



RECREATION MASTER PLAN

2025



FINAL



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Bracebridge, ON

Purpose

A Recreation Master Plan identifies local community needs and offers specific recommendations to support the local community. The Township of Ramara's Recreation Master Plan was developed through public, resident, community group, staff and Council consultation and engagement.

This plan focusses on the tangible short-term actions that will create a comprehensive, achievable and maintainable suite of recreational programs and facilities. Medium and long-term priorities are discussed and identified as well as recognized as subject to change as demographics, recreational trends and budgeting capabilities shift.

Study Area

This plan covers the entire Township of Ramara and includes parks, beaches, boat launches, lake access points, and township wide trails. Recreation facilities and infrastructure include: four parks with playgrounds, seven green space parks, five baseball fields, eight public access boat launches, 53 km of trails, the Ramara Recreation Centre, three small community halls and multiple other parkettes and open space areas.

Study Process

The Recreation Master Plan review and update began in June of 2024. A multi-faceted public and stakeholder engagement process was conducted that included a public survey, open houses, group and individual interviews with staff, council, interested community groups and committees and a senior staff working session. A township wide site tour was conducted, supplemented by a recreation program services and delivery analysis and a complete parks and facility inventory review.

The findings were refined into short-term, medium-term and long-term recommendations that are intended to act as a roadmap for the next 10 years.

Recommendations

Participation, annual monitoring of the plan and financial commitment are key elements to implementing recommendations.

Two key priorities of continued **relationship building** and **investment in trails** offer the best opportunity to increase services for programming and facility use identified by the community, while recognizing limited budget availability to invest in recreational services.

Summary of Short, Medium and Long-Term Recommendations

Short-term

- ☐ Develop multi-use communication tool
- ☐ Complete the Operational Review
- ☐ Review programming duplications
- ☐ Continuing Paid Parking Strategy
- ☐ Increased budget for pilot programs
- ☐ Create equitable programming opportunities
- ☐ Investigate Age-Friendly Action Plan
- ☐ Explore one-off events
- ☐ Make use of staff and community groups to implement leagues
- ☐ Explore School Board/School Communities' collaboration
- ☐ Implement planned park investments
- ☐ Facilitate increased park operational budgets
- ☐ Consult and include Joint Accessibility Committee
- ☐ Consider options to naturalize parks
- ☐ Review Trails Committee mandate
- ☐ Identify trail heads/main access points
- ☐ Identify key partnerships and shared use of trails with ATV, snowmobile groups etc.
- ☐ Form a trail feature strategy
- ☐ Plan and finalize a redevelopment plan of Brechin Community Centre
- ☐ Explore a multi-use sports pad
- ☐ Support on-going improvements and pilot outdoor pickleball league with Atherley Community Board
- ☐ Pilot satellite programs at Longford Mills and Udney Community Centres
- ☐ Revitalize one baseball diamond, upgrade parking and develop gymnasium upgrade plan at the Ramara Centre
- ☐ Remove outdoor structures as needed and evaluate the long-term plan for the baseball diamond at the Udney Community Centre

Medium-term

- ☐ Update parkland inventory
- ☐ Explore options to sell surplus land
- ☐ Strategically acquire lands through cash in lieu opportunities
- ☐ Identify areas for improved safe access to trails and facilities
- ☐ Explore programming partnerships with neighbouring municipalities
- ☐ Invest in educational and training opportunities for staff and instructors
- ☐ Investigate possible passive or instructional swimming opportunities and partnerships
- ☐ Improve lake access points and parking
- ☐ Develop Kurtis Drive Park Plan
- ☐ Execute a township wide park and recreational branding and signage strategy
- ☐ Develop an updated township mapping tool
- ☐ Implement trail features strategy and invest into trail amenities
- ☐ Implement Park redevelopment upgrades at Brechin Community Centre
- ☐ Investigate lake access, beach and boat launch redevelopment at Lovely Day Park
- ☐ Investigate parking lot expansion and evaluate park at Longford Mills Community Centre
- ☐ Investigate a redevelopment plan for the outdoor space at Ramara Centre
- ☐ Investigate potential development of lands beside Ramara Municipal Office
- ☐ Investigate playground/multi-use sports court and evaluate park at Udney Community Centre

Long-term

- ☐ Develop a plan to utilize Concession Road 8/Lake Simcoe Property (Bayshore Village Sewage Works Expansion Project Lands)
- ☐ Review status of 2612 Concession D-E property with Infrastructure department
- ☐ Engage residents for a comprehensive expansion plan for the Ramara Centre



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Preliminary Background Report for Sector Trends

Appendix B: Public Engagement Summary & Survey Results Report

Appendix C: Recreation Program and Facilities Review Report

1 Introduction

In 2024, the Township of Ramara retained a consulting firm to update the 2012 existing Master Recreation Plan to reflect the current and future needs of the community.

1.1 Purpose of the Recreation Master Plan

This Recreation Master Plan (the Plan) will serve as a framework for the Township's future recreation service provisions over the next 10 years and to act as a visionary roadmap that directs recreational priorities in terms of programming, facilities and service delivery into the future. The Plan will provide implementable options to Council in alignment with the 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan and the Recreation and Community Services Department staff for the short (1-2 years), medium (3-5 years) and long term (5-10 years).



1.2 Project Process and Methodology

The project was laid out in five key phases:

- 1) Analysis and Review
- 2) Community Consultation and Engagement
- 3) Key insights / Strategic Path and Recommendations
- 4) Draft Master Recreation Plan Review
- 5) Final Presentation and Report to Council

1.2.1 Analysis and Review

The project began with a comprehensive review of available reports, plans and other relevant documents that included:

- Existing Township Policies related to recreation
- 2012 Recreation Master Plan
- Township of Ramara Strategic Plan 2023-2026

- Township of Ramara Official Plan
- County of Simcoe Official Plan
- Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- Provincial Policy Statement 2020
- Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023
- Township of Ramara Active Transportation Plan
- Accessibility Plan
- Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Mapping - cycling, canoeing, parks, green spaces, boat launches and trails
- Fees and Charges Bylaw

On June 12, 2024, a start-up project meeting was held with staff leaders on the project to discuss the project workplan, key dates moving forward and known stakeholders to begin the creation of the project notification list. On June 27, 2024, a meeting was held with the Guidance Committee, consisting of Senior Staff and the Deputy Mayor.

On June 21, 2024, the project team attended an Accessibility tour to visit Brechin Park, the medical center, Udney Hall, Ramara Centre, and Longford Mills Community Centre. This visit offered the opportunity to get an in-depth tour of these facilities from the perspective of accessibility.

Market research and trends in recreation were examined and the summary research is provided in **Appendix A** of this report, including the review and analysis of neighbouring municipal programming and current recreational plans.

Deliverables of this phase of the project included a formal Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan as well as a Preliminary Report that identified the key issues learned to date. The following preliminary list of critical issues was assembled. These issues were carried forward and considered when formulating recommendations in this Plan.

- Underutilized recreational facilities
- Declining users
- Decreasing number of volunteers
- Aging facilities
- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of facilities or programming
- External program delivery
- Large geographical township and small population

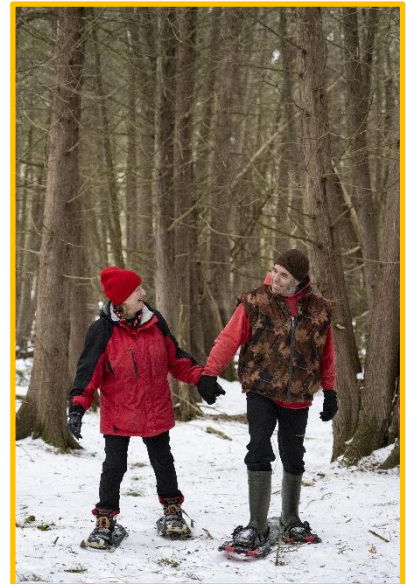
- Changing recreational trends
- Aging population to service

The 2012 Recreation Master Plan provided 70 recommendations with suggested timeframes for action. The status of these recommendations was ascertained through staff input. Section 9 of this report reviews each of the 2012 recommendations, notes their status and if action is still required as part of this Plan.

1.2.2 Community Consultation and Engagement

Utilizing the Community and Stakeholder Engagement plan created in Phase 1, an electronic survey was created and launched to understand current uses by the community and their priorities in terms of future facilities and programming for recreation in the Township of Ramara.

The survey was launched July 8 and closed August 5. Two public open houses were held on July 29 and one-on-one or small group interviews were held between July 31 and August 12, 2024. A Public Engagement Summary & Survey Results report was published as a stand-alone document and included as **Appendix B** to this final report.



The consultation uncovered an opportunity for a Senior Staff Leadership workshop that was held on August 28, 2024. The workshop recognized cross departmental projects, funding opportunities, budget constraints and provided discussions on potential growth and development that may have significant impacts to the future of recreational facilities and service investments.

A final Open House meeting took place on February 5, 2025, at the Ramara Municipal Office. Twenty members of the public attended, including 3 ward councillors. A formal presentation took place, followed by a question-and-answer period and informal discussions. Following the public Open House, the Township advertised a period for further project comments and feedback. One comment was received by a township of Ramara resident, and a comprehensive response was received from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU). Public Open House comments and this written input are reflected in this final Plan.

1.2.3 Key insights / Strategic Path and Recommendations

A critical element of the tasks in Phase 3 was the Recreation Program and Facilities Review Report, provided as Appendix C to this report. The program and facilities review report catalogued the existing facilities and programming available in the Township of Ramara in a comprehensive manner to inform recreational recommendations and priorities in this Plan.

Council was presented with a status of the project and a summary of both the Public Engagement Summary and Survey Results report, and the Recreation Program and Facilities Review Report on October 7, 2024.

1.2.4 Draft Master Recreation Plan Review

Phase 4 of the project involved drafting the Township of Ramara Master Recreation Plan and obtaining project team input.

1.2.5 Final Presentation and Report to Council

During the project, Council discussed ways to ensure resident awareness and participation. Additional advertising budget was allocated for the final open house presenting the Draft final plan on February 5, 2025. Comments received during this open house were incorporated into the final Plan as appropriate.

A summarizing presentation was delivered to Council for adoption of the plan on April 28, 2025.



2 Community Profile

Ramara was formed in 1994 through the amalgamation of the townships of Rama and Mara. The municipality stretches along the northeastern shore of Lake Simcoe from Gamebridge to Orillia, and along the entire eastern shore of Lake Couchiching from Orillia to Washago. Farming, tourism and aggregates are the primary industries and are supported by a wide variety of local enterprises. The area is perhaps best known for its proximity to Casino Rama, which is located on the neighbouring First Nations reserve of Chippewas of Mnjikaning First Nation in Rama.

