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate joint purchases of supplies and services as per Centre Board requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly with Municipal staff for most effective/efficient use of resources and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Centre Boards in realizing their short and long term plans
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate Centre bookings to maximize rental revenues • Liaise with each Centre Board to provide ongoing assistance and support according to formal agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to operate Centres (according to formal agreement) keeping accurate records, monthly meeting minutes, executive elections, liaising with Municipal staff, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt formal agreement between the Municipality and Centre Boards (e.g. financial relationship, operation and management responsibilities, programming and community use)

RECOMMENDATION 63

- Work with Community Centre boards to create standard rental forms with site-specific rental rates based on amenities and rules and regulations for renters, and an on-line rental and payment process.

RECOMMENDATION 64

- Work with Community Centre boards to create an operational policy and procedures manual for the facilities, including the board members' roles and responsibilities, and other vital information.

RECOMMENDATION 65

- Prepare a 10-year capital budget forecast and capital asset plan for each Community Centre in the Ramara parks and recreation system.

RECOMMENDATION 66

- Coordinate joint purchase of supplies and services as per Community Centre board requests to maximize economies of scale and lower costs of operation.

RECOMMENDATION 67

- Facilitate the development of a formal agreement with Community Centre boards that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of boards, municipal staff, and municipal council.

RECOMMENDATION 68

- Streamline and coordinate Community Centre bookings to reduce volunteer workload and to maximize rental revenues.

RECOMMENDATION 69**Immediate**

- Liaise with boards and provide ongoing assistance and support according to the formal agreement between the boards and the municipality.

RECOMMENDATION 70**Immediate**

- Recruit youth members for all Community Centre Boards.

13. Implementing Recommendations

In all, this Master Plan makes 70 recommendations to enhance parks and recreation in Ramara Township in the following areas:

- Facility and Sport Fields
- Parkland, Waterfront and Land Consolidation
- Recreation Programs
- Community Development
- Trails
- Human Resources: Staff and Volunteers










While each recommendation is inherently valuable and integrated with the overall desired future vision, some recommendations are deemed to have greater priority, some should be implemented right away, and some should be phased in over a longer time period.








This section provides an estimated implementation schedule, outlining what needs to be done now, in the short term and in the longer term. It is presented in chart format so it is easy to refer to and use as a road map to guide planning.








Following the implementation schedule charts, the Consulting Team has placed high priority on several key recommendations that are most immediate and crucial to successfully positioning parks and recreation in Ramara for the future. Direction on first or next steps to begin implementation of these high priorities is provided.









13.1 Implementation Schedule











Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
Facility and Sport Field Recommendations			
1. Review facility expansion options at Ramara Centre with “shovel-ready” plans to allow greater utility for all ages at the centre; particularly a full-size gymnasium and provision of lighting for the major soccer pitch. The current multi-purpose room could be used for expanded program and rental opportunities.			★
2. Ensure all entrances to facilities have consistent Township of Ramara logo/signage situated at roadways leading to the facility. Major facilities should have a floral arrangement (perennial/annual mix) and a consistent major sign at each location showing Township of Ramara logo and identifier.		★	
3. Follow recommendations in the Frank Cowan insurance report including immediate action on all Priority #1 recommendations that could endanger life (ie absent GFI circuits, non-Canadian Standards Assoc. compliant playground equipment, unprotected outdoor electrical circuits, Brechin Park stub-outs, frayed fencing). Ensure consistent levels of maintenance for all recreational facilities to avoid liability claims and less participation (avoidance of use of facilities due to poor conditions) by residents.	★		
4. Ensure that there is a standard format for facility, park and equipment inspections in Ramara Township using generally accepted facility inspection templates (OMRA – Ontario Municipal Recreation Association or equivalent). Prepare and document annual maintenance inspections for the Ramara Township CAO two months in advance of budget review sessions by Ramara Council to allow prioritized capital and capital maintenance project requests to be properly documented with budget-ready costing.	★		
5. Continue research into best practices in recreation facilities, sport fields and parklands to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation.	→		
6. Establish a formal “damage covered” policy for any liabilities or breakage that may occur as a result of recreational program access to schools; maintain such access with an intent of establishment of a formal community access agreement with both County of Simcoe school board locations in Ramara Township and provide access by schools to municipal facilities (in joint use agreements).		★	






Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
7. Seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnerships with Severn Township for the Washago outdoor rink.			
8. Publicize all recreation facilities, trails, access points to lake and parks within Township on Ramara website (after completion of inventory work) and provide a limited publication of a full inventory of available community programs, clubs, recreation events and offerings for the entire Township of Ramara with sections devoted to each geographic area.			
9. Prepare an inventory of all community assets including government facilities, agencies, churches, historic sites, private and public facilities to allow maximum publication and utilization by Ramara residents. This could be accomplished by hiring a student to work with volunteer committees and boards.			
10. Provide appropriate vehicular and bicycle parking at all major facilities and Township road "right of way" access points to lakeshore swimming			
11. Establish and/or expand three multi-use sport pads at Udney, Ramara Centre and Brechin to allow installation of moveable skateboard ramps. The sport pads should be a continuous smooth cement surface which allows use of "Solo" or equivalent cement skateboard ramps or wooden/metal edge skateboard ramps. Such ramps could be rotated amongst the three (or other) locations to allow diversity year to year of the skateboard experience.			
12. Add a playground to Udney ball diamond.			
13. Establish unit cost measures (cost per acre for park maintenance, cost per sq. ft. for indoor recreation facilities, cost per person in recreation programs, etc.) to allow benchmarking, best practices and continuous improvement and to document budget efficiencies to Township Council and taxpayers.			
14. Involve planning, recreation and parks staff with the Township Treasurer and CAO to map out a development charges strategy within land holdings and acquisitions along with 10 year capital planning. Such a strategy should be formally reviewed and submitted to Ramara Council.			
15. Develop capital asset plans for all community centres and parks, recreation and culture amenities.			

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
Parkland, Waterfront and Land Consolidation Recommendations			
16. Eliminate use of all boat ramps until such ramps can meet an acceptable service standard through the Township’s insurer.			
17. Select one waterfront site to establish a fishing platform to further expand the range of recreational opportunities to residents.			
18. Separate water treatment facilities from public viewing on public parkland where possible or locate such facilities on separate land areas where possible.			
19. Develop a long-term Municipal land strategy with all Township Departments working together. This strategy would: a) Dedicate a purpose to each land holding b) Declare properties that have no logical parkland or municipal use as surplus c) Test the desirability to "hold" or "sell" with a landlocked site having the least potential for parkland or municipal use d) Determine feasibility of land swaps where sale is not an option e) Seek to engage regional planners f) Consult with the public and be open and transparent.			
20. Consolidate existing parcels of parkland into five recreation areas: Brechin, Udney, Atherley, Washago area and Ramara Centre. If new land parcels are offered that do not fit the plan, take cash in lieu to fund the long-term park planning strategy.			
21. Involve the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee in all future 5% in lieu of parkland discussions with Planning Department.			
22. Improve public access to the waterfront by: a) Making access to waterfront lands/facilities part of parks and recreation system in Ramara b) Developing appropriate water access facilities at north, central and south locations. c) Creating a focused, long term strategy to assemble road end allotments, waterfront access and parklands. This may require completing a waterfront study.			
23. Review Township grass cutting policies and procedures in light of Species at Risk legislation and identify environmentally sensitive locations (e.g. nesting areas) for later scheduled grass cutting.			












Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
Recreation Programs Recommendations			
24. Support continued efforts to provide high quality, innovative children and youth recreation programs in locations throughout the municipality that are convenient for these age groups and the caregivers who transport children and youth to various activities.			
25. Implement quality assurance measures for children and youth recreation programs by implementing provincially-recognized programs such as the Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) “High Five” program and the Ontario Partnership for Active and Engaged Youth (Play Works Partnership) “Play Works” guidelines.			
26. Measure annual resident recreation program satisfaction levels to improve current overall rating of “good” to “very good” and “excellent” over the decade ahead. Use surveys to monitor and review program demands or priorities and to change program offerings when necessary.			
27. Support expansion of adult/older adult programs (e.g. Georgian College Outreach) given the demand for programs from this age group and the importance of recreation to the residents’ quality of life. Programs should be designed for men and women, and make full use of the outdoor amenities of the township including the lakes, trails, parks, and public lands during all seasons.			
28. Support the funding of additional signs at strategic locations across the vast geographic area of the municipality to inform residents and increase participation in the parks and recreation opportunities in their community.			
29. Make full use of the township mailings, press releases to media, community newspapers and newsletters, and other electronic, computer-based methods to improve communication about and participation in recreation program opportunities and events.			
30. Authorize Ramara Township recreation staff to pursue additional partners within and on the borders of the municipality to create mutually beneficial joint recreation programs and services for Ramara children and youth, families, older adults and other resident age groups that meet their vital leisure and recreation developmental needs. For example, the Recreation Supervisor could work with counterparts in Kawartha Lakes, Brock, Severn, Orillia to jointly market and run programs, recruit participants, etc.			

