



MIDDLESEX CENTRE

# Community Services MASTER PLAN

2023 - 2027

## Message from the Mayor

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre values the wellbeing of its residents and wants to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in community life. This updated Community Services Master Plan puts in place steps towards achieving this goal through our parks, community spaces, and recreational and cultural programming.

### **Parks and recreation offer immeasurable benefits to residents of all ages and abilities, among them:**

- Improved physical and mental health
- Opportunities for social interaction and learning new skills
- Access to nature
- Reduced stress and more happiness

But more than that, parks and recreation are foundational to how we define our municipality, establishing a sense of place and improving the livability of our neighbourhoods.

Ours is a growing municipality. It is important that we plan for the opportunities and challenges this growth will present to both the physical spaces – parks, trails, arenas, community centres – and the recreational and cultural programs offered locally.

In this document, you will see a range of recommendations focused on building supportive environments that foster active living, connect people with nature, and strengthen our recreation capacity. The plan puts an emphasis on ensuring inclusion and access to recreation for everyone.

We thank the many individuals and organizations that participated in the consultation process around this plan and provided feedback on what they envision for our parks and recreation now and in the future. The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is committed to continuing to work with residents, businesses and other partners to bring the recommendations in this plan to life and to provide parks and recreational opportunities that are engaging and welcoming for all.

Sincerely, Aina DeViet,



Mayor of Middlesex Centre

## Middlesex Centre Strategic Plan 2021-2026

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre's Strategic Plan (2021-2026) provides a road map for the municipality and guides the efforts of Council and staff over the next five years. The Community Services Master Plan Update focuses on key strategies that will support the overall Strategic Plan and its objectives.

### **Corporate Vision:**

A thriving, progressive and welcoming community that honours our rural roots and embraces our natural spaces.

### **Corporate Mission:**

To deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional, and innovative manner.

### **Values:**

- Respect
- Cooperation
- Innovation
- Integrity

### **Priorities:**

- Engaged Community
- Balanced Growth
- Vibrant Local Economy
- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services
- Responsive Municipal Government



# Community Services Department Vision & Mission

## Community Services Vision:

To be a community that embraces active and healthy living and that works together to support quality leisure opportunities that are accessible to all.

## Community Services Mission:

The Community Services Department builds community capacity, facilitates collaboration, and maintains safe parks, facilities, and trails that are accessible and responsive to local needs.

## Guiding Principles:

- 1) Opportunities for All
- 2) Promoting Active and Healthy Lifestyles
- 3) Partnerships Build Strong Communities
- 4) Success Through Community Development
- 5) Improving Awareness and Communication
- 6) Making Sound Investments in Infrastructure
- 7) Celebrate our Parks
- 8) Connecting Middlesex Centre
- 9) Financial Sustainability
- 10) Commitment to Service Excellence

# About the Community Services Master Plan

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is updating the Community Services Master Plan from 2012. Over the last nine years, staff have actively worked on the implementation of the seventy-three recommendations identified. In all, sixty-two of the seventy-three recommendations have been completed or are now in progress.

The Community Services Master Plan 2023-2027 (CSMP) is intended to provide strategic direction across the community services department for the next five years. The plan will be available to Middlesex Centre Council and senior administration as a key point of reference to inform future decision making and overall investment in the areas of recreation programming, facilities, parks, playgrounds, trails, community engagement and other related departmental services. Further, the CSMP will serve as a foundational document for future project-specific or tactical planning such as feasibility studies, frequent reporting, and annual departmental business plans.

The CSMP will guide the department to effectively plan, budget, implement and deliver on identified priorities while supporting the municipality's strategic plan. The CSMP aligns with the priorities laid out in the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's Framework for Recreation in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

## With the Parks, Recreation & Culture landscape ever changing, updating the CSMP will allow us to:

- Adopt a vision for the future of the Community Services Department
- Identify short, medium, and long-term initiatives
- Respond to trends in parks, recreation and culture<sup>1</sup>
- Determine the need for recreational and cultural programming in our communities
- Highlight gaps in our facilities and infrastructure and set priorities for capital investment

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Parks and Recreation Association/Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (February 2015). A Framework for Recreation in Canada - 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing. Ottawa: Canadian Recreation and Parks Association. 40 pages.

# Our Parks and Facilities

Parks and Open Spaces										
Park	Playground	Washrooms	Pavilion	Trail	Baseball	Basketball	Pickleball	Tennis	Soccer	Special Amenities
Bryanston School Property	•				•	•	•	•	•	
Caverhill Park (Komoka)	•			•						Tobogganing
Deerhaven Optimist Park (Ilderton)	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	Tobogganing
Delaware Lions Park					•		•	•	•	Skateboard Park Outdoor Ball Hockey Tobogganing
Delaware Municipal Park	•	•			•					Batting Cages
Denfield Park	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		
Douglas B. Weldon Park (Arva)	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		Dogs off Leash Area Tobogganing
Ilderton Heritage Park	•	•	•		•					Splash Pad Skateboard Park
Ilderton Rail Trail				•						Dogs off Leash Area
Junction Park (Ilderton)				•						Gazebo
Kilworth Optimist Park	•			•						
Kilworth River Flats				•						
Kilworth River's Edge				•						
Komoka Park	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Ethan's Garden (Pollinator Garden)
Komoka Wellness Centre	•	•		•		•				Splash Pad
Meadowcreek Park (Ilderton)	•	•							•	
Pleasant Park (Delaware)									•	
Poplar Hill Park	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			Grandstand Historic Log House
Westbrook Park (Kilworth)	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	Splash Pad Tobogganing