With a growing population, currently at 10,377, Ramara offers year-round beauty and grows immensely during the summer months due to seasonal visitors and residents. Ramara is comprised of nine settlement areas: Atherley-Uptergrove, Brechin, Cooper's Falls, Gamebridge, Lagoon City, Longford Mills, Sebright, Udney and Washago. Brechin is one of the township's largest communities.

The Township of Ramara owns and operates the Ramara Centre, located at 5482 Highway 12, between Atherley and Uptergrove as well as community centres in Longford Mills, Udney and Brechin that are operated by Community Centre Boards of Management which are composed of volunteers.

2.1 Key Demographics

A key factor in the success of recreational programs or facilities is the question of serving the appropriate user groups. To understand the user groups available, the basic demographics of an area must be considered. Table 1 below provides a summary of the age demographics of Ramara Township and surrounding areas, and Table 2 provides the growth projections for the same areas.

Table 1: Township of Ramara and Surrounding Area Age Demographic¹

Area	Total 2021	0-19	20-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Simcoe	533,170	116,295	60,055	102,280	148,620	105,920

¹ [Census of Population \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-62-001-x/2019001/article/00001-eng.htm)

Area	Total 2021	0-19	20-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Ramara	10,375	1,670	895	1,400	3,520	2,880
Brock	12,565	2,730	1,255	2,375	3,435	2,770
Severn	14,575	2,810	1,395	2,390	4,565	3,420
Orillia	33,410	6,250	3,865	5,930	8,700	8,670
Oro-Medonte	23,020	4,860	2,035	3,850	7,345	4,925
Rama First Nations	1,000	230	160	200	285	140

Table 2: 2051 Population Growth Projections for Ramara and Surrounding Areas²

Area	2016	2021	% Change	2051 Projection
Ramara	9,488	10,375	9.4	12,870 ⁽¹⁾
Brock	11,642	12,565	7.9	20,900 ⁽²⁾
Severn	13,462	14,575	8.3	17,790 ⁽¹⁾
Orillia	31,166	33,410	7.2	41,000 ⁽³⁾ *
Oro-Medonte	21,036	23,020	9.4	26,230 ⁽¹⁾
Rama First Nations	878	1,000	13.7	Unavailable

An informative statistic is also the household income available to users. This helps to determine if activities requiring user rates vs. activities that have minimal municipal cost are better suited to an area. Table 3 illustrates the medium household incomes of Ramara and surrounding areas.

² [Census Profile, 2016 Census \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-62-001/2016001/article/14861-eng.htm)

(1) [HEMSON - Revised Simcoe County Growth Forecasts and LNA Results - 31May22](#)

(2) [Durham GMS Phase 2 Area Municipal Growth Allocations and Land needs 2051 - Final Report](#)

(3) [OP-Text-Consolidation-June-1-2024.pdf \(orillia.ca\)](#)

Table 3: Median Household Income for Ramara and Surrounding areas³

Area	Median Total Income of Household 2015	Median Total Income of Household 2020	% increase
Ramara	\$72,160	\$85,000	17.8
Brock	\$73,072	\$92,000	25.9
Severn	\$77,009	\$94,000	22.1
Orillia	\$55,082	\$71,000	28.9
Oro-Medonte	\$95,667	\$114,000	19.2
Rama First Nations	\$44,800	\$67,500	50.7

2.2 Population Growth in Neighbouring Communities

Table 4 below represents the recent population growth trends in Ramara Township and Neighbouring Townships and communities. Almost all communities, including Ramara, have seen an increase in their average growth rate.

Table 4: Population Growth of Neighbouring Communities⁴

Census subdivision (CSD) name	Population		
	2021	2016	% change in growth
Ontario	14,223,942	13,448,494	5.8
Simcoe County	533,169	479,635	11.2
Ramara	10,377	9,488	9.4
Brock	12,567	11,642	7.9
Severn	14,576	13,462	8.3
Mnjikaning First Nation 32 (Rama First Nation)	878*	870**	0.9
Orillia	33,411	31,166	7.2

*There is no population update for Mnjikaning First Nation 32 in 2021. The population that falls under the 2021 column is from 2016.

**The population that falls under the 2016 column is from 2011.

³ [2016 Census of Population \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-62-001-x/2016001/article/00001-eng.htm)

⁴ [2016 Census of Population \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-62-001-x/2016001/article/00001-eng.htm)

It is noted that the projected population by 2031 in the 2012 Master Plan was 15,500, which was an estimated increase of 5,700 people from 2006-2031. A revised County of Simcoe Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment from 2022 estimated that by 2051 Ramara would reach a population of 12,870. This revised forecast provides an estimated growth of 3,070 people between the years 2022 and 2051.⁵

2.3 Age Distribution

Ramara's population has been on a similar trend since 2011. The 2021 Census data shows that now the percentage of adults over 65 years of age is 28%, which is a 5% increase from 2011. Adults 55 and over make up 50% of Ramara's population, which is a 10% increase from 2011. Table 5 and Figure 1 illustrate the age distribution of Ramara residents.

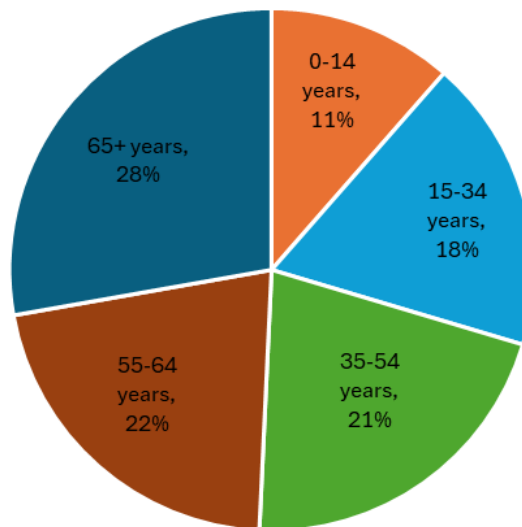
Table 5: Age Distribution of Ramara Residents, 2021

Age Group	0-14	15-34	35-54	55-64	65+
2021	1,185	1,885	2,190	2,225	2,880
Percent	11%	18%	21%	22%	28%



⁵ [County of Simcoe Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment, Hemson Consulting Ltd., May 2022](#)

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Ramara Residents, 2021



2.4 Household Income

The average household income in Ramara after taxes was \$86,100 in 2021, which is slightly lower than the average provincial household income. Figure 2 and Table 6 below represent average and median household incomes for Simcoe County, Ramara, and Ontario.

Figure 2: Average Household Income, 2021

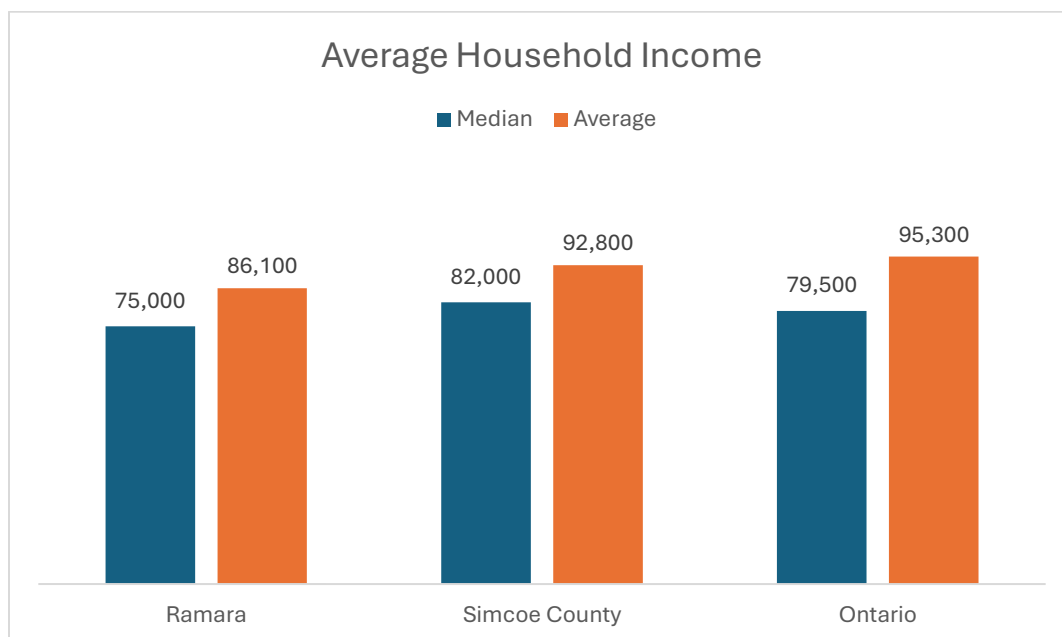


Table 6: Average Household Income, 2021

Description	Ramara	Simcoe County	Ontario
Median after-tax household income 2021	\$75,000	\$82,000	\$79,500
Average after-tax household income 2021	\$86,100	\$92,800	\$95,300

2.5 Demographic Conclusions

Ramara continues to age, with over half of the population being over 55 years old. The median income is less than the provincial average, indicating that user fees and other costs associated with recreational activities and programming will need to reflect the income levels of residents. There is minimal long-term growth projected. These generalized factors indicate that prioritizing recreational activities suited to seniors as the majority user in the short and medium-term may be appropriate. Long-term priorities may include younger users as the demographic curve of the community changes.





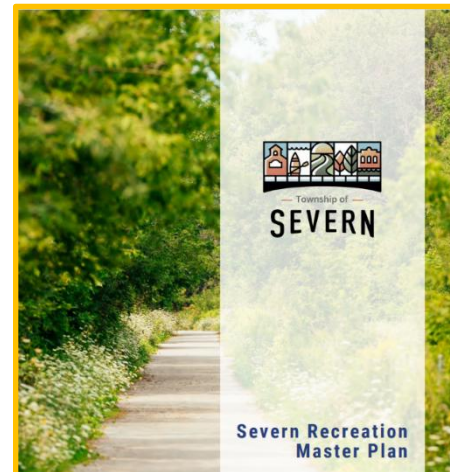
3 Trends in Parks and Recreation

The Townships of Severn, Oro-Medonte and Brock are neighbouring municipalities to the Township of Ramara, each of which recently updated or created a new Parks and Recreation Plan. These plans have been used as the source of market and sector trend information for the purposes of this project.

3.1 Township of Severn Recreation Master Plan, 2022

The Township of Severn completed an updated Recreation Master Plan in September 2022. The document was completed shortly after the end of the pandemic and the issues and trends correlated accordingly. Key issues included:

- Increased demand and importance of open space, parks and trails for individuals or families;
- Reluctance to return back to organized activities, programs or sports;
- Lack of access to indoor facilities based on temporary pandemic uses;
- Increased awareness of accessibility concerns;
- Not all activities residents participate in are available in Severn and many travel to programs offered by neighbouring municipalities (Orillia, Barrie and Midland); and
- 60 % of survey respondents indicated the need for more programs.