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
31. Support expansion of parks and recreation programs and services that enhance the quality of life for residents as a key strategy to improve the tax base of the municipality by making Ramara a desirable community for residents and by achieving a wealth of proven social, economic and environmental benefits.			
32. Continue research into best practices in leisure and recreation to find new and innovative and/or cost effective means of providing municipal recreation programs and services (e.g. free yoga in Brock Township) Other rural municipalities in Simcoe County and Muskoka District as well as across southern Ontario and further afield have much to offer.			
33. Add components of physical activity to leisure and recreation programs and community events as a means to heighten community awareness of its vital health benefits.			
34. Build upon staff's current success with recreation programs and develop a plan based on the Master Plan survey findings to incorporate feasible residents' ideas about new and existing programs, locations, and other suggestions for the future of recreation programs and services.			
Community Development Recommendations			
35. Ensure that Recreation staff play a key role in developing Ramara's parks and recreation volunteer leadership by drafting a volunteer policy for adoption by Council. This policy will solidify the township's role and commitment to its vital parks and recreation volunteer base. The Township's role in volunteer recruitment, training, recognition and retention are vital elements of volunteer development and should be addressed in the policy.			
36. Conduct research into grant and other funding opportunities for Centre maintenance, and capital projects, e.g., Elderly Persons Act funding, the Canadian Tire Foundation's Jump Start funding for low-income families, and for other Ramara voluntary leisure and recreation organizations.			
37. Work with the municipality's insurance agency to assess risks associated with voluntary Community Centre board-managed properties and voluntary organizations that offer programs and events for Ramara residents and visitors.			
38. Keep abreast of legislative requirements affecting voluntary Community Centre board managed properties and voluntary leisure and recreation organizations, and inform volunteer leaders about compliance requirements regarding such things as health and safety, rentals, serving alcohol, and accessibility for persons with a disability.			

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
39. Keep the Township's parks and recreation website information up-to-date including the Community Centre board-managed properties and other voluntary leisure and recreation organizations with the objective of increasing participation in programs and services. Website-based information should include a photo gallery, Centre and organization descriptions, general and contact information.			
40. Provide more training and orientation opportunities for all councillors and community centre boards and volunteer committees.			
41. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and the Municipality over five years.			
Trails Recommendations			
42. Upgrade and develop Ramara trail and active transportation system using a two-phase strategy.			
43. Review and upgrade existing trails and build new trails to meet the following standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard surface (either stone dust, asphalt) • 10 feet/3 metres wide • 2 feet/1.5 metres clear cut zones on each side 			
44. Be proactive in Township planning department to create new trail connections within all new site developments.			
45. Coordinate efforts between the Trails Committee and Ramara Planning Department to work with Share the Road initiatives when possible and develop a trails master plan for Ramara with wayfinding system.			
46. Promote 1.5 m edge to all new County and Municipal roads.			
47. Connect trails with community facilities and places people want to go, such as schools, parks, shops, businesses, restaurants and food concessions, etc. to establish more “point- to- point” connections to ensure that trails all have the 4 D’s – distance, direction, difficulty level and destination.			
48. Review existing subdivisions, making improvements to trail accessibility and safety where possible. Consider the opportunities within Lagoon City to promote bike lanes along main connecting roads.			

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
49. Require all new subdivisions, commercial and public areas to connect their on-site pedestrian routes to offsite sidewalks and trail access points. Design pedestrian routes to allow clear and unobstructed passage, with a minimum width of 1.5 metres with no abrupt side slopes, and a minimum overhead clearance of 2.5 metres. All street furniture should be off the pedestrian route of travel and storm sewers should be placed where they won't interfere with active transportation.			
50. Provide the following conditions on all pedestrian routes to promote and enable walking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian routes should be placed within 150 metres (or closer) of all residential areas. • Cul-de-sacs and other types of dead ends need to provide connection of a minimum of 3 meters wide which should be hard surface (compacted gravel as a minimum). 			
51. Incorporate changes to the current job description of Recreation Supervisor (formerly Coordinator) to include the following trails responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with and provide support to volunteer groups working on trail initiatives. • Begin and maintain a basic and regular trails standards inspection system by a qualified person. • Coordinate trail budget plans with volunteers and seek financial support from available funding sources and grant opportunities. • Work with North Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to seek assistance in increasing the awareness of trails and their importance. 			
52. Change the reporting methods of the Trails Committee as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on a monthly basis to the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC). • Vet all projects, activities, grant applications with RPCAC and adoption by Council prior to commencement 			
53. Comply with AODA legislation for accessible trails and practice principles of universal and sustainable design.			

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
Human Resources: Staff and Volunteer Recommendations			
54. Reclassify existing Recreation/Community Development Coordinator position to Recreation Supervisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write new job descriptions with additional responsibilities (including but not limited to duties in support of the trails committee, community centre boards, youth activities and playground equipment maintenance.) • Identify additional compensation required. 	★		
55. Create a staff flow chart outlining responsibilities and relationships between CAO and Recreation Supervisor.	★		
56. Reflect costs and proposed additional costs per recreation sector in new detailed budget accounts as follows: Ramara Recreation Centre, Staff, Building Maintenance, Field Maintenance, Equipment Maintenance, Staff Training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare capital asset management plans for all recreation sites (i.e. parks, buildings, trails) in order to make long term capital forecasts to manage the future costs of each facility. 	★		
57. Commence Canadian Standards Association approved staff training in playground equipment and trails maintenance as first priority. Consult training@ontarioparksassociation.ca for additional information on types of training available (e.g. chainsaw safety, registered playground practitioner, parks equipment and safe operations, ball diamond maintenance, chipper safety training, parks equipment operations and hazard analysis, irrigation workshop, park supervisor and lead hand competency, etc.)	★		
58. Include Planning staff, Recreation Supervisor and Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee on future parkland acquisitions and/or 5% in lieu park land dedication decision making.	★		
59. Present Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee meeting minutes to Council for adoption to formalize their relationship and also to mandate a closer tie between Council and RPCAC goals and objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share regular budget printouts with RPCAC at monthly meetings. • Present five-year forecasts, prepared jointly by RPCAC and Recreation Supervisor to Council to set budget parameters. 	★		

Recommendations	Immediate	2014-2018	2018+
60. Rename Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee.			
61. Restructure the relationship of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee to the Township and formalize by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having Council appoint RPCAC members who serve maximum of 3 terms (4 years per term). • Recruiting members who represent a broad cross section of recreation needs in the community. • Presenting meeting minutes to Council for formal adoption. 			
62. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and the Municipality over five years.			
63. Work with Community Centre boards to create standard rental forms with site-specific rental rates based on amenities and rules and regulations for renters, and an on-line rental and payment process.			
64. Work with Community Centre boards to create an operational policy and procedures manual for the facilities, including the board members’ roles and responsibilities, and other vital information.			
65. Prepare a 10-year capital budget forecast and capital asset plan for each Community Centre in the Ramara parks and recreation system.			
66. Coordinate joint purchase of supplies and services as per Community Centre board requests to maximize economies of scale and lower costs of operation.			
67. Facilitate the development of a formal agreement with Community Centre boards that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of boards, municipal staff, and municipal council.			
68. Streamline and coordinate Community Centre bookings to reduce volunteer workload and to maximize rental revenues.			
69. Liaise with boards and provide ongoing assistance and support according to the formal agreement between the boards and the municipality.			
70. Recruit youth members for all Community Centre Boards.			

13.2 Implementing Key Priorities

The Consulting Team has identified several priorities, from all of the recommendations, that the Township of Ramara should focus its energies on immediately to effectively position Ramara for the future. Many of these priorities focus on formalizing organizational structure, consolidating land, and setting priorities, rather than projects requiring large capital expenditures.