## Arenas

Ilderton Arena

Komoka Wellness & Recreation Centre

## Community Centres

Bryanston Community Centre

Coldstream Community Centre

Delaware Community Centre

Ilderton Community Centre

Komoka Community Centre

# Our Growing and Changing Community

Municipality of Middlesex Centre and Settlement Area Population Estimates					
Year of Population Projection	2016	2021	2026	2031	
Municipality of Middlesex Centre - Total	17,800	20,100	23,400	26,700	
Settlement Areas	Ilderton	3,500	3,968	4,634	5,300
	Komoka-Kilworth	4,600	6,275	8,249	10,250
	Arva	500	565	657	750
	Delaware	1,600	1,872	2,235	2,600
	Hamlets & Remaining Rural Areas	7,600	7,420	7,625	7,800

Calculations are based on linear growth rates for settlement areas using data from the Official Plan Review process, 2022.

**\*AGE CHARACTERISTICS:**  
 0-14: **19.3%** 15-64: **61.8%** 65+: **18.9%**



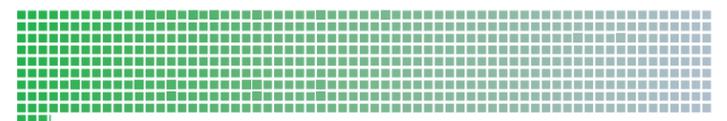
**\*AVERAGE AGE:**  
**41.6** years



**\*POPULATION DENSITY:**  
**32.2 people** per sq. km



**\*LAND AREA:**  
**588.16<sup>2</sup>** km



**\*\*RESIDENTS AGED 55+:**  
 represent **33%** of the population



**\*\*INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT:**  
 household median income: **\$108,971** (2015)



Overall, Middlesex Centre residents have higher incomes and employment participation rates compared to the County and Province.  
 □ = \$2,725

\*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

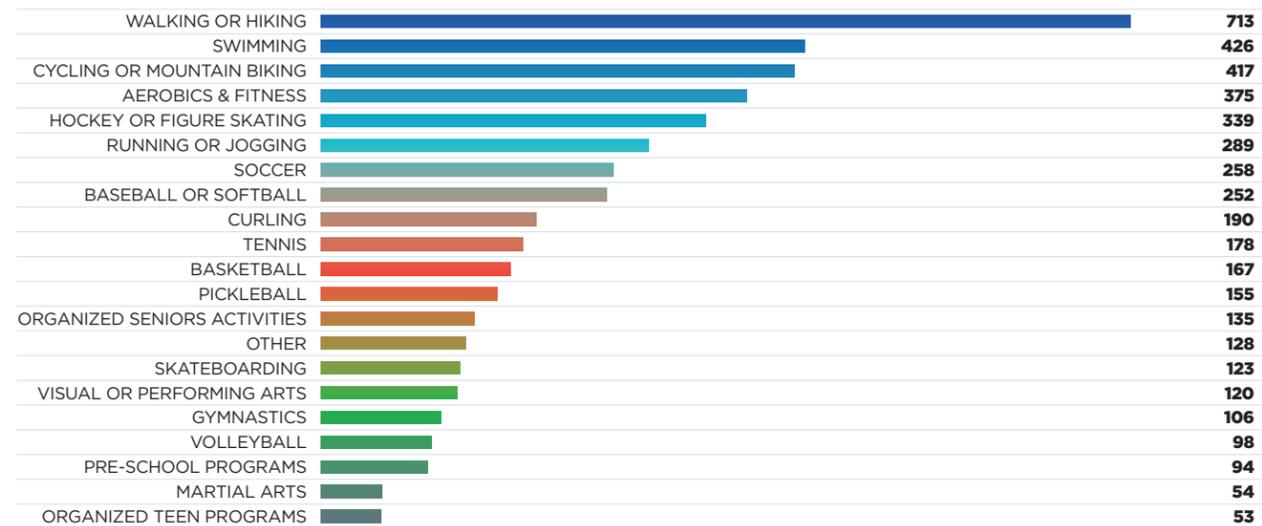
\*\*Source: Middlesex Centre Age-Friendly Community Master Plan, 2022.

# Community Engagement: What we Heard

The Community Services Master Plan Survey was open from April 19th, 2021, to May 31st, 2021. A total of 841 surveys were completed with a completion rate of 80%. The survey was advertised through social media, municipal website, Middlesex Banner, park signage and the Villager publications in Komoka-Kilworth-Delaware & Ilderton. In addition to the survey, over