The following priorities were identified:

- Importance of local community events and the need to support these events;
- Work with and expand relationships with township and local arts, cultural and community groups to explore low-cost events, communicate and promote existing events;
- Opportunity to expand and/or improve outdoor activities;
- Improvements needed to local trails and parks;
- Water activities are of major importance and water access improvements are needed regarding boat launches, access to lakes and rivers for swimming, canoeing and kayaking;
- Need for upgrades to washrooms, parking and waste receptacles; and
- Demand for pickleball and to resurface and develop courts (Washago).

3.2 Oro-Medonte Parks & Recreation Master Plan, 2023

The Township of Oro-Medonte completed their Parks and Recreation Master Plan in April 2023. The project identified key capital priorities and delivery framework. The resulting document formed two different vision approaches, one focused on “Outdoor Leisure” and the second based on “Village Recreation.” Key issues identified during the consulting exercise include:

- Need for new and appealing facilities, there was recognition of the importance and value of the local community halls but also the demand for new modern facilities to meet the needs of their residents;
- Population growth in the area and the future needs of facilities;
- Open space not necessarily within proximity to growth and settlement areas; and
- Oro-Medonte relies on neighbouring municipalities for access to facilities (indoor swimming pools and arenas).

Some of the main wants and needs of the plan are:

- Increased and enhanced trail-based activities and community links, connections and outdoor hubs;

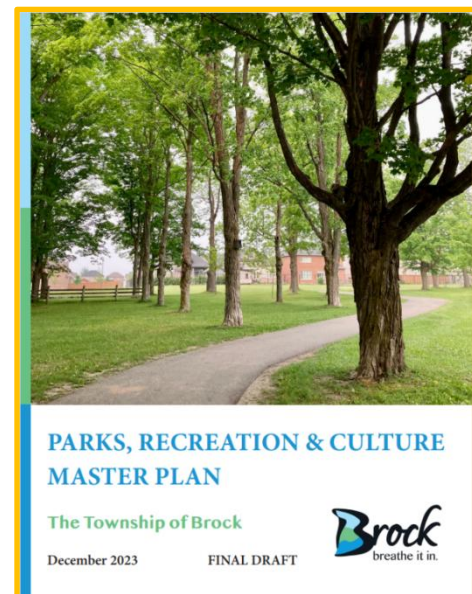


- Emergence of pickleball and the need for courts, indoor and outdoor or the possibility to use local schools;
- Increased needs for sports field supply in the future (soccer, baseball etc.);
- Need for study into boat launches;
- Possibility of an outdoor rink and future expansion of arena;
- Community wants more and updated playground equipment; and
- To investigate opportunities to partner and create cost sharing agreements with neighbouring municipalities.

3.3 Township of Brock Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan, 2023

The Township of Brock recently undertook a comprehensive review of their Parks, Recreation and Master Plan with a final product delivered in December of 2023. Key issues identified in the review were:

- Decrease in volunteers running sports and programming, recognizing volunteers run many of the available activities;
- Underused and aging facilities and equipment;
- Decrease in users for all age level activities, noting that many programs offered by the township could not get the minimum number of participants to continue to run activity; and
- Increased vandalism in public spaces and parks.



The community consultation identified several wants and needs, that include:

- Access to indoor/multi-purpose gymnasiums or rooms, currently they use local schools or churches, none owned by the township;
- Increasing demand for pickleball both indoors and outdoors;
- Off-leash dog parks;
- Increased and expanded trails for walking and connections within the 3 towns;
- More water access points, beaches and public boat launches; and
- The need for more senior-based programming and accommodation.

3.4 Additional Information by Sport

3.4.1 Pickleball

Trends from across North America show that pickleball participation is growing exponentially. Pickleball Canada notes that 11% of households now have at least one household member that plays pickleball at least once per month which extrapolates to approximately 1.37 million Canadians and represents a near tripling of players in two years. It was also reported that a recent growth in numbers comes from players between 18 and 34, indicating a change in demographics. Neighbouring municipalities such as Orillia, Brock, Severn, and Oro-Medonte all have plans to install new pickleball courts due to increased interest from residents. Brock and Oro-Medonte note that multi-purpose courts cause conflict between pickleball and tennis players and are not optimal.



3.4.2 Splash Pads

Residents in neighbouring municipalities have expressed interest in the addition of splash pads to existing parks and playgrounds. Orillia has identified the need for two additional splash pads and Brock has identified the need for one additional pad at one of the Sunderland Parks. In Brock's Recreation Master Plan, there is reference to a potential increase in the use of splash pads due to climate change. During heat waves splash pads can be used as cooling stations for residents. Although there may be an increase in interest for splash pads, Oro-Medonte mentions in their Master Plan that splash pads can be difficult to install due to on-site only water production and septic field requirements. There is also the issue of very age-specific users that these facilities only serve.



3.4.3 Playgrounds

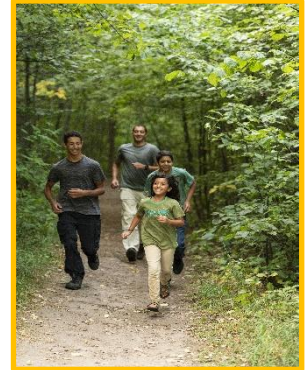
All neighbouring municipalities are invested in making new and existing playgrounds accessible. Recommendations in Master Plans mention ensuring existing playgrounds are altered to make them more accessible by adding ramps, altering ground surfaces, or creating sections where there are no differences in elevation between pathways and play areas. Another emerging trend from neighbouring



municipalities such as Brock and Severn are tree planting plans. Planting trees surrounding playground areas creates shade and additional green spaces for residents.

3.4.4 Green Space Parks

Neighbouring municipalities indicate their plans to increase green spaces and canopy cover. The Township of Brock mentions that a Survey by Park People indicate Canadians appreciation for green spaces has increased since the pandemic. Severn also mentioned a survey from 2020 that revealed 70% of Canadians expressed an increased appreciation for parks and green spaces. Both Severn and Brock have recommendations in their Master Plans to provide more canopy cover in parks by planting more trees.



3.4.5 Skate Parks

Skate parks have seen success in neighbouring municipalities and cities throughout Ontario. Orillia and Severn currently have one skate park that is well used, and Orillia has requests to relocate and expand this facility to better suit users. Oro-Medonte does not have a permanent skate park but has implemented temporary skate parks in the past with varying degrees of success. Brock has two skate parks – one in Beaverton and one in Cannington that are housed in existing park areas.



3.4.6 Cricket

Although Cricket is a growing sport in North America there is not a current demand for cricket fields in neighbouring municipalities, but there is potential for this sport to grow in the Area. Simcoe County District School Board held their first ever cricket tournament in Bradford this year, signaling a potential future growth in the sport. Students at the new Beaver River Public School in Beaverton participated in cricket games at a sports dome in Durham in 2024. Oshawa and Whitby have both created outdoor pitches in recent years. Currently the nearest cricket fields can be found in larger cities like Mississauga, Markham, and Etobicoke.



4 Public Engagement Summary

4.1 Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Public and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Engagement Plan) and schedule were designed to ensure the key principles were followed:

Inform – To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Consult – To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Involve – To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Collaborate – To partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Represent – to ensure all interested or concerned stakeholders and Indigenous representatives and communities are appropriately represented throughout the project.

The Engagement Plan included a Public Survey, a Public Open House, followed by staff, council and community group interviews. The Public Survey was launched on July 8, 2024, and ran until August 5, 2024. The survey was available online at the Township of Ramara Website and advertised through social media and direct email to previously identified community groups and potential stakeholders. The Recreation Department staff also made hardcopy surveys available at various municipal facilities.

The Public Open House on July 29, 2024 involved two sessions: an afternoon Open House hosted at the Township of Ramara Municipal Office in Brechin and an evening session held at the Ramara Recreation Centre. The afternoon session had 11 residents in attendance including 2 council members (Councillor Bell & Councillor Tuju). The evening session had 6 in attendance, including 2 council members (Councillor Snutch & Councillor Tuju). Residents included representation from the Ramara Library Board, Ramara Trails Committee, Ramara Soccer and the Lake St. John Association.

Following the Public Open House, staff and council interviews were set up and in-person and virtual meetings took place from July 31 to August 12, 2024.

Staff interviews and discussions included:

- Jennifer Connor, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk
- Justine Bayne, Recreation and Community Services Supervisor
- Abby Harper, Recreation Programmer
- Melody Madden, Program Assistant
- Walied Zekry, Director of Building and Planning/Chief Building Officer
- Jennifer Stong, Planner
- Manon Higgins, Director of Finance/Treasurer
- Josh Kavanagh, Director of Infrastructure and Drainage Superintendent
- Tony Stong, Director of Fire and Rescue Services/Fire Chief

Council Member Interviews and discussions included:

- Jennifer Fisher, Ward 2 Councillor
- Dana Tuju, Ward 3 Councillor
- Joe Gough, Ward 4 Councillor
- Sherri Bell, Ward 5 Councillor

Stakeholder groups and community organizations were identified early in the project. Each group was informed by email of the project, the public survey and Public Open House. The consultant team (Planscape Inc.) directly contacted each community group via email to determine if they wished to participate in a follow-up interview or meeting. Follow-up interviews included the following groups:

- Ramara Trails Committee
- Orillia District Snowmobile Club
- Ramara Chamber of Commerce

It is also noted that Janet Banfield, CEO of the Ramara Public Library attended a Public Open House Session and provided additional comments by email.

Consultation with Rama First Nation is on-going. At the time of this report no formal response from Rama has occurred. The Township of Ramara has identified this consultation and future partnerships with Rama First Nation as high priority. Township staff have committed to creating a meaningful relationship with the Rama First Nation recreational staff counterparts.

4.2 Summarized Consultation Themes

The following themes have been noted from the consultation efforts to support the creation of the Ramara Recreation Master Plan. They are not in priority order and have been provided for convenience, but it is recommended that the fulsome summary of the consultation touchpoints of this project be read in their entirety in **Appendix B**.

- Multi-function / multi-use spaces are preferred;
- Trails and trail connections between centres and as local features are supported;
- Pickleball appears to be the priority sport court recommendation;
- Spaces are under-utilized and the recommendation is to improve what exists;
- Safety and accessibility on trails and facilities is critical;
- Beaches and lake accesses are underutilized;
- Parking in public spaces is difficult and prohibits expansions;
- Partnerships for programming are a big opportunity;
- The library serves as a community hub and should be supported; and
- Lagoon City “residents only” view of facilities and programming.