Formalize the Organizational Structure and Budget Procedures for Delivery of Recreation

The Consulting Team recommends the following changes to the roles of the Advisory Committee and Recreation Coordinator:

- Broaden the scope and function of the Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to include parks and culture. The Consulting Team recommends a name change to Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee. The addition of parks and culture reinforces current volunteer interests, an increased emphasis on Ramara history and culture, and expected growth in these areas. Committee membership would include people representing seniors, youth, trails, parks, halls/community centres, library, culture, historic, special events, Council and community at large.
- Formalize the relationship between the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee (RPCAC) and Council. All RPCAC meeting minutes will be prepared for Council approval each month. Council may challenge or debate issues or request additional information. This will build a closer relationship between volunteers and elected officials, which in turn will maximize financial effectiveness and recreational benefits for taxpayers.
- Redefine the title and role of the Recreation Coordinator. The Consulting Team recommends that the C.A.O. for the Township of Ramara write a detailed job description for the current Recreation Coordinator position and rename it Recreation Supervisor. The Supervisor's role would include:
 - Coordinating the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee.
 - Assuming, gradually, a role in assisting in developing capital asset management plans for all community centres and recreation facilities in Ramara.
 - Preparing checklists, forms and documentation for supervision, inspection and maintenance of all parks, park equipment and trails.
 - Developing a five-year plan for assisting all booking, coordinating, maintaining municipal services for community centres and properties.
 - Working with and supporting volunteer groups and community centre boards with budgets, information sharing, grant application, common rental forms,

standardized user fees, etc. It is understood that there may be need to grandfather certain community members or reduce fees if they contributed to original construction/operation of a facility.

- Create a set of accounts for formalized Recreation, Parks and Culture budget forecasts.

The Consulting Team recommends forming ten accounts as follows:

- Recreation, Parks and Culture (RPC) Staffing
- RPC Facility Operations
- Ramara Centre (heat, hydro, snow removal, grass cutting, chemicals, cleaning, repairs and maintenance)
- RPC Maintenance and Repairs
Facility Repairs
- RPC Parks Equipment Repairs
Hall Equipment Repairs
- RPC Capital
- RPC Facilities Reserves
- RPC Parks Reserves
- RPC Trails Reserves
- RPC Halls Reserves

The Recreation Supervisor will project budget numbers for the above accounts and staff should begin long-range budget planning for all facilities. This process is called Capital Asset Management, and will project the expected financial needs associated with each forecast.

All Community Centres need to be inspected and a Capital Asset Management Plan developed to cover a ten-year forecast period. Financial resources are required to bring these centres into 2013 best practice conditions.

Consolidate and Adopt a New Approach to Municipal Parkland Allocation

Ramara has collected a large number of properties throughout the Township with no formal or consistent acquisition plan. Many parcels are owned by the Municipality, but not used or maintained for public access. The Consulting Team recommends that the Township of Ramara inventory and assess all Municipal properties that appear on the Municipal role. The Planning Department should proceed in identifying and documenting (photographing and legally describing) all parcels, including open space, unopened road allowances, existing road allotments to waterfronts, lots, parks, parkettes, easements and future site development plans.

From this inventory, each parcel can be evaluated against planning objectives for parks and recreation. Properties that are surplus can be traded or sold. The Provincial Planning Act gives the Municipality the option of taking 5% land mass or cash. Properties that do not meet long

term planning objectives should take the cash contribution for Council approved parks and recreation projects.

As part of this inventory and evaluation process, parks should be classified according to size and attributes. The Consulting Team recommends the following guidelines:

- Community Parks are a minimum of 6.07 ha (15 acres), accessible from major roads and having two sides of the park exposed to public right of way. Community parks are suitable for accommodating multiple active sports and natural features. These parks offer off-street parking and areas for passive recreation, including shade, benches and picnic tables. Ideally areas of the park are naturalized and there is a fully accessible pedestrian/cycling trail or pathway.
- Neighbourhood Parks are approximately 2.0 ha (4 to 5 acres) in readily accessible areas to residential neighbourhoods. They are designed with active play spaces with recreation facilities for pre-school and school-aged children. They are also landscaped for passive recreation, such as sitting and strolling, but may accommodate informal active pursuits, such as kicking a soccer ball or playing catch.
- Open Space Areas are areas, such as waterfront lands, valleylands, wetlands, forests and woodlots, conservation lands, trail systems, linear open space corridors, areas with scenic or natural interest, environmentally sensitive lands, etc. These areas may offer opportunities for heritage, interpretation, education or low impact recreation. They may also include spaces such as historic monuments or town squares.
- Tot Lots are usually less than 0.2 ha (½ acre) and are situated near neighbourhoods where young families live. They provide safe, fun play structures for children 5 years of age and under to play on, with benches for caregivers.

The general standard of provision for playgrounds is 1/2800 population or 1 per 800 metre radius.

Generally 1.2ha/1000 (2.96 acres/1000) population is the minimum standard, but many municipalities have standards set at 4.0ha/1000 (9.88 acres/1000). The Consulting Team believes that once the consolidation process is complete, Ramara will meet or exceed the 4.0ha/1000 recommended acreage. The fact that two Provincial Parks are within Township boundaries, also affects the overall need for parkland.

This process requires an independent review. Dunbar and Associates would be pleased to conduct this review in a timely manner, but it is not a mandate of the Master Plan contract.

The Consulting Team recommends that an additional 4 ha (about 10 acres) be purchased to enlarge Brechin Park for special events and large-scale community functions. This may be accomplished through the tax base by capital forecasting and fundraising. Recent estimates for

non-waterfront acreage are \$5000-\$8000/acre, so 10 acres at Brechin would cost \$50,000-\$80,000.

Identify Waterfront Park Development Priorities

Ramara holds several excellent waterfront parcels and the potential of these locations for development of long-term opportunities needs to be evaluated. Currently, several waterfront access points are unmarked and unmaintained. The Consulting Team recommends that these parcels be evaluated for their ability to service, first and foremost, the residents of Ramara. Criteria used to evaluate the waterfront parks should include:

- Current location and accessibility
- Ability to provide quality waterfront experiences
- Opportunity to add additional parcels to existing parks and/or connect with trails
- User profiles (who is using it and what for)
 - a) immediate neighbourhood
 - b) local community or Township users
 - c) regional users

This type of evaluation must take place and be integrated with the consolidation of parkland described above. It will take time, energy and commitment to complete, but is required to get financial support and to maximize access to leisure opportunities for all residents of Ramara.

Expand the Ramara Centre

The Ramara Centre is a highly used, focal point in the community. It needs to be expanded to enable more users to enjoy the space. The Consulting Team recommends that shovel-ready plans be put in place to expand the current centre by 50% to facilitate more programs and sport-related use.

The cost for additional indoor space is valued at \$200 per square foot. A full-size basketball court (28 meters by 15 metres or 420 square metres -- 4520 square feet) would cost approximately \$900,000.

Expansion of the outdoor fields at Ramara would cost approximately \$50,000-\$80,000 for 4 ha or 10 acres, based on recent estimates of \$5000-\$8000 per acre (non waterfront). However, this is not recommended for another 5-10 years. Staff should investigate purchasing new lands on the east side of the Ramara Centre for a 13-adult soccer pitch. The general standard of provision for soccer pitches is 1/1800 population or 1/75 registered players. For ball diamonds it is 1/3000 population or 1/75 registered players.

To finance the expansion, the Consulting Team recommends that the Township apply to the Ontario Elderly Persons Act to receive 35% funding and use the tax base by capital forecasting.

Complete the Mnjikaning Fish Weirs Project

This initiative, in many ways, signifies the essence of Ramara Township and what parks and recreation is all about. It reinforces the ideals of heritage and culture, partnerships and sense of community, preservation of the natural environment and vital trail networks. This project requires support from the Federal, Provincial and County governments. Municipal government should not be solely responsible for this Canadian heritage site, but should be an enthusiastic advocate of and participant in its completion.

Work in Partnership with Severn to Improve Washago Outdoor Rink Opportunities

Washago rink is used by many Ramara taxpayers in the north end of the Township. The Consulting Team recommends that Ramara Township seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnership with Severn. Partnerships are the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars in providing recreation programs and activities.

14. Conclusion

The Final Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents the collaborative effort of Ramara Township Staff, Council, many volunteer groups and interests, residents of all ages and the Consulting Team. The end result is a roadmap that will guide the development of parks and recreation well into the future.

Some of the priorities identified for immediate action (in Section 13.2) will be controversial and will require a lot of dialogue among staff, Council, residents and volunteers. However, by being proactive in implementing these recommendations, the groundwork will be laid for successful growth and transition into the future.

There is an emphasis in the Master Plan on consolidating land and establishing sound organizational and budget practices that are necessary as communities grow. There is less emphasis on capital projects, but those will come as the Township builds its systems and procedures to accommodate such growth and development.

In fact, ongoing dialogue with community residents and stakeholders will be essential to constantly monitor and adapt to changing parks and recreation needs over the years. The recommendations in this report will have to be regularly reviewed and progress evaluated. It may be necessary, based on changing needs, to revise and update the plan.