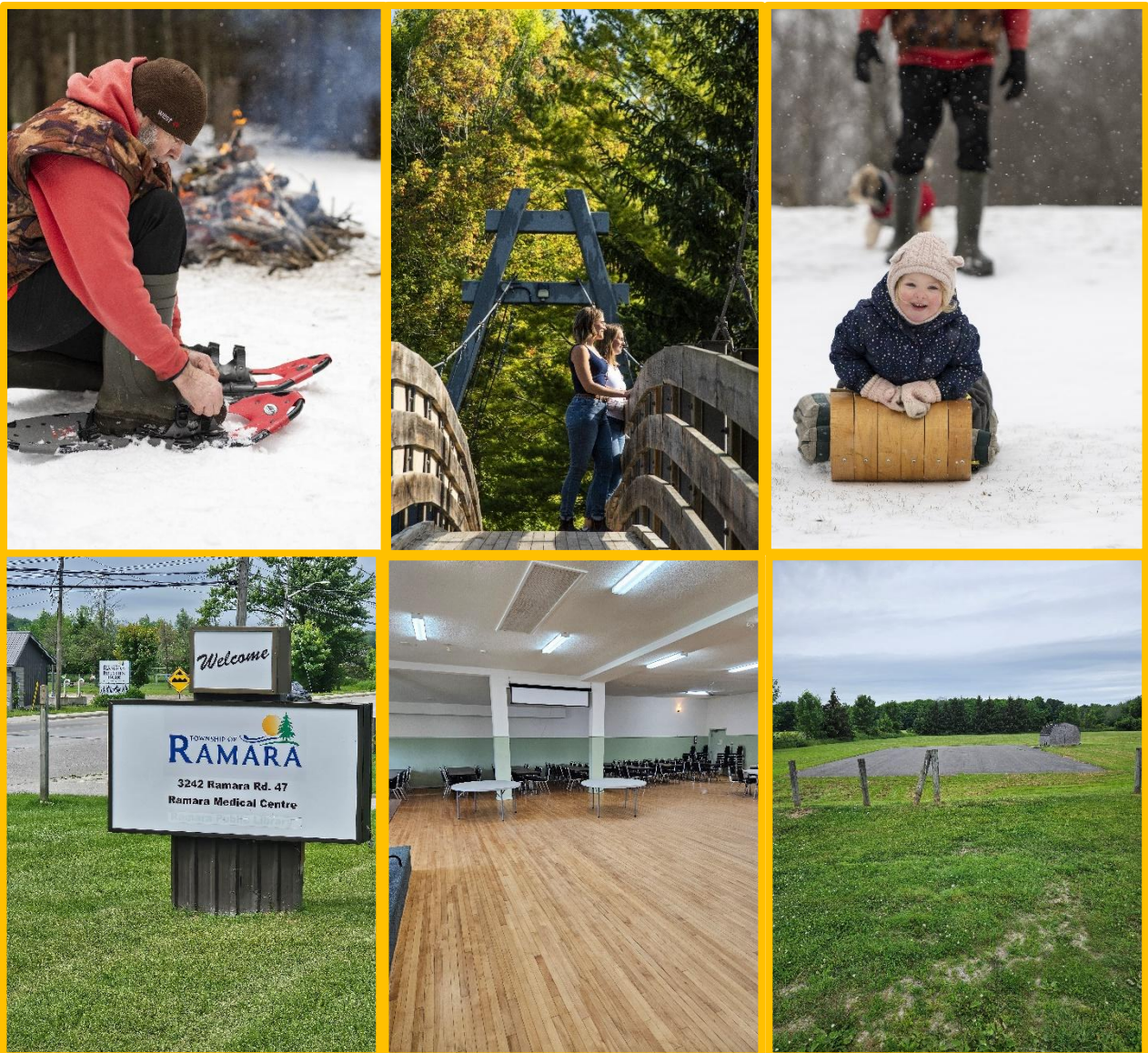


4.3 On-Line Survey Summary Findings

The on-line survey provided excellent feedback and future surveys should be considered for consistent use by Township staff as a tool to gather and assess information regarding recreation use, needs and recommendations. The following points are contextually important for the recommendations of this Plan.

- Over half of respondents are over 60 years of age;
- Over 70% of respondents were female;
- Over 80% of respondents are permanent residents;
- There was a fairly equitable spread of respondents from each Ward;
- Many respondents are part of an existing community group;
- 55% of respondents currently swim, 33% play pickleball, 32% engage in a book / reading or social club;
- Almost 43% of respondents engage in a recreational activity not listed in the survey;
- 88% of respondents note that they walk or hike;
- Over 50% of respondents use the Ramara Centre for activities, compared to less than 20% use for each of the other existing facilities;
- Approximately 40% of respondents are satisfied with the programs provided by Ramara and approximately 10% are either unsatisfied or very satisfied;
- Approximately 41% of respondents are moderately satisfied with the facilities provided by Ramara, with about 8% very satisfied, 22% note very satisfied and 13% unsatisfied;
- Interestingly, approximately 24% of respondents indicate that they never use any recreational program or facility in Ramara and 21% use them weekly with just over 3% indicating that they use programs or facilities daily;
- Approximately 76% of respondents travel outside of Ramara to engage in recreational activities one to four times per week;
- Approximately 50% of respondents are satisfied with the existing walking and cycling trails and approximately 33% are unsatisfied with the existing trails;
- Trails, a recreation centre (with a gym / fitness / dancing facility), pool and pickleball courts are the facilities that respondents would most like to see in the future;
- The main reason preventing respondents from using existing facilities and programs is that they aren't offered;
- Respondents want programming offered through the week or 7 days per week vs. on the weekends;

- An indoor pool and/or multi-use recreation centre are the top items on respondent's wish list;
- Asked to narrow down a priority project for the Township, 13% of respondents selected trails, 11% selected a multi-use recreation centre and 10% selected an indoor pool;
- Fitness / sporting activities were deemed to be the most beneficial to residents;
- Users report getting their recreational information from social media or an email list most predominantly and prefer these methods of communication; and
- User fees could be supported by respondents (please note that this was only a yes / no question and that no amounts or costs informed the responses).



5 Program Service & Delivery

5.1 Township of Ramara Recreation Programming

The Township of Ramara offers a variety of recreational activities and services that are generally concentrated at the Ramara Recreation Centre. Opportunities are available for residents from pre-school children to adults and seniors. Recreation staff offer some organized sports opportunities and continue to experiment and diversify options. However, as like most rural communities, organized and competitive sports are controlled by external associations. Additionally, many Ramara residents travel to neighbouring municipalities to access their facilities.

The Township of Ramara program planning generally is based on a Winter, Spring and Fall Schedule. July and August programs are dedicated to child and youth summer camps. A week-long child and youth camp is offered during the December holidays and on March Break, offering a break or pause to adult programming. In 2025, recreation programming will pilot a summer session of adult programs to be offered in evenings and at alternative locations that include the Udney Community Centre.

The Recreational staff at Ramara plan programming based on current trends in the profession and on-going discussions with residents and various user groups. They intentionally try to divide programming between sports, art and music when creating seasonal line-ups. In the past, staff have used different forms of media and surveys to reach out to the public to target recreational wants or needs. This has often proved problematic as interest in a sport or program does not equate to residents registering or participating.



Programs offered are generally oriented around children and youth and adults and actively aging. Adult programming is predominantly for senior residents.

Working aged adults are less flexible than seniors to attend day-time scheduled programs. Changing programs to evenings can be challenging for staffing and providing schedules. Older adults are less likely to come out after dark or because of inclement weather. Experience of the Ramara Recreation Department has shown that changing to evenings also does not equate to working aged adults participating given the option.

5.1.1 Program Successes

The threshold for running programs, including new programs, is covering the cost of the instructor or associated costs of supplies. If activities or programs can be offered by full-time Recreation Staff, new programs can be offered without the need to recoup staffing costs. The success of programs is based on registration numbers. Pickleball for example has a high turnout and consequently has the most scheduled blocks in the Ramara Centre timetable.

5.1.2 Programming Constraints

There are several factors that play in the planning and success of on-going programming.

- Limited Indoor facilities
 - Ramara Recreation Centre is not a proper gymnasium and has limited ceiling heights, and other design constraints (glass)
 - The only other facilities in the Township are Community Centres – intended as “halls”
 - There is no public space available in Brechin
 - There is a high demand for pickleball which equates to limited space for alternative sports or programming given the facilities constraint of space
- Limited Outdoor Facilities
 - Many amenities are in disrepair, or they do not yet exist
- Location (Ramara Centre)
 - After School programming is limited in that the Ramara Centre is not in proximity to school aged children (bused home and then require transportation to the centre)
 - Not walking distance to Atherley-Uptergrove population

- Age-Appropriate Programs
 - Difficulty in developing “working-aged” sports or programming
 - Sports and activities and age groups tend to be cyclical and are adjusted accordingly
- Affordability
 - Finding instructors at a reasonable cost to work minimum and sometime flexible shifts can be problematic
 - Providing affordable user fees can be contentious
 - Programming budgets are limited



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	1 9:30 am Committee of Adjustment Meeting	2 6:30 pm Optimizing Your Phone's Camera & So Much More!	3	4 10:00 am Little Adventurers	5
6	7 9:30 am Committee of the Whole Meeting	8 7:00 pm Trivia (In Person & Virtual)	9 6:00 pm Fire Open House 6:30 pm Optimizing Your Phone's Camera & So Much More!	10 9:30 am Lagoon City Parks and Waterways Meeting	11 10:00 am Little Adventurers	12
13	14	15 6:00 pm The Ontario Paranormal Society (T.O.P.S.)	16 10:00 am Aging Well Expo 6:30 pm Adult: Crafty Creations - Gem Painting (Part 1 & 2)	17	18 10:00 am Little Adventurers 5:00 pm Pajamapalooza!	19 5:30 pm Brechin Mara Legion Pig Roast
20 12:00 pm Brew Ha Ha!	21 5:00 pm Council Meeting	22 10:00 am Spice Up Your Life - Grab and Go Kit 6:30 pm Teens: Hobby & Hang (Ghost Tea Lights)	23 6:30 pm Pumpkinfest! @ Udney Community Centre	24 9:30 am Special Committee of the Whole - 2023 Budget Meeting 4:00 pm After School Adventures	25	26 10:30 am Hungry Caterpillars - A Family Picture Book Club
27	28 9:30 am Special Committee of the Whole - Water/Wastewater Budget	29 7:00 pm Trivia (In Person & Virtual)	30	31 6:00 pm Ramara Fire and Rescue Services Annual Haunted House	1	2

6 Existing Recreational Facilities in Ramara

The Township of Ramara has an expansive geographic area with extensive shoreline on both Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. Outdoor leisure activities include access to multiple open space parks, beaches and a long-committed township wide trail system.

The Township of Ramara’s Asset Management Plan (AMP) identifies 75 assets as part of Parkland and Outdoor Recreation profile and identifies a total of 17 buildings and structures that include the Ramara Recreation Centre, Community Halls and accessory structures. Identifying all properties and assets relevant to the broader scope of Parks and Recreation in the Township of Ramara proved to be slightly difficult. Not all properties are listed specifically under the Parkland and Outdoor Recreation, and many are correctly categorized as part of core assets. Core assets include roads, sidewalks, paths, and trails.