15. Appendices

1. Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey
2. Clearview's Hall Board Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding
3. Tiny Township Volunteer Management Policy
4. Clearview Trail Donor Recognition Policy
5. Playground Inspection Checklist
6. Park Criteria Checklist
7. Simcoe County Trail Strategy
8. Sample Trail Inspection Forms

Appendix 1: Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey

We Want Your Comments and Ideas!**RAMARA PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN SURVEY**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this 15-minute on-line survey. Your responses are strictly confidential so please give us your honest and candid opinions. Your participation will assist Council in making important decisions about the future of parks and recreation in Ramara Township. Let us hear your needs and concerns by September 30, 2012 so we can plan recreation programs, parks and facilities in a way that will benefit you, your family and the community.

Please tell others to complete an on-line survey by visiting the Township of Ramara website (www.ramara.ca).

Paper copies are also available at the Ramara Centre and the Township Municipal Office or by calling 705 484-5374. Drop off completed paper copies of the survey to Ramara Municipal Office or Ramara Centre or mail to:
Township of Ramara Administration Centre,
Attention: Dunbar & Associates
2297 Highway 12,
Brechtin, Ontario
L0K 1B0

Thank you for participating!

***1. Which age group are you in?**

- 9-14
- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

***2. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female

***3. Do you consider yourself to be a:**

- Full-time resident of Ramara
- Seasonal resident of Ramara
- Non-resident

4. Are you a participant in/member of any of these community groups? Please select all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Historical Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Mnjikaning Fish Fence Circle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Book Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Library Quilters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carden Field Naturalists | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Community Policing Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Trail Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brechin Lions | <input type="checkbox"/> Our Ramara |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brechin Legion | <input type="checkbox"/> Brechin Community Centre Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Youth Fastball | <input type="checkbox"/> Atherley Community Centre Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Youth Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Udney Community Centre Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> Longford Community Centre Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beavers, Cubs, Scouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Plum Point Cottagers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sparks, Brownies, Guides | <input type="checkbox"/> Joyland Beach Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Youth Group/Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramona Agricultural Society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boot Scooters | <input type="checkbox"/> Bayshore Village Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brechin and Beyond | <input type="checkbox"/> Lagoon City Community Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orillia Snowmobile Club | <input type="checkbox"/> North Mara Beach Residents Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ganaraska Hiking Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Sylvan Glen Beach Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rotary Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Public Library Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Lagoon City Parks and Waterways Commission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lagoon City Yacht Club | <input type="checkbox"/> Ramara Chamber of Commerce |

Please list any other recreation club or group that you are a member of that is not listed above (e.g. hockey team, Air Cadets, Severn Bridge Rowing Club, etc.).

5. Overall, how satisfied are you with the recreation programs provided by Ramara Township (e.g. day camps, swimming programs, etc.)?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- No Comment

If you would like to comment, please do so in the box below.

6. Overall, how satisfied are you with recreation facilities in Ramara Township (e.g. community halls, Ramara Centre, etc.)?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- No Comment

If you would you like to comment, please do so in the box below.

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with Ramara's:

	Parks and Open Space?	Sports Fields (e.g. ball diamonds, soccer fields, etc.)?
Very Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Comment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you would like to comment, please do so in the box below.

8. How satisfied are you with trails for walking and cycling in Ramara Township?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- No Comment

If you would like to comment, please do so in the box below.

9. In the future, what facilities should Ramara Township develop? From this list of potential parks and recreation facilities, choose your top five priorities. Rank ONLY your top five choices, by indicating which one is your 1st priority, 2nd priority, 3rd priority, 4th priority and 5th priority.

	My 1st priority	My 2nd priority	My 3rd priority	My 4th priority	My 5th priority
Baseball Diamond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basketball Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volleyball Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ball Hockey Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lawn Bowling Green	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shuffleboard Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trails for biking and walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor Ice Rink	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open Space for Fairs, Events, Celebrations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soccer Field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lacrosse Field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tennis Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural Areas/parkland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waterfront Access with Parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skateboard/BMX park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canoe/Boat Launch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Display or community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have another priority not listed above, please suggest it in the box below.

10. In the future, what recreation programs should Ramara Township offer? From this list of potential parks and recreation programs, choose your top five priorities. Rank ONLY your top five choices, by indicating which one is your 1st priority, 2nd priority, 3rd priority, 4th priority and 5th priority.

	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	4th Priority	5th Priority
Art Classes (e.g. painting, scrapbooking, photography)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dance Programs (e.g. ball room, hip hop, square)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Swimming Programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports Programs (e.g. basketball, volleyball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Exercise Programs (e.g. tai chi, yoga, zumba, nia)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lifestyle Programs (e.g. cooking, nutrition)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Water-Based Programs (e.g. canoeing, rowing, paddle boarding)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trail-based	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

programs (e.g. power walking, jogging, cycling)					
Youth programs (e.g. leadership, environmental, dances, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Events (e.g. concerts, socials, festivals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have another priority not listed above, please suggest it in the box below.					
<input type="text"/>					

11. If you were given 100% of the parks and recreation budget for Ramara Township, how would you distribute it among the following facilities? You may use 100% of the budget on one facility, or divide the budget among several facilities (e.g. 10 percent for baseball, 25 percent for playgrounds, 50 percent for boat launch and 15 percent for lawn bowling), as long as you only use 100% in total. Please do not add decimal points to your answer. Use only whole numbers, such as 10, 80, 35, etc.

Baseball Diamond	<input type="text"/>
Basketball Court	<input type="text"/>
Volleyball Court	<input type="text"/>
Ball Hockey Court	<input type="text"/>
Lawn Bowling Green	<input type="text"/>
Shuffleboard Court	<input type="text"/>
Trails for biking and walking	<input type="text"/>
Dog Parks	<input type="text"/>
Playground	<input type="text"/>
Outdoor Ice Rink	<input type="text"/>
Open Space for Fairs, Events, Celebrations	<input type="text"/>
Soccer Field	<input type="text"/>
Lacrosse Field	<input type="text"/>
Tennis Court	<input type="text"/>
Natural Areas/parkland	<input type="text"/>
Waterfront Access with Parking	<input type="text"/>
Skateboard/BMX park	<input type="text"/>
Canoe/Boat Launch	<input type="text"/>
Display or community gardens	<input type="text"/>

12. If you were given \$100 to spend on parks and recreation in Ramara Township, how would you distribute the money among the following age groups? You may spend all \$100 on one age group, or divide it among several age groups, as long as you only spend \$100 in total. Please do not add decimal points or dollar signs to your answer. Use only whole numbers, such as 10, 80, 35, etc.

0-14 years of age	<input type="text"/>
15-29 years of age	<input type="text"/>
30-45 years of age	<input type="text"/>
46-64 years of age	<input type="text"/>
65+ years of age	<input type="text"/>
Family	<input type="text"/>

13. How would you like to receive information about Ramara Township Parks and Recreation programs and services?

- Sign Boards
- Flyers inserted with other Municipal mailings (e.g. tax bills)
- Newsletter or brochure
- E-mail (Optional: please provide your e-mail address in the box below if you would like to receive e-mail notification about upcoming recreation programs)
- Visit website

Other (please specify)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Township of Ramara Parks and Recreation Master Plan Study. Watch for study updates on the Township website (www.ramara.ca) and in local media. Please contact Caroline Schiavone, Recreation/Community Development Coordinator, at 7054845374 ext. 247 or 7053253091 for further information.

The closing date for this online survey is September 30, 2012.

Appendix 2: Clearview's Hall Board Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding



ITEM FOR: Council
DEPARTMENT: Public Works
MEETING DATE: June 20, 2011
ITEM NO.: 4
SUBJECT: Municipal Service Board Memorandum of Understanding

RECOMMENDATION:

That Clearview Township Council approve entering into a formal agreement, referred to as the Memorandum of Understanding, with all seven of Clearview Township's Municipal Service Boards appointed to manage the day-to-day operations of the community halls

AND authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the agreement on behalf of the Township of Clearview.

BACKGROUND:

In 2007, Clearview Township's Culture and Recreation Master Plan was adopted and within it reference to a "renewed relationship" between the hall boards and the Township through the adoption of a formal agreement clearly defining roles and responsibilities that would be mutually beneficial for both parties. In 2009, staff met with members from all seven hall boards to review what was then referred to as the "Co-operative Agreement". While not exactly received with a lot of enthusiasm, it did provide a starting point for future discussions on what such a document would look like. Two hall boards in particular, Sunnidale Corners Community Centre and Nottawasaga Community Hall, recognized the potential value in an agreement and worked closely with both staff and board members to see if some form of arrangement could be reached.

The process involved individual meetings with the hall boards along with a general meeting with all seven boards to come to a consensus on what they would like to see included in the document. A draft agreement was brought to the Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting on June 1, 2010. The following resolution was passed at that meeting:

Moved by Debbie Bronee, seconded by Kate Sparling, RESOLVED that the Clearview Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee endorses the Community Centres' Cooperative Agreement and; FURTHER recommends to Clearview Township Council to approve the Community Centre Cooperative Agreement. Motion Carried

The agreement was then circulated amongst staff and Council for further input. The final document, entitled the "Memorandum of Understanding", is a compilation of suggestions made by

all seven halls boards, staff and Council. It clearly outlines the relationship between the hall boards and the Township along with both parties' responsibilities within this relationship. As recommended in Clearview Township's Culture and Recreation Master Plan, 2007, it is a working document which will be reviewed on an annual basis to assess its success and determine if revisions are needed.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

The Memorandum of Understanding works to address Recommendation 4.7.3 of Clearview Township's Culture and Recreation Master Plan, 2007, which states:

"the roles and responsibilities of Hall Boards and as applicable parks boards should be formalized through expanded agreements with the Township. These agreements should clarify the financial relationship and commitment, responsibilities around operations and management, funding for capital improvements and upgrades, and expectations for programming and community use".

It further addresses within the Township's Strategic Plan, *Our Focus: Your Future*, 2008:

- **Goal 3: Municipal Service, Action Item 3.4** Implement the recreation and culture master plan;
- **Goal 4: Community Heritage, Action Item 4.5** Promote and support the Township's cultural events and activities;
- **Goal 5: Service Excellence, Action Item 5.3** Develop a strategy to recruit, recognize and retain our volunteers.

Though considered a working document, the current Memorandum of Understanding provides both parties with a solid foundation upon which to build a strong and mutually beneficial relationship.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:

There is no financial impact.

SCHEDULES:

Schedule 'A' – Memorandum of Understanding

PREPARED BY:

Jacqueline Soczka, Community Culture and Recreation Programmer

APPROVALS:

Steve Sage, Deputy-Director of Public Works



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN:

**THE CORPORATION OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF CLEARVIEW**
(hereinafter referred to as the "Township")

-and-

Avening Community Centre Municipal Service Board

-and-

Brentwood Community Centre Municipal Service Board

-and-

Creemore Station on the Green Municipal Service Board

-and-

Dunedin Community Centre Municipal Service Board

-and-

Nottawa Memorial Community Centre Municipal Service Board

-and-

Nottawasaga Community Hall Municipal Service Board

-and-

Sunnidale Corners Community Centre Municipal Service Board

-and-

(hereinafter referred to as "Municipal Service Board(s)" or "Board(s)")

Pursuant to Section 196 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, a municipality may establish a Municipal Service Board to give control and delegate to such Board certain powers of the municipality, subject to limits and conditions as the municipality considers appropriate. This agreement is intended to clarify the powers, limits and conditions governing the relationship between the Corporation of the Township of Clearview and its Municipal Service Boards. Each party agrees to act in good faith at all times on behalf of the township.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBERS

- Members of each hall Board are appointed by Council at its first regular meeting of the Council term or as soon as possible thereafter.
- Members are appointed for the term of Council (4yrs); however, new members can be appointed to the Board midterm through a by-law amendment approved by Council.
- There shall be a minimum of three (3) members appointed to each Board at all times. Out of these members, the Board needs to have an executive comprising of at least a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. All other members shall be called directors.
- Executive positions are traditionally held for one year, though they can be held for longer, and are elected at each Board's Annual General Meeting. The AGM also gives Boards an opportunity once a year to inform the general public of previous and future activities.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

General Management and Operation Procedures

Each Board is to:

- manage the day-to-day operations of the centre, including its bookings, finances and minutes. Boards may opt to defer general snow removal and grass cutting to the Township.
- take care of general maintenance and minor improvements of the facility along with any other related expenditures as approved in the Annual Budget.
- in the event of an emergency that is beyond its available resources or expertise, contact the Township for support.
- keep accurate and adequate books of account, records and minutes of the centre to be submitted yearly to the Township by January 31.
- follow relevant policies, procedures and legislation in conducting the day to day management of the facility.
- let the Township know of any upcoming events, capital projects, programmes, change in members or executive positions, etc. so it can assist the Board with advertising, volunteer recognition, and grant applications, when appropriate.

Meeting Procedures

- Similar to council meetings, Board meetings are governed by By-law 08-14 referred to as the "Procedure By-law".
- Board meetings should be held regularly and be open and advertised to the public (ie minimum requirements would be posting on the Township's website and/or notice posted at the facility). Preferably, meetings should be held at the centre unless otherwise clearly posted for the benefit of the public. Whenever possible, the Board should strive to give the public at least 48 hours notice of such meetings to allow the public to participate.
- Boards need to have a majority of the members present (50% + 1) to hold a meeting and therefore pass motions and conduct the business of the Board.
- Motions are required to approve the following in accordance with the Municipal Act and Procedure By-law:
 - election of Executive positions
 - approval of minutes
 - authorization of expenditures
- All motions, particularly for expenditures, need to be recorded in the minutes including the name of the mover and seconder, together with whether the motion was "carried" or "lost", for our auditor. To be carried, a majority vote of the Board is required.

Financial Requirements

Each Board is to:

- make certain all expenditures are in compliance with the Township Procurement By-law 04-67.
- keep detailed financial records to be submitted yearly to the Township by January 31.
- prepare and submit an Annual Budget and Capital Improvement/Replacement Schedule (for items over \$5000) to the Township by October 30 for the upcoming year (this is as simple as doing a walkabout of your facility and noting items that need to be replaced in the upcoming budget vs those which will need to be replaced over a 5 year period).

Dissolution of the Board

- Boards may, upon a minimum two-thirds vote of its members, file a written request to Council to dissolve the Board.

TOWNSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

As the parent corporation, the Township is here to support its Municipal Service Boards and the facilities they manage. That being said, the Township is to:

1. appoint an Auditor to prepare the Boards' Annual Audited Financial Statements
2. establish general policies and procedures with the support of the Boards that enhance the effectiveness of their operations.
3. approve each Board's Annual Budget.
4. help the Boards with general book keeping, if necessary.
5. approve and prioritize the Boards' Capital Improvement/Replacement Schedules.
6. work cooperatively with the Boards to support short and long-term program plans.
7. provide property and liability insurance for the Boards, their facilities, events and volunteers.
8. work cooperatively with the Boards to support expenditures essential to the basic functioning of the facility, such as those prioritized in the Capital Improvement/Replacement Schedule or in the event of an unforeseen emergency need that is beyond the Board's human and/or financial means.
9. organize volunteer training opportunities for Board members (i.e. WHMIS, First Aid, MSDS, Board Governance, debriefs on relevant Regulations, Acts and By-laws).
10. support the Boards in hosting routine meetings with all Municipal Service Boards to share ideas and coordinate joint ventures.
11. support the Boards when necessary to fulfill their mandate (ie finding directors)
12. inform the Boards of any cost saving opportunities such as utility discounts, fire extinguisher inspections, etc.
13. keep the Boards abreast of any grant opportunities and assist with the application process, if necessary.
14. communicate to the Boards upcoming audits and inspections and report back to the Boards in a timely manner.

VIABILITY

In the event one of the Boards has exhausted its human and/or financial resources and no longer appears viable, a meeting will be held between the Township and representatives from the Board with the option of calling a Joint Hall Board Meeting to discuss a plan of action.

REVIEW

This agreement will be reviewed yearly from the date of execution. Any amendments must be signed and dated by the Township and all the Boards and attached to this agreement.

EXECUTION

The Memorandum of Understanding shall be executed on this day of , 2011.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE BOARD
SIGNING AUTHORITIES**

**TOWNSHIP OF CLEARVIEW
REPRESENTATIVES**

_____ **Avening Community Centre**

_____ **Brentwood Community Centre**

_____ **Creemore Station on the Green**

_____ **Ken Ferguson, Mayor**

_____ **Dunedin Community Centre**

_____ **Robert Campbell, Clerk**

_____ **Nottawa Memorial Community Centre**

_____ **Nottawasaga Community Hall**

_____ **Sunnidale Corners Community Centre**

Appendix 3: Tiny Township Volunteer Management Policy

Corporation of the Township of Tiny
Recreation Department Policies and Procedures



SUBJECT: Volunteer Management

ISSUED:	REVISED:	REVISION NO:	POLICY #:
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Date of Council Approval: January 11th, 2010

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Township of Tiny is committed to creating a caring and inclusive living environment through citizen engagement and provides opportunities for everyone to fully participate in the life of his or her community. It recognizes the importance of the role volunteers can play in the achievement of its mission and mandate and enhancing the work of paid staff in the creation of a safe and enjoyable place in which to live. This policy has been developed to facilitate the involvement and management of volunteers in the delivery of its services.