There are many lake access points at the end of roadways. These access points provide opportunities for lake access that include the use of boat launch sites, swimming opportunities and many become heavily used during the winter months for recreational use of the lakes for fishing, snowmobiling and other outdoor activities. Through staff discussions and a township wide tour, access points were identified as well as properties that are currently used or partially used for township servicing by the Department of Infrastructure.

Table 7 below lists identified assets and are organized by Township Ward with a general description and condition of each. The table includes properties or locations identified by staff that could be considered a resource related to parks and recreation or may have future recreational potential. An asterisk (*) identifies properties or locations not included as part of the “parkland” assets in the AMP.



Table 7: Township of Ramara Programs and Facilities

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
WARD 1	Longford Mills Community Centre 3854 Longford Mills Road, Longford Mills	Park Land (Village Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant Open Space, playground removed, asphalt pad remains. • Future paving planned for accessible parking • Increased Parking Options available for Hall and overflow to Lake St. John Access
		Community Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100+ year old original structure (1919) • Asset Plan includes addition (1991) and other renovations • AODA upgrades suggested
		Outdoor Lights & Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
	*Longford Mills Boat Launch (Lake St. John)	Public Road Allowance/Boat Launch & Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent increased parking, needs grading • Possible overflow parking at Longford Mills C.C.
	*Shelba Drive Lake Access (Lake St. John)	Public Road Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant, no maintenance operations in place
	Bluebird Park 6314 Blue Bird Street	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent Increased Parking • Boat launch
		Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Playground • Future plans for a small trail loop and natural planting plan
	Unnamed Parkland 8003 County Rd. 169 @ Riverleigh	Parkland (Active Recreation) Wetland features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly wetlands • Community led “Naturalization” area • Opportunity for trails/loop • Difficult to develop

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
	Unnamed Parkland 7885 County Rd. 169 @ Birch Dr	Parkland (Active Recreation) Wetland features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Trail • Possible Highway location for trail head; access to Howlyn Pines Trail
	*Poplar Lane Water Access (Green River)	Public Road Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended use of canoe and kayak access • Signage and mapping for trails and waterways
	Unnamed Parkland 2505 Coopers Falls Rd.	Parkland (Rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small vacant parcel, no maintenance operations in place
	Walter Wicks Native Walkway 3531 Southwood Beach Blvd.	Parkland (Passive Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous community led “Naturalized” Trail loop with access to Lake St. John • Vacant, treed lot, no maintenance operation in place
	Floral Park Dock (end of Dock Rd.)	Parkland (Active Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront lot
		Dock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned 65K investment to upgrade failing dock
	*2612 Concession D-E	Infrastructure Site (Rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Wayside Pit • Infrastructure Dept using for ditching material • Possible future multi-purpose Township use
	*Davy Drive Watermain 7230 Davy Drive	Infrastructure Site (Active Recreation), small lot on Switch Road (Shoreline Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current location of local wellhead • Vacant portion of land treed wetland • Possible location of local trail loop

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
WARD 2	Udney Community Centre 2347 Concession Road 10, Udney	Parkland (Agriculture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space, baseball diamond
		Udney Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 68-year-old hall with multiple upgrades AODA upgrades required
		Storage Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pole Barn Storage (2015)
		Backstop (baseball)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently not in use, infield maintenance and upgrades required
		Playground (multiple)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only basketball posts exist – essentially no longer an asset
		Outdoor Lights & Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light posts have shown areas of rot and will need replacement or removal
		Park Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In decent shape (fencing is for baseball diamond)
	Sandy Point, Lake Dalrymple 4011 Dalrymple Dr.	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote location, provides local access to Lake Dalrymple Higher use in Winter Limited parking
	Val Harbour Park 3758 Harrys Lane, Atherley	Parkland (Passive Recreation & Natural Area Protection) Wetland features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Space parkland Limited access park and water access Limited parking available
	Joyland Beach Area 4159 Bayview Ave. *4154 Bayview	Parkland (Passive Recreation) Wetland feature not noted but present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant land with no maintenance operation in place Both properties have water on property at the time of site visit Limited ability to use sites with natural features present

	<p>*Bayshore Water Treatment Plant Extension 3700 Concession Road 8</p>	<p>New Infrastructure Lands (Rural, Natural Area Protection) Wetland features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property purchased for future expansion of Bayshore Wastewater Treatment Plant (100 + ha) • Extensive frontage and island on Lake Simcoe (1100 m +) • Possible future multi-use conveyable property and access to passive recreation
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	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
WARD 3	<p>Ramara Recreation Centre 5482 Highway 12 South, Atherley</p>	Parkland (Village Institutional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main outdoor sports and recreation fields in township; baseball & soccer fields • Potential replanting plan in progress with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) • Limited parking and functional parking issues • New Sunshade in budget
		Recreation Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20+ year-old Facility (2001); Library, Meeting Space and Gymnasium
		Garage Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage
		Generator Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage
		Bleachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Sets of Bleachers 20+ years-old
		Paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown
		Park Fencing Outdoor Lights & Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans to upgrade one field (fencing and lights in good shape)

Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
	Backstops (2 – Baseball)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans to upgrade one field
Atherley Community Park/ Lovely Day Park 3 Winchester Street, Atherley	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many recent installs and upgrades, including beachfront, boat launch/lake access closed
	Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 Install
	Sports Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand New Install (2024)
Kurtis Drive Park 4682 Kurtis Drive, Atherley	Parkland (Passive Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space; area of regular grass cutting but no infrastructure
	Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown
Prophet Park (Sandy Beach) 4671 Orkney Beach Road (linked to 234 Courtland Road)	Parkland (Active Recreation- P, H)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Land (wetland) Would be an ideal site for parking to nearby boat launch and beach access – but potential parking limited due to wetland/floodplain
Courtland/Orkney Beach Rd. (Sandy Beach) 234 Courtland Rd. (linked to 4670 Orkney Beach Rd.)	Parkland (Rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Land (wetland) Would be an ideal site for parking to nearby boat launch and beach access – but potential parking limited due to wetland/floodplain
*Unnamed Park 4291 Orkney Beach Road.	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not identified in Parkland Asset Management Plan (identified by staff)
Fern Resort Rd. 4501 Fern Resort Rd.	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boat launch and dock (infrastructure) Mainland access to Couchiching Islands Ample nearby parking

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
WARD 4	Brechin Community Park 3227 Ramara Road 47, Brechin	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space, baseball diamond, playground, pavilion, basketball court and dog-park Used on Saturdays for vendor's market
		Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 years-old building used by OPP and Library with washrooms
		Playground Equipment (Multiple Assets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In disrepair with safety concerns
		Outdoor Lights and Fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown condition
		Paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown condition
		Park Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown condition
		Dog Park Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively new
		Bleachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Sets pf Bleachers 20+ years-old
	Brechin Library/Medical Centre (former) 3242 Ramara Road 47	Building (Village Commercial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Site of Brechin Library and Medical Centre Home to the "Good Doctors" Unused open green space and basement
	*St. Andrews Hall/Standard Bank 2287/2291 Highway 12	Buildings (Village Commercial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown plan or scope Opportunity for multiuse space that includes recreation and library uses
	Bayshore Drive Park 166A Bayshore Drive	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space, regular grass cutting, Waterfront access Limited parking

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
	Thicketwood Place Park/McGuinnis Point 44 Thicketwood Place,	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space, regular grass cutting, Waterfront access Limited parking
	Unnamed Bayshore Park 128 Bayshore Dr.	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Green Space, regular grass cutting, Waterfront access Private parking is available at Bayshore Community Centre; potential improved on-street parking
	*Glenrest Drive Boat Launch Glenrest Drive	Unknown Asset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Listed as Parkland Asset and not part of Road System
	Heritage Farms Parkland 2958/2961 Suntrac Dr. (backlot and lake front)	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future Plans for a small trail loop and natural plantings (back lot)
		Boat Ramp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No parking, launch only
	Florida Ave./Concession B Suntrac Dr. – Trail between Heritage Farms/Florida Ave. 1415 Florida Ave. Back Lot 1418 Florida Ave. Lake front 2886 Con. Rd. B vacant lot	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple connected properties with trail to Heritage Farms and water access Unused back lot and Concession B property
	Furniss Crescent Park 2820 Furniss Crescent, Brechtin	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Open Green Space back lot parkland
	Gamebridge 1636 Ethel Dr. Gamebridge	Parkland (Hamlet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown planned use in residential neighbourhood, small frontage on Talbot River
	Ramara Road 51 Parkland – Gamebridge 1659 Ramara Rd. 51	Parkland (Hamlet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small vacant Open Space Parkette

	Asset Location	Asset/Amenity	Description/Conditions
WARD 5	Lagoon City Park 116 Lake Avenue, Brechin	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Open Space Park with beach Limited parking
		Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Playground (2024)
	Laguna Parkway Park 3 Laguna Parkway, Brechin	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future plans for a small trail loop and natural plantings
	The Steps Ridge Avenue, Brechin	Parkland (Village Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Water access beach with limited parking
	Brechin Beach 2641/2648 Lakeshore Drive, Brechin	Parkland (Active Recreation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Water access beach with limited parking Potential for increased parking on backlot
	Prophet Beach 2464 Lakeshore Dr.	Parkland (Passive Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Water access beach with limited parking
	Coral Beach 1784 Lakeshore Dr	Parkland (Passive Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Water access beach with limited parking
	Lakeshore Drive Parkland 1658 Lakeshore Dr	Parkland (Passive Residential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Water access beach with limited parking Beside Concession A Right of Way, with potential to increase parking area

6.1 Ramara Trails

The trail system stretches across publicly owned property and often runs along the side of local roadways or is incorporated into existing sidewalks and includes:

- The Ramara Trail: The Ramara trail is 6 km long and part of the Trans Canada Trail. It starts at the Mnjikaning Fishing Weirs National Historic Site and continues north, following the abandoned CN rail line to Casino Rama. View the Ramara Trail Map to plan your route, including parking locations and trail access points.
- The Lagoon City Trail: The Lagoon City trail is approximately 2.5 km long and runs off Laguna Parkway. Adventure on the trail and check out the various wildlife, including a heron rookery. From March 15 to August 15, the township has established a Quiet Zone area to help protect the herons from excessive or loud sounds during the heron's mating and nesting season.
- The Washago Trail: The Washago Trail is part of the Trans Canada Trail - the world's largest network of recreational multi-use trails. The Washago Trail starts in Washago and ends at Coopers Falls Road to connect to the Town of Gravenhurst trails. It is over 13 km long and consists of off-road and on the road trails. ⁶



⁶ [Trails - Township of Ramara](#)

7 Partnerships

Partnerships allow municipalities to provide their residents with access to more extensive facilities in cooperation with adjoining municipalities. The Township of Ramara, while abundant with parkland, generally lacks functional indoor facilities for sports and athletics. Ramara residents benefit from the abutting municipal facilities. In the north, the City of Orillia has a full suite of recreational programming and state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor facilities. Orillia offers a high level of competitive sporting leagues and is near the Atherley-Uptergrove community. In the south, the rural Township of Brock offers an indoor arena and Curling Club near Brechin and Lagoon City residents.

Successful partnerships should have a give and take approach and the Township of Ramara could look at opportunities to provide facilities or services that are not offered by neighbouring municipalities or look at ways to compliment or support existing infrastructure.

Table 8 indicates the future possible partnerships the Township of Ramara could pursue to provide residents with a wider variety of programming and facility access. The partnerships are ranked in terms of the recommended level of priority for the Township given the information and data gathered during this project. Green cells are high priority for the Township, orange is medium, and red are identifies as low priority. High priority represents an opportunity that is both actionable in the short-term and financially viable (i.e. requires less than \$25,000 investment to begin). The \$25,000 threshold was used given the available resources of the municipality. Low priority are partnerships that are possible but have a level of difficulty to achieve and / or are greater than \$25,000 investment to begin. Medium priorities are those that may be actionable but expensive, or less expensive but difficult to achieve.

Table 8: Prioritized Partnership Opportunities

Partnership Opportunity	Description	Priority
Rama First Nations	Continue building relationships with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation and look for mutually beneficial projects. (i.e. joint use agreement for Mnjikaning Arena)	HIGH PRIORITY
Township of Severn	Seek partnership with the Township of Severn for joint use agreement opportunities for the Washago Outdoor Rink. The Rink is used as an ice surface in the winter and for pickleball in spring to fall.	HIGH PRIORITY

Township of Brock	Seek partnership with the Township of Brock for joint access to facilities, such as arenas, curling club and baseball facilities. There could be an opportunity to provide programming to residents of the north part of Brock in Ramara. It is assumed that these discussions will take time and are therefore a medium priority.	MEDIUM PRIORITY
City of Orillia	Seek partnership with the City of Orillia for joint use of indoor and outdoor facilities such as arenas, aquatic facilities and sports fields. As feedback heard during the project is such that Orillia facilities appear to be well utilized and fully booked, opportunities for partnership and collaboration will take some time for planning and discussion.	MEDIUM PRIORITY
Township of Oro-Medonte	Oro-Medonte has several facilities and offers a wide range of programming like Ramara. The proximity of the two townships makes potential partnerships difficult. Priority could change if specific opportunities for cooperation or collaboration arise.	LOW PRIORITY
Joyland Beach	Seek partnership with Joyland Beach to allow access to the waterfront. The priority of this partnership could change as circumstances for this facility possibly change.	MEDIUM PRIORITY
School boards in Ramara	Seek partnership with both School boards (Simcoe County District School Board & Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board) in Ramara to improve soccer and baseball fields and allow residents in Ramara to use facilities such as indoor gymnasiums and outdoor fields.	MEDIUM PRIORITY
Library	Maintain the relationship between the Township of Ramara and Library Board and staff to allow for shared use of facilities in the Ramara Centre and explore options in Brechin.	HIGH PRIORITY
Community Centre Boards	Re-establish relationships with Ramara's Community Centre Boards of Management to allow shared use for recreation programming. Currently it is difficult to schedule programming at any of the community halls because the Township does not manage the halls or have access to their schedules.	HIGH PRIORITY

8 Recreational Investment

According to the Township's 2024 Asset Management Plan (AMP) for Non-Core Assets, the average condition for Parkland and Outdoor Recreation Facilities is poor.

The Asset Management Plan: Non-Core Infrastructure Assets (July 2024)⁷ recognizes two components relevant to the Recreation Master Plan. In Section 6 of the AMP being the Facilities Inventory, the AMP identifies the Recreation and Culture Department as having 8 Major Buildings with a replacement value of \$3,651,346 and 9 Minor Buildings having a replacement value of \$573,740. Additionally, the AMP identifies 75 active assets in Section 7: Parkland and Outdoor Recreation. Of the listed assets, 46 represent parcels of parkland with a replacement value of \$13,738,000. Unless the Township of Ramara intends to sell parklands, the replacement value is negligible. The AMP also recommends publicly owned parklands be re-evaluated following recent inflation trends of land values. The remaining assets are made up of fencing, paving, bleachers, playground and sports equipment, lights and fixtures and marine infrastructure with a total replacement value of approximately \$712,000.

The Financial Strategy of Section 7.7 in the AMP recommends a capital investment of approximately \$58,000 over the next 10 years to maintain "current" service levels with minimal investment into replacement of recreational assets. This recommended investment does not include parkland or building replacement, nor does the AMP indicate assets relating to indoor programming.

Discussions with staff helped identify that most investment into facilities and parkland occur through the Infrastructure Department rather than the Recreation Department and the small investment of \$58,000 is not a telling story of the maintenance and operations of parks and recreation. For example, the 2024 Infrastructure Budget included the new Lovely Day Outdoor Sports Court of \$110,600.

The Recreation Operating Budget is projected to have 2024 expenses of \$551,100 and revenue of \$211,200. The bulk of the budget covers wages of full-time staff, seasonal camp staff and contracted instructors. The budget also includes the maintenance and utility costs of the Ramara Recreation Centre and Brechin Community Centre. The 2024 Budget included \$500 for new indoor equipment, \$2200 for seasonal programming and \$2800 for camp programming supplies.

⁷ [Asset Management Plan - Non-Core Assets \(ramara.ca\)](https://www.ramara.ca/asset-management-plan-non-core-assets)

The Community Centre’s (Atherley, Longford Mills and Udney) and the Trails budgets run balanced budgets and are managed by community boards. Revenue includes Township reserves and grants.

A weighted risk matrix is used in the AMP to determine support for any replacement and rehabilitation projects and/or decisions. Assets with a higher risk towards that Corporation and stakeholders should be prioritized in capital planning. Twenty-eight facilities for Outdoor Recreation are rated at a moderate to very low risk for the corporation, and only one facility is rated at a very high risk.

Table 9 below indicates the average age and condition of recreational facilities in Ramara, outlined in the 2024 AMP – Non-Core Assets.

Table 9: Recreational Facilities and Open Space Qualitative Analysis

Facility	Quality / Investment Assessment
Playground Equipment	Average age: 15 years Average conditions: Poor & Very Good
Outdoor Lighting & Fixtures	Average age: 22 years Average conditions: Poor/Very Poor
Sports Equipment	Average age: 20 years Average conditions: Very Poor/Fair
Bleachers	Average age: 22 years Average conditions: Poor
Parkland	Unevaluated
Outdoor Recreation and Parkland facilities	Average age: 25 years (for all facilities in Ramara) Average conditions: Poor

8.1 Future Lands - Surplus and Acquisitions

There are several identified properties that are currently vacant and unused. A few of the undeveloped parcels of land appear to be undevelopable based on the natural features of the site. Where land may be developable, and not used or planned for future parkland, there could be an opportunity for the Township to divest some lands to fund recreational facilities and parkland projects or become part of a strategy to fund new recreational opportunities.

An example of surplus land divestment might include 1636 Ethel Drive (Gamebridge), zoned Hamlet (H). A fulsome and holistic discussion of available assets and parks and recreation strategy for the long-term should precede any decision to sell public lands.

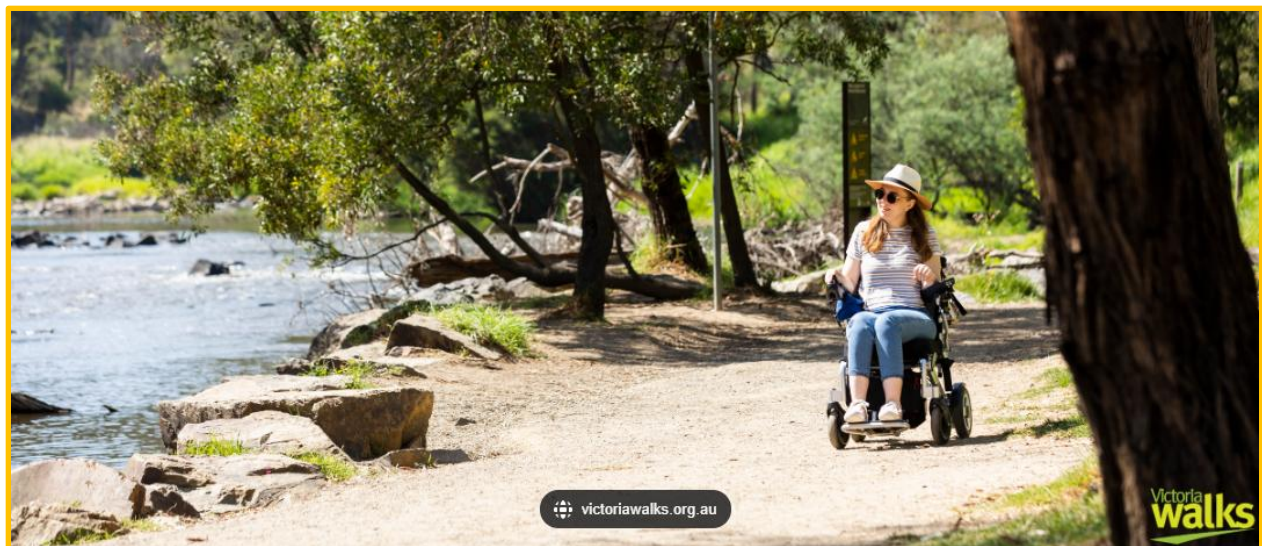
Long-range plans should include strategies for the acquisition of land pertaining to parks and recreation and should strategically look at acquiring land that will contribute to linking and expanding existing parkland and recreational facilities.

8.2 Building Accessibility Assessment and Investment

A Building Accessibility Assessment was conducted by Workplace Wellbeing (July 9th, 2024) and several concerns were raised. Future upgrades, repurposing or redevelopment plans will require investment to address the Report's concerns. Below are some of the highlights of the report:

- Lighting – considerations for indoor and outdoor lighting based on time of day and visual impairments
- Signage – increased signage in general but also the need for accessible signage
- Accessible Parking – many locations did not have identified accessible parking, signage or sufficient space or spots
- Fencing (Brechtin Dog Park) – accessible latches required
- Recreational Equipment – in disrepair and not accessible
- Multiple trip hazards, unsafe entrances, emergency exits and ramps
- Transitions – moving from concrete/asphalt to gravel or grass can be problematic

These recommendations should be addressed in each new facility upgrade.



10 Progress on 2012 Master Plan Recommendations

The 2012 Recreation Master Plan provided 70 key recommendations with suggested timeframes. This section of the report reviews the status of the recommendations citing what has been completed and whether any recommendations are to be carried forward. Of the 70 recommendations, 47 action items have been identified as still relevant. Based on the nature of the suggestions, most are applicable as on-going tasks and are now part of standard procedures and operations.