POLICY PURPOSE:

This Volunteer Management Policy outlines an overall framework for the recruitment and management of volunteers involved in the delivery of Township of Tiny services and/or special events. This policy is designed to:

- Encourage the adoption of volunteer management practices that will manage risk, enhance program delivery and accountability and protect volunteers, staff and the general public from harm.
- Ensure volunteers are effectively recruited, managed and supported during tenure with the Township of Tiny.
- Provide guidance to paid employees for the facilitation of positive volunteer experiences.

SCOPE:

This policy relates to persons acting in a volunteer capacity that assist the Township of Tiny to deliver programs and services. It is understood that volunteers will enhance and support the work of the Township of Tiny but never replace it. This policy will be supported by a Volunteer Management Manual developed and/or revised in consultation with community groups and associations and key volunteers and managed through the Department Heads of each Township of Tiny department.

VALUES:

The Township of Tiny has adopted the following core values with respect to Volunteer Management:

- Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society: It fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities: It promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs.
- Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both volunteer and organization: It increases capacity of organizations to accomplish goals and it provides volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute.
- Volunteer involvement is based on relationships.

PRINCIPLES:

The Township of Tiny has adopted the following principles to guide decision-making in the crafting of policies and procedures:

Corporation of the Township of Tiny
Recreation Department Policies and Procedures



SUBJECT: Volunteer Management

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- The Township of Tiny recognizes that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.
- The Township of Tiny's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement.
- The Township of Tiny commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers. It will provide volunteers with a work environment that is free of any form of discrimination, including harassment, which affects the dignity, self-worth and human rights which includes: position; race; ancestry; place of origin; colour; ethnic origin; citizenship; creed; gender; sexual orientation; age; record of offenses; marital or family status or disability.
- Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the Township of Tiny.
- Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and the community.
- Volunteers will act responsibly and with integrity.

STANDARDS:

The Township of Tiny has adopted the following standards for the recruitment and management of volunteers:

- Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 years of age.
- Members of Township Council, leadership and paid staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the Township of Tiny's mandate.
- Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the Township of Tiny's human resources team. The Township of Tiny has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mandate, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support volunteer involvement and establishing policies for effective management.
- Policies and procedures are adopted by the Township of Tiny to provide a framework that defines and supports involvement of volunteers.
- The Township of Tiny has a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for Volunteer Management.
- Volunteer assignments will address the mandate of the Township of Tiny and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect their abilities, needs and backgrounds.
- Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out to and involve a diverse volunteer base.
- A clearly communicated screening process is adopted and consistently applied.
- Each volunteer will be provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer will receive training customized to the volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers will receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and will be provided with regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.
- The contributions of volunteers will be regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods (i.e. annual awards).
- Standardized documentation and records management practices will be followed in line with relevant legislation.

Corporation of the Township of Tiny
Recreation Department Policies and Procedures



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- The impact and contribution of involving volunteers and of the volunteer program will be continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the Township of Tiny are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Activity:** a program, event, project or other undertaking which contributes to the mandate and objectives of the Township of Tiny.
- **Volunteer:** an individual or member of a group who freely and willingly contributes time, energy and support to performing a defined task directly on behalf of the Township of Tiny without compensation, or expectation of compensation, other than for approved expenses incurred through the volunteer activity.
- **Affiliated Volunteer:** an individual who is a member of a Township affiliated organization (e.g. service club) and provides assistance to the Township of Tiny. An Affiliate Volunteer will be covered under the Township of Tiny's liability insurance policy on the conditions that: the program and/or service has been pre-approved by Township Council and/or designated paid staff; and that the affiliated organization ensures that the Affiliated Volunteer is properly screened, trained and supervised and that all health and safety requirements are met as per Township of Tiny policy. Affiliated organizations must carry sufficient levels of Director Liability insurance.

LIMITED EXCLUSIONS:

- The Township of Tiny recognizes that volunteer firefighters and employees of the Township of Tiny may perform duties on a volunteer basis from time to time. The exception to this is only as it relates to the provision of liability insurance when firefighters and Township employees are performing volunteer duties on behalf of the municipality.
- The Township of Tiny recognizes that, in extraordinary circumstances, the services of an unregistered volunteer(s) may be offered on an "as needed" or "one time only" basis (e.g. a participant in a program offers to assist in table/chair setup). This is acceptable on a case-by-case basis and the decision as to whether the offer of assistance is accepted will be the responsibility of the paid staff and/or registered volunteer who is in charge of the activity. The decision to accept the offer will be based on the level of risk to the volunteer as well as the level of risk to the participants in the program or service.

PROCEDURE PARAMETERS:

- Volunteer screening is an ongoing process designed to protect both participants and volunteers and will include the following elements:
 - Risk assessment
 - Information form
 - Interview process based on the risk assessment
 - Reference checks (if applicable to the volunteer position)
 - Police record checks (if applicable to the volunteer position)
- Each volunteer will be required to sign an acknowledgement of the conditions of involvement with the Township of Tiny.

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- Vehicles and equipment not owned by the Township of Tiny will not be covered under the municipal insurance policy and no compensation will be paid for loss or damage to same.
- The Township of Tiny will adhere to the Human Rights Code in all instances of involvement of volunteers.
- Personal information collected by the Township of Tiny with respect to volunteer involvement will be used only for the administration and management of the volunteer program.
- Volunteers will be provided with an orientation and training opportunity for each position to which they have been assigned before commencing work.
- Volunteers will receive supervision and will be consulted regularly regarding performance in the position assigned. A volunteer file will include but not be limited to things like: volunteer information form; conditions of involvement; reference and police check results; position description; term of engagement; training and orientation documentation; and evaluation and feedback records if applicable.
- When issues arise from time to time that require disciplinary action, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by supervisory paid staff: 1st - a verbal warning by supervisor (written record of the verbal warning will be kept in the volunteer personnel file); 2nd written warning by supervisor outlining the infraction and corrective action agreed to by the volunteer; 3rd written notification of suspension (time period to be assessed on a case-by-case basis); 4th written notification of dismissal (containing a chronological listing of action taken steps 1 through 3, and reason for the dismissal).

In instances where continuing involvement of the volunteer in a program or service would put the volunteer and/or the Township of Tiny or the public at risk, immediate dismissal of the volunteer is permitted. The following will result in an immediate dismissal of the volunteer: Stealing money or goods from the Township of Tiny, another volunteer or the public; physically assaulting participants/public, family members, staff and/or another volunteer; and/or possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal drugs while working in their assigned position; contravention of the Township of Tiny's Health and Safety Policy and/or the OHSA.

- Volunteers will be recognized both formally and informally for their contributions to the Township of Tiny programs and services through methods that include: recognition events; certificates of appreciation and recognition; public acknowledgement in newspapers and on electronic media; postings on the Township web site; and letter of thanks from Township Council.
- The Township of Tiny will make every effort to equip volunteers with the knowledge, equipment and supplies to perform the duties of the assigned position in the context of the Health and Safety Act.
- The Township of Tiny will ensure that volunteers are never placed at risk in assigned positions. The level of risk associated with activities will be assigned a risk factor rating based on the following criteria:
 - The participant – elderly, young children, persons with special needs.
 - The environment – where the activity/involvement is taking place.
 - The nature of the activity – handling money, selling tickets, direct program volunteer.

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- The level of supervision – indirect, off-site, on-site.
- The nature of the relationship between the volunteer and the participant.

If it is determined that the risk of involvement is too great and the consequences too serious the Township of Tiny may eliminate the opportunity for involvement, and/or modify the involvement to reduce the risk. Involvement will be grouped according to the following risk criteria:

- **Low risk:** minimal or no contact with children, the elderly or those with special needs.
- **Medium risk:** personnel who work with children, the elderly or those with special needs, but are never alone with them.
- **High risk:** personnel who have the opportunity to be alone with children, those with special needs or the elderly; personnel who are in a position to exert influence over participants in a program or service; personnel who participate in activities requiring more than minimum Occupational Health and Safety training.

Volunteer screening standards will be based on the above risk criteria. To reduce risk in specific positions the following safeguards will be used: in medium and high risk assignments volunteers will work in pairs; an experienced volunteer or paid staff will work with a new volunteer. Students fulfilling the requirements of 40 community service hours will be required to work under the direct supervision of Township of Tiny paid staff.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION:

Sources of Information:

Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards
Town of Halton Hills
Canadian Code For Volunteer Involvement
Municipal Toolkit – Practical Strategies to Enhance Municipal Support for Volunteer Programs

Appendix 4: Clearview Trail Donor Recognition Policy



ITEM FOR:	Mayor & Members of Council
DEPARTMENT:	Parks & Rec
ITEM NO.	13C (1a)
MEETING DATE:	April 30, 2012
SUBJECT:	Trail Donor Recognition Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

The Culture and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council THAT the Clearview Trail Link Donor Recognition Policy attached be approved.

BACKGROUND:

April 18, 2011, Clearview Township formally established the Clearview Trail Subcommittee which reports directly to the Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee. Since then, the committee has been working fervently to create a fundraising plan to raise the estimated \$1.85 million required over the next 5 years to construct approximately 40 km of pedestrian trails within our major settlement areas and across our beautiful countryside. The intent is to ultimately connect all of Clearview through an elaborate network of new and existing trail linkages as described in Schedule C.

To date, the subcommittee has been working with a number of members from the community with expertise in fundraising to help put together a comprehensive plan. A crucial first step was the creation of the Trail Link Donor Recognition Policy that details how to formerly recognize donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, government and private enterprise. The policy applies to all cash and in-kind donations made to the municipality for the purpose of trail development or enhancement of municipally owned and operated recreational trails within the Clearview Trail Link system. It does not apply to trails constructed by developers as a condition of the development process nor does it provide for donations under \$20.

CLEARVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 3: Municipal Services. Efficient, sustainable and affordable infrastructure; Broad range of cultural facilities and infrastructure; Ability to pursue active lifestyles within the community

Goal 5: Service Excellence. Providing cost-effective services that benefit from community participation and partnerships.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

On November 1, 2011, the Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee reviewed the Recognition Policy and resolved to bring it to Council for their consideration and acceptance into corporate policy. The policy set out in Schedule A combines insight from Management Team and our committee volunteers with information gained through workshops on fundraising and sponsorship, discussions with experienced fundraising consultants and research into best practices used by other organizations. The latter looked beyond trail recognition programs, in part due to their lack of availability, to other sectors such as health care and education. As a whole, the Trail Donor Recognition Policy is not only an important first step to ensuring donations are properly and promptly recognized by the Township thus demonstrating Council's

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commitment to service excellence, it is a valuable resource that will no doubt be emulated by others in the sector.

Below is a summary of the levels of giving and recognition discussed in detail in the policy. As part of the policy's implementation will be the creation of a Stewardship Program similar to the Public Works Department's Adopt-A-Road Program. A tracking system will also be developed to ensure donors receive the appropriate level of recognition, particularly given that the policy provides for cumulative giving. At this point in time, these administrative duties will be the responsibility of the Community Culture and Recreation Programmer. Tax receipts will continue to be administered by Treasury.

LEVEL OF GIVING						RECOGNITION
UP TO \$499	\$500 - \$2,499	\$2,500- \$9,999	\$10,000 - \$24,999	\$25,000 - \$29,999	\$30, 000 +	
X	X	X	X	X	X	Thank you letter
X	X	X	X	X	X	Income tax receipt
	X	X	X	X	X	Listed on Clearview's Trail Link Webpage
	X	X	X	X	X	Listed in Feature Story in Clearview's Community Culture & Recreation Guide
	X					Donor's name displayed on 1 km Trail Marker
		X	X	X	X	Listed in Annual Trail Report to Council
		X	X			Personalized Recognition Certificate and Invitation to Council
		X	X	X	X	Special invitation and recognition at Trail opening
		X	X	X	X	Opportunity to participate in International Trails' Day Activities
		X	X	X	X	Featured on Clearview's TV Screens one month leading up to International Trails Day
		X				Donor's name displayed with Interpretive Signs along the Trail
			X	X	X	Recognition under Latest News on the front page of the Township's website
			X	X	X	Personalized, handcrafted walking stick logoed with "Clearview Trail Link Supporter"
			X	X	X	Company logo included on the Township's Trail Link webpage
			X	X	X	Recognized in all email blasts promoting the Trail Link
			X			Name prominently displayed on plaque on trailhead sign
				X	X	Specially framed trail supporter certificate
				X		Larger plaque with business logo or name on trailhead sign
					X	Naming opportunity along the trail system
					X	First right as Steward of the Trail
					X	Recognition in all special print materials for Trail unveiling

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SCHEDULE "A"

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CLEARVIEW
TRAIL LINK DONOR RECOGNITION POLICY**

1. SCOPE

This policy applies to all cash and in-kind donations made to the municipality for the purpose of trail development or enhancement of municipally owned or operated recreational trails within the Clearview Trail Link system. It does not apply to trails constructed by developers as a condition of the development process.

2. PURPOSE

- To provide consistent and fair policies and procedures related to the recognition of all cash and in-kind donations to the trail system
- To ensure all donations are properly and promptly recognized
- To build lasting relationships with donors inviting further contributions and providing reciprocal positive exposure for their philanthropy.

3. GENERAL PROCEDURE

- 3.1 The Township is responsible for determining the appropriate type of recognition for each Level of Giving which may change from time to time when appropriate. At minimum, all donations over \$20 will be sent a thank you letter.
- 3.2 The issuance of tax receipts shall be governed by Procedure #2011-015 of the Finance Department, Subject Issuing Donation Tax Receipts.
- 3.3 The value of service and gifts-in-kind shall be determined as per Procedure #2011-015 for the purpose of issuing donation tax receipts and recognition.
- 3.4 Donations under \$20, such as those made at special events, shall not be tracked under this policy.
- 3.5 Donations \$500 and over shall be listed on our website and in the Community, Culture and Recreation Guide as part of a donor recognition page in the year the donation was made.
- 3.6 At minimum, donations \$2,500 and over will be listed in an Annual Trail Report to Council.
- 3.7 Formal public announcements for donations of \$30,000 and above will be co-coordinated in conjunction with the wishes of the donor. Public announcements may be considered for smaller amounts where appropriate.
- 3.8 Donor recognition shall equitably acknowledge the support of individuals, foundations, corporations, governments and private enterprises.
- 3.9 Donor recognition shall be subject to donor wishes as to confidentiality. Donors requesting anonymity shall be omitted from all public displays and publications such as those listed in sections 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7.
- 3.10 An amount not to exceed one per cent of all donations shall be allocated to donor recognition programs to ensure the majority of funds go to trail construction. Expenses include the cost of trailhead signs, walking sticks, trail markers and plaques. Recognizing that trailhead signs and rest stops, for instance, make suitable locations for Public Art, the Township will look to commission local artists in their creation when feasible.

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- 3.11 The level of donor recognition will be determined at the time of contribution or upon the agreement of an ongoing contribution. Special requests for unique donor recognition or donations that do not fall within the levels outlined in Schedule B will be considered if put forth by the donor. However, discretion is ultimately left with Council.

4. LEVELS OF GIVING

This policy is laid out to provide significant flexibility to meet the needs and interests of potential donors. It provides for those individuals or organizations looking to volunteer their time to donors seeking naming opportunities for large donations. Recognition given to donors will be in keeping with the level of contribution, all of which is detailed in Schedule B. Gift-in-kind donors will be listed in the appropriate category based on the value of their gift as per Procedure #2011-015. Stewards of the Trail are volunteers and therefore not considered gift-in-kind donors.

4.1 Steward of the Trail

Steward of the Trail provides an opportunity for groups or individuals to help support the trail system through volunteer hours to help keep the trail litter-free. Citizens, schools, youth groups and corporate organizations are encouraged to “adopt” a specific trail or piece of trail along the Clearview Trail Link system. Similar to Clearview Township’s Adopt-a-Road program, volunteers will be asked to take part in an annual clean-up event. Stewards of the Trail must be registered with the Township and will be provided with all necessary equipment. An appreciation luncheon will be held annually to thank Stewards, preferably on the day of clean-up.

4.2 Trail Construction

Further to Schedule B, recognition of cash or in-kind contributions shall be subject to the following.

- 4.2.1 The Township shall be responsible for the care, scheduling, installation and maintenance of all trail markers, trailhead signs, rest stop amenities and the like associated with each Level of Giving.
- 4.2.2 All recognition items listed in Section 4.2.1, once purchased, are the sole property of the Township. In the event an item needs to be moved or replaced, the Township will contact any donors associated with that item.
- 4.2.3 The Township will work cooperatively with the donor to determine the appropriate location for recognizing their contribution; however, the Township reserves the right to determine the final location along with the location of trailhead signs and markers.

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4.3 Naming Opportunities

Naming of trails provide donors will a unique opportunity to gain exposure within the community and are therefore an important aspect of the Township's fundraising initiatives. Careful consideration will be given before any named opportunity is approved by the Township. Naming opportunities will be based on the following criteria.

- 4.3.1 Normally, a one-time donation equal to 50% of the total cost of trail construction or a minimum of \$30,000, whichever is greater, is required for naming opportunities.
- 4.3.2 The Township will work with donors to determine each appropriate naming opportunity given section 4.3.1 with the understanding that each trail shall be named only once notwithstanding section 4.3.5.
- 4.3.3 The name of the trail chosen by the donor must have the final approval of Council through a recommendation from the Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee to ensure the name reflects the values and position of the Township.
- 4.3.4 Donors with naming rights shall have the first opportunity to act as Stewards of the Trail subject to section 4.1.
- 4.3.5 Naming opportunities will not imply that the name or names will be used in perpetuity. If a trail is relocated or disassembled, or where the former name is no longer appropriate, then a request for a new name may be considered by Council. Notwithstanding 4.3.6, the Township will work with the donor in such instances to determine alternate forms of recognition.
- 4.3.6 A naming opportunity may be withdrawn at any time in the event it calls into serious question the integrity and public respect of the Township.
- 4.3.7 The naming of trails is available to all those listed under 3.8 with the exception of government agencies.

5. CUMULATIVE GIVING

Subject to the provisions laid out in this policy, all donations will be tracked for the purpose of recognizing cumulative giving. This includes all types of donations given since the approval of this policy by Council including cash, property and gifts-in-kind. Donations made prior to this policy will not be tracked unless previously agreed upon.

A donor's Level of Giving will be evaluated on a yearly basis with the exact date to be set by staff. Donor names will not appear at more than one level but at the Level in keeping with the total amount given at each yearly review.

6. COMMUNICATION

Ongoing communication with donors is essential to recognizing their generous contribution as well as encouraging long-term commitment to the trail system. As such, all donors contributing \$500 or more will receive a copy of Clearview's Community Culture and Recreation Guide with donors over \$2,499 also receiving a copy of the Annual Trail Report to Council. Donors may also be contacted from time to time throughout the campaign to keep them informed of how their contribution is being used and how the campaign is progressing.

7. REVIEW

Every three (3) years, just before the beginning of a major campaign, or in the event an amendment is needed, the Recreation and Culture Advisory Committee shall review the Donor Recognition Policy with the purpose of making recommendations to Council for improvements when necessary.

Appendix 6: Park Criteria Checklist

Name of Park _____

Date of Review _____

Reviewer _____

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Action
CPTED* (effective use of built environment to reduce crime, e.g. clear sight lines)				
Access to active transportation routes and trails				
Way finding for park				
Benches, tables, seating areas, shade				
Pedestrian lighting				
Garbage receptacles				
Parking for physically challenged				
Low maintenance native plantings				
Park maintenance				
Washroom facilities				
Bike racks				
Accessibility into park and amenities				
Multiuse capacity of space				
Access to public transit				
Fencing to identify border of parks and private property				
Hydro supply				
Water supply				
Suitability for parkland development (e.g. good drainage, size, etc.)				
Potential for green space connectivity (to natural areas, corridors, open space.)				

*crime prevention through environmental design

General Comments

Appendix 7: Simcoe County Trail Strategy

Simcoe County TRAILS STRATEGY



Introduction

The Simcoe County Trails Strategy is an initiative of the County of Simcoe to develop an action plan promoting trails-related investments to create a County-wide network of trails.

The Simcoe County area is host to more than 225 kms of connecting municipally-owned trails with hundreds of kilometres of other trails in communities, parks and open spaces.



Many of the existing trails in Simcoe County follow historic First Nations travelling routes and, more recently, along former railway lines. An interconnected and well-

maintained trail system that offers a consistent and enjoyable experience is not only marketable with municipalities reaping economic rewards, but a great foundation for building healthy communities and a healthier County.

The County of Simcoe is committed to assisting area municipalities in developing what will be a world class trail network – an asset to enjoy and be proud of.



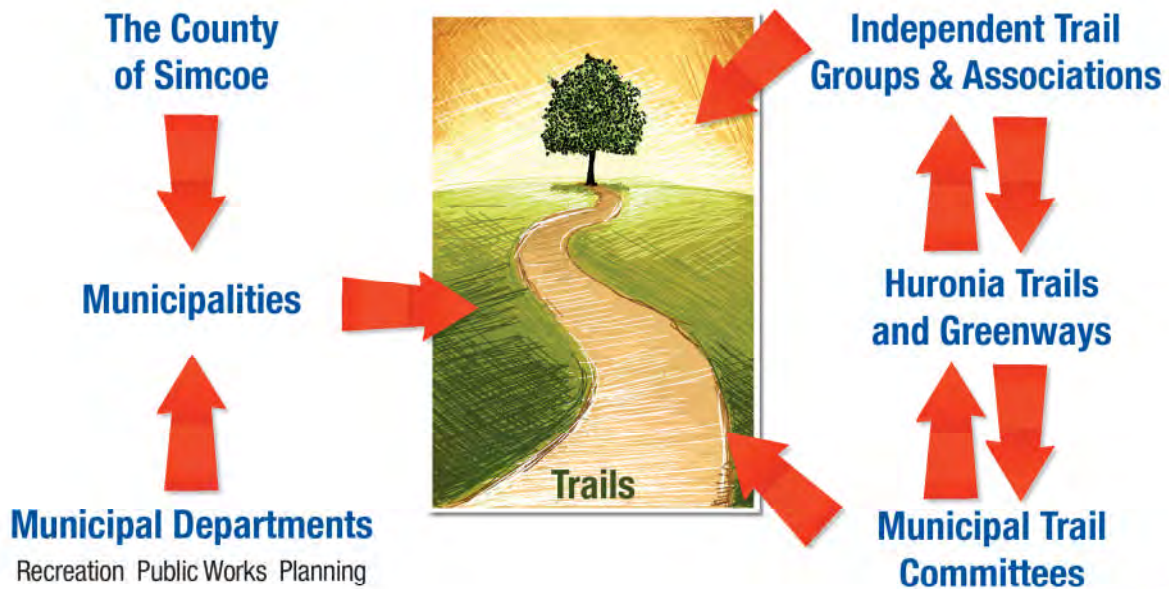
simcoe.ca

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Simcoe County TRAILS STRATEGY



Support for Trails in Simcoe County



simcoe.ca

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Simcoe County TRAILS STRATEGY



Planning Policy Context

Both provincial and municipal land use planning documents place increasing emphasis on planning for active and healthy communities

March 2005

Provincial Policy Statement

- Promotes pedestrian and non-motorized activity facilities
- Requires provision for publicly-accessible parks and recreation areas including trails.

June 2006

Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe

- Requires planning for a balance of transportation choices.
- Encourages development of complete communities with a range of housing types, high quality public open space and easy access to local stores and services; essentially, places where people can live, learn, work and play.

January 2007

Changes to the Planning Act

- Promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians.
- Lands required for pedestrian pathways, bicycle pathways and

public transit rights-of-way may be dedicated to municipalities through development approvals.

June 2008

County of Simcoe

Transportation Master Plan

- Identifies an increased role for the County in the development of active transportation opportunities.

November 2008

Adopted New County of Simcoe Official Plan

- Encourages pedestrian-friendly design.
- Requires preparation of Active Transportation Plan for all primary settlement areas.
- Promotes establishment of County-wide trail system.

simcoe.ca

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Appendix 8: Sample Trail Inspection Forms

Trail Inspection Worksheet

Trail Name		
Inspectors Name	Date	Weather Conditions
Time Start	Finish	
Physical Condition of Trail Surface Location of Surface Hazard		
Horizontal Clearance Location of Hazard		
Vertical Clearance Location of Hazard		
Signage Location of Hazard		
General Comments		

Trails Criteria Checklist

Name of Trail _____
 Date of Review _____
 Reviewer _____

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Fair	Action
CPTED* controls are managed along trail routes (e.g. access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement, maintenance)				
Trail Surface 3.0 m				
Side cut free zones on both edges 0.5 m				
General grade 5% (Areas of 8% or more, gross slope 2%; cross slope >5%)				
Drainage				
Accessibility to physically challenged				
Way finding				
Garbage receptacles				
Benches or seating areas				
Bollards in good repair and position				
Functional gates				
Noxious weeds are absent or limited (hogweed, poison ivy, poison oak)				
Standing dead trees are not a hazard				
Bike racks				
Access to washrooms				
Connectivity to subdivisions, public places, other trails, parks, etc.				
Parking				

*crime prevention through environmental design

General Comments