Collaboration and communication across relevant township departments and services provided have improved and continue to develop. The Recreation Department is continuing to work on partnerships with Community Centre boards and Township-led committees, including Ramara Trails.

Upgrades to waterfront accesses, parks and trails are ongoing action items that continue to be important and implemented when feasible. New playgrounds have been installed at various locations throughout the township that include Bluebird, Lovely Day and Lagoon City Parks.

Larger actions items included a Ramara Centre Expansion Project and the Mnjikaning (Atherley Narrows) preservation and pedestrian bridge are still relevant projects, but scale, scope and financial implications have frozen progress. Table 10 provides a comprehensive list of recommendations along with their status at the time of this report.

Table 10: 2012 Master Plan Recommendations and Status

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
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+	No action - the library has plans to expand.	
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	2014-2018	Complete	

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
arrangement (perennial/annual mix) and a consistent major sign.			
3. Follow recommendations in the Frank Cowan insurance report including immediate action on all Priority #1 recommendations that could endanger life.	Immediate	Complete	
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 be equivalent).	Immediate	Complete	
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	Ongoing	✓
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	No school agreements in place	✓
7. Seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnerships with Severn Township for the Washago outdoor rink.	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓
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+	Complete	

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
9. Prepare an inventory of all community assets including government facilities, agencies, churches, historic sites, private and public facilities.	2014-2018	Complete	
10. Provide appropriate vehicular and bicycle parking at all major facilities and Township Road “right of way” access points to lakeshore swimming.	Immediate	Complete	
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	Multi-use sports pad installed in Atherley park	✓
12. Add a playground to Udney ball diamond.	2014-2018	Ball diamond not in use, existing playground removed	
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	Complete	
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	Complete	
15. Develop capital asset plans for all community centres and parks, recreation and culture amenities.	Immediate	Complete	

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
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	No action	✓
17. Select one waterfront site to establish a fishing platform to further expand the range of recreational opportunities to residents.	2014-2018+	No action	✓
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+	No action	✓
19. Develop a long-term Municipal land strategy with all Township Departments working together.	2016-2018+	Complete	✓
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+	No action	✓
21. Involve the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee in all future 5% in lieu of parkland discussions with Planning Department.	2016-2018+	Committee no longer exists.	
22. Improve public access to the waterfront by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	2016-2018+	Complete	✓

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
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.	Immediate	Complete	
Recreation Programs Recommendations			
24. Support continued efforts to provide high quality, innovative children and youth recreation programs in locations throughout the municipality.	2014-2018+	Ongoing	✓
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+	Ongoing	✓
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+	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
28. Support the funding of additional signs at strategic locations across the vast geographic area of the municipality.	2014-2018	Complete	✓
29. Make full use of the township mailings, press releases to media, community	Ongoing	Ongoing	✓



Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
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.	Ongoing	Ongoing	✓
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+	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
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	Complete	
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	Complete	
Community Development Recommendations			
35. Ensure that Recreation staff play a key role in developing Ramara's parks and	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
recreation volunteer leadership by drafting a volunteer policy for adoption by Council.			
36. Conduct research into grant and other funding opportunities for Centre maintenance, and capital projects.	Immediate	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
39. Keep the Township's parks and recreation website information up to date including the Community Centre board-managed properties.	Ongoing	Complete	
40. Provide more training and orientation opportunities for all councillors and community centre boards and volunteer committees.	2014-2018+	Complete	
41. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and Municipality over five years.	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓
Trails Recommendations			
42. Upgrade and develop Ramara trail and active transportation system using a 2-phase strategy.	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
<p>43. Review and upgrade existing trails and build new trails to meet the following standards:</p> <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	Ongoing	✓
44. Be proactive in Township planning department to create new trail connections within all new site developments.	Ongoing	Complete	
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+	Complete	
46. Promote 1.5 m edge to all new County and Municipal roads.	2014-2018+	Complete	
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+	Ongoing	✓
48. Review existing subdivisions, making improvements to trail accessibility and safety.	2014-2018+	Ongoing	✓
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+	Ongoing	✓
50. Provide the following conditions on all pedestrian routes to promote and enable walking:	2014-2018+	Ongoing	



Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
<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). 			
<p>51. Incorporate changes to the current job description of Recreation Supervisor (formerly Coordinator) to include the following trails responsibilities:</p> <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	Part of Infrastructure Department & Trails Committee	✓
<p>52. Change the reporting methods of the Trails Committee as follows:</p> <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	Part of Infrastructure Department and Trails Committee	✓

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
53. Comply with AODA legislation for accessible trails. Practice principles of sustainable design.	Ongoing	Ongoing	
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	Complete	
55. Create a staff flow chart outlining responsibilities and relationships between CAO and Recreation Supervisor.	Immediate	Complete	
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	Complete	
57. Commence Canadian Standards Association approved staff training in playground equipment and trails maintenance as first priority.	Immediate	Staff have undertaken training	
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	No Action	

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
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	Committee no longer exists.	
60. Rename Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee to Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee.	Immediate	Committee no longer exists.	
61. Restructure the relationship of the Recreation, Parks and Culture Advisory Committee to the Township and formalize.	Immediate – 2016	N/A	
62. Formalize the relationship between Community Centre Boards and Municipality over five years.	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
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	Ongoing	✓
65. Prepare a 10-year capital budget forecast and capital asset plan for each Community Centre.	2014-2018	Complete	
66. Coordinate joint purchase of supplies and services as per Community Centre board requests.	2014-2018	Ongoing	✓
67. Facilitate the development of a formal agreement with Community Centre boards	2014-2018	Complete	

Recommendation	Timeframe	Status	Action / Decision Required
that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of boards, municipal staff, and municipal council.			
68. Streamline Community Centre bookings to reduce volunteer workload and maximize revenues.	2014-2018	No action, Township has streamlined Township bookings	
69. Liaise with boards and provide ongoing assistance and support according to the formal agreement between the boards and the municipality.	Immediate	Ongoing	✓
70. Recruit youth members for all Community Centre Boards.	Immediate	Ongoing	✓

11 Implementation Plan

A successful Master Recreation Plan will require persistent momentum through consistent participation, regular monitoring and effective execution.

11.1 Participation

The implementation of the Plan will become dependent on support and commitment from staff, Council and the residents of the Township as well as on-going monitoring of recommendation progress. Many recommendations require more public input on concepts and plans, and all require financial support for increased operational costs and capital expenditures. As Council and staff begin each project or task, how residents, users and community groups can support that project, or task should be discussed and action taken to ensure participation is consistent.

Ramara parks and recreation operations, maintenance and programming are managed through two different Township organization departments: the Infrastructure Department and Legislative Services. Additionally, future growth and development is managed by the Building and Development Department. The Ramara Library, Communications, Economic Development and the Finance Department also have important roles. A collective effort is required to ensure successful execution of projects that meet Township goals and objectives.

Many of the key recommendations require additional community consultation and input. Recreational Programming continues to evolve and communication with residents is a crucial part of creating and expanding programs, services and outreach.

Investments into individual localized parks, beaches, boat launches and access points are often delicate. These community open spaces are valued spaces, and resident input and support are critical factors for seeing a positive return on investment.

11.2 Monitoring

Annual monitoring and ongoing considerations will be important to the success of the plan. Collaboratively staff and Council will be required to track and evaluate the progress of the key recommendations. Table 11 includes a monitoring column for convenience for a 5-year review of the recommendations of this Plan. An annual plan and report to Council during

budget time should be undertaken to consistently monitor progress and adjust priorities as opportunities or unexpected challenges arise.

11.3 Execution

The execution of the recommendations requires financial commitment. Many of the recommendations to upgrade parks and green spaces are interconnected between municipal departments and offer cross-jurisdictional benefits. Increasing budget commitments through the Recreation Department is required for future programming and development. Operating and capital expenditure will occur through Infrastructure Services for most improvements to park assets or facilities.

Table 11 contains the implementation recommendations of the Plan as well as a blank column to track progress in a 2029 update.



Table 11: Implementation Recommendations and Monitoring Table

Recommendations	Short-term (1 – 2 yrs) (2025-2026)	Medium-term (3 – 5 yrs) (2027-2029)	Long-Range (> 5 yrs) (2030-2034)	2029 Implementation Update
<p>Relationships, Collaborations and Partnerships</p> <p>Note: relationship building is a continuous task and is therefore categorized as a short, medium and long-range recommendation</p>	<p><u>Rama First Nations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue engagement and relationship building to discuss ongoing partnerships ○ Mnjikaning (Atherley Narrows) preservation and pedestrian bridge project with Rama First Nations and the City of Orillia <p><u>Communication Material:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a multi-use recreation communication product that can easily be used in social media posts and printed in hard copy as a pamphlet for hard copy users. This product can serve as the main branding for recreation for the 1–2-year short-term priorities and mark the update of this plan every two years. It is suggested that a map of the recreational amenities and improvements is included as well as key community and staff contacts. <p><u>Municipal Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to seek opportunities for joint use agreements and partnerships with Severn Township for the Washago outdoor rink (Winter ice, Summer Pickleball) ○ Continue to seek opportunities with City of Orillia and Brock Township for use of facilities or to provide opportunities for residents to use Ramara programs or facilities <p><u>School Boards Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to seek opportunities to use school board gymnasiums and collaboration with scheduling, programs and locations <p><u>Community Centre Boards:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to communicate and facilitate satellite programming when feasible and participation mandates <p><u>Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult and include committee with projects and plans to ensure recreational investments meet AODA Standards and solutions be proposed for existing barriers at facilities, parks and public access points <p><u>Library:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to plan and collaborate with Library staff and board to make effective use of limited space and avoid duplication of programming <p><u>Community Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to seek opportunities to work with community organizations, associations and businesses to support local clubs, leagues, events etc. (e.g. Joyland Beach Association, Brechin Legion, Ramara Chamber of Commerce) ○ Many current facilities were constructed and maintained with local community volunteers, investigating and re-establishing key partnerships maybe both welcomed by the community and reduce associated costs (i.e. create management boards/volunteers to maintain or fundraise for key facilities such as baseball diamonds). ○ Continue to work with groups and partnerships with current local community gardens and investigate new spaces for gardens with various community groups (Rooted in Ramara, Brechin Legion, etc.) 			

Recommendations	Short-term (1 – 2 yrs) (2025-2026)	Medium-term (3 – 5 yrs) (2027-2029)	Long-Range (> 5 yrs) (2030-2034)	2029 Implementation Update
Operational & Organizational Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete the Operational Review with possible efficiencies of Parkland and Recreation restructuring with respect to Infrastructure Department ○ Review overlaps or duplication of programming between Recreation and Library Services, as well as maintain the collaborative approach both departments have taken ○ Continue to apply and develop a paid parking strategy and reinvest revenue into public parks and spaces ○ Review mandate of Ramara Trails Committee with possibility to include localized connections ○ Identify public spaces that require improved outdoor lighting to provide safe and inviting outdoor spaces for all users ○ Explore age friendly policies and best practices and investigate implementing an “Age-Friendly Action Plan” as recommended by SMDHU using Ontario planning guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update parkland inventory and identify Parkland Assets that do not fit into the long-term strategy as described in the 2012 Master Recreation Plan ○ Explore options to sell land to reinvest funds into specific capital recreation projects and development ○ Strategically acquiring lands or cash in lieu through future development in the Atherley-Uptergrove and Brechin settlement areas ○ Strategically, acquire, and plan for lands that provide improved safe access to key parks and facilities and within proximity to area schools for cycling and pedestrian access 		
General Recreational Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create an increased budget for pilot programs not currently being offered in Ramara with an opportunity to capture users in neighbouring municipalities for increased revenues ○ Explore and create equitable recreational activities for all populations including those with special needs ○ Explore one-off events to trial new activities (e.g. cornhole, dodgeball, badminton, baseball etc.) ○ Make use of staff and community groups to showcase and implement leagues (e.g. firefighters, business league, Lions, Legion etc.) ○ Explore School Board/School communities’ collaboration for use of gymnasiums and complimenting locations for after school programming and engagement of parents and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuation of on-going evolution of programs as potential spaces and facilities develop, and demographics and trends change ○ Explore programming partnerships with neighbouring municipalities and use of spaces such as indoor and outdoor arenas or pools ○ When possible, invest into educational and training opportunities for staff and instructors ○ Investigate possible passive or instructional swimming opportunities and partnerships both indoor and outdoor within Ramara or with the City of Orillia 		

Recommendations	Short-term (1 – 2 yrs) (2025-2026)	Medium-term (3 – 5 yrs) (2027-2029)	Long-Range (> 5 yrs) (2030-2034)	2029 Implementation Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to use accessible kitchens for programming and education (Udney Hall etc.) 			
General Park / Parkette Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement planned park investments at Blue Bird Park, Laguna Parkway Park and Suntrac Park that include a small trail loop and planting/naturalization plan including increased tree canopy cover Facilitate increased parkland operational budgets to include increased staffing and equipment to improve regular maintenance such as grass cutting and other property standards from April to November Consult and include the Joint Accessibility Committee with current plans and projects Consider options to naturalize certain parks or areas within parks with a native species planting plan to reduce regular maintenance and grass cutting Consider sustainable turf management practices at all parks and open spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement lake access and parking improvements at Brechin Beach, Concession A Road Allowance (and abutting parkland), Simcoe Street and Bayshore Village parks Develop active or passive recreational plan for Kurtis Drive Park Continue to execute township wide park and recreational branding and signage strategy to identify parks, trails and recreational facilities Develop an updated user-friendly township mapping tool available both digitally and in hardcopy that could be included with the Recreation Guide Identify potential “hydration stations” at parks where feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan to utilize Concession Road 8/Lake Simcoe Property (Bayshore Village Sewage Works Expansion Project Lands) for potential passive recreation use and lake access or public beach outside of the expansion and influence area Review status of 2612 Concession D-E property with Infrastructure department for future multi-purpose use or divestment 	
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Trails Committee mandate to include strategic planning of localized trail loops and individual community improvements with available lands and future growth Identify trail heads/main access points for future investments and planning Form a trail feature strategy that explores natural heritage features (e.g. native species education, historical locations and information) Consult and include Joint Accessibility Committee with current plans and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in amenities such as shelters, seating, information, parking, hydration stations, tree/canopy cover etc. at local trail heads Collaborate with recreational programming to provide direct programming and in-direct passive recreational opportunities Implement trail feature strategy that could include permanent or seasonal signage or art installations recognizing cultural and natural heritage features of Ramara 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete where feasible, the trail connections across Ramara Work with Simcoe County and CN Rail for possible solutions for safe links to complete Rama Road trail system Continue to explore options to connect Lagoon City and Brechin with Bayshore Village extension Plan safe trails and linkages as part of future residential development in Brechin and Atherley-Uptergrove relating to the Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan that could include land acquisition or parkland dedication 			

Recommendations	Short-term (1 – 2 yrs) (2025-2026)	Medium-term (3 – 5 yrs) (2027-2029)	Long-Range (> 5 yrs) (2030-2034)	2029 Implementation Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the opportunity to work with other potential trail users such as ATV, snowmobile or other clubs and associations to provide shared access and/or agreements Investigate opportunities or policy creation for E-bikes and motorized scooters and potential strategic charging locations if the need is warranted Consider cycling and pedestrian trail opportunities in locations near area schools and the Ramara Centre to improve safety and accessibility 			
Brechin Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and finalize a redevelopment plan as per staff level concept drawings with public input and engagement Explore the support for a multi-use sports pad and indoor recreational/meeting/event space as part of redevelopment SMDHU recommends including increased tree canopy cover and a hydration station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Park redevelopment upgrades with public support and as funding is made available through grants and budgeting 		
Lovely Day Park (Atherley Community Board)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support on-going improvements from the community board with low-investment commitments and regular maintenance Pilot spring/summer/fall outdoor pickleball league/schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and consult with local users for lake access and potential boat launch redevelopment or upgrades if there is demand Explore and invest into the potential of an expanded beach along Creighton St. South if there is demand 		
Longford Mills Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot satellite programs or services for adult-aged demographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential parking lot expansion/upgrades that will offer overflow parking for Lake St. John access/boat launch Re-evaluate parkland and facility with proper community and public engagement for long-term feasible investments 		
Ramara Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revitalize 1 baseball diamond and encourage baseball and softball leagues, rentals or partnership with Rama or overflow from Orillia. The diamond will be used for T-ball that is currently organized by Recreation staff Upgrade parking/redevelop to create new parking closer to fields or consider other options Develop gymnasium upgrade plan – budget to increase indoor equipment (basketball nets – potential lines/painting of floors for multi-use court within the limitations of the building design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate a redevelopment plan for the outdoor space with proper public consultation that could include a playground, walking trail, sports court and naturalizing or tree planting plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with public on expansion wants/needs that could include options for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New fully functioning Gymnasium and Fitness room Meeting and Social Spaces Community Kitchen (key to rentals and community events) Rental Venue for increased revenue (weddings, birthdays, anniversaries) Investigate the feasibility of a Public Pool for swimming lessons, aquatic therapy and fitness 	

Recommendations	Short-term (1 – 2 yrs) (2025-2026)	Medium-term (3 – 5 yrs) (2027-2029)	Long-Range (> 5 yrs) (2030-2034)	2029 Implementation Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and plan for improved cycling and pedestrian trails, paths and lanes to provide safe access; this should include short term considerations and long-term plans as development and lands become available 			
St. Andrew’s Hall & Standard Bank (Breachin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate potential development of lands beside Ramara Municipal Office to explore if redevelopment could include multi-use space for recreational purposes Redevelopment and long-term plan will require public input and financial commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is dependent on a long-term plan and use of the buildings and if space is available for recreational programming or services, if funding is available and direction from public consultation 		
Udney Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot satellite programs or services for adult-aged demographics Removal of any outdoor unsafe structures that may include the basketball posts, bleachers and outdoor baseball diamond lighting Evaluation and consultation needed with Community Board and public on the future of the baseball diamond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-evaluate parkland and facility with proper community and public engagement for long-term feasible investments As part and recommendation of the 2012 Master Recreation Plan, engage and consult with the public for the potential installation of a playground and multi-use sports court 		

11.3.1 Execution priorities

Some basic principles should be followed when selecting recreational projects to execute.

1. Will this serve as a core component of the community?
2. Will this project enhance the overall recreational offerings of the Township?
3. Is there an opportunity to partner with other Township departments or other agencies / funders?
4. Will this project help achieve a strategic objective or priority for the Township?
5. Can the funding for the project be obtained without compromising core functions or responsibilities of the Township?

If all answers are “yes” then the project should begin with a strategic plan that includes the elements noted in Table 12.

Table 12: Strategic Elements of Recreational Projects

Element	Description
Project Name	
Project Location	
Project Goal	
Project Description	
Staff Lead	
Available Budget	
Estimated Timing	
Residents / Users Served	
Strategic Objective being achieved	
Partnership Opportunities	

From the consultation undertaken for this project within the context of a limited budget for recreational undertakings, the following 8 projects have been selected from Table 11 to pursue in the next two years. These projects offer tangible and short-term achievements but also include the necessary planning steps to determine medium and long-range proprieties.

Top 8 Short Term Project Recommendations

- 1) **Communication Material:** Create a multi-use recreation communication product that can easily be used in social media posts and printed in hard copy as a pamphlet for hard copy users. This product can serve as the main branding for recreation for the 1-2 year short-term priorities and mark the update of this plan every two years. It is suggested that a map of the recreational amenities and improvements is included as well as key community and staff contacts.
- 2) **Relationships:** Establish a relationship with adjacent First Nation Communities to discuss collaborative recreational opportunities. Establish a recreation department relationship with the City of Orillia, Township of Severn and the Township of Brock to advise that the Township of Ramara is open to collaborative efforts. To continue relationship building with residents, annual or semi-annual recreation surveys should be distributed to the stakeholder list created for this project. The list should be added to as new residents enter the conversations.
- 3) **Ramara Centre Programming investments:** The Ramara Centre serves as the existing nexus of recreational services and collaborates routinely with the library programming. Immediate investment to improve programming with supplies, instructors or upgrades to the existing facility should be allocated in the budgets for 2025 and 2026. Recreation staff should identify for Council the amount needed to support their programming plans and pilot projects.
- 4) **Trails:** Review mandate of Ramara Trails Committee with discussion around including localized connections. Form a trail feature strategy / investment plan that explores natural heritage features (e.g. native species education, historical locations and information) and other required infrastructure improvements such as trail head locations, parking, repair stations and other amenities.

- 5) **Park Improvements and Maintenance:** Implement planned park investments at Blue Bird Park, Laguna Parkway Park and Suntrac Park that include a small trail loop and planting/naturalization plan.
- 6) **Brechin Community Centre:** Plan and finalize a redevelopment plan as per staff level concept drawings with public input and engagement. Explore the support for a multi-use sports pad as part of redevelopment
- 7) **Operational Review:** The Operational Review planned for the Municipality should consider the identified short and medium-term recreational priorities to find staffing and resource efficiencies and identify where additional resources are needed.

The projects have been selected from the identified list of short-term projects from Table 11. They can however be amended as funding or opportunities become available in future.

Medium and Long-term projects have been identified in Table 11 as well. It is recommended that in 2026, these priorities be re-evaluated with current information and the next round of 2-year (short-term) priority projects are selected for implementation. Table 11 should be updated and added to accordingly and act as a “roadmap” for current and future recreational projects and programming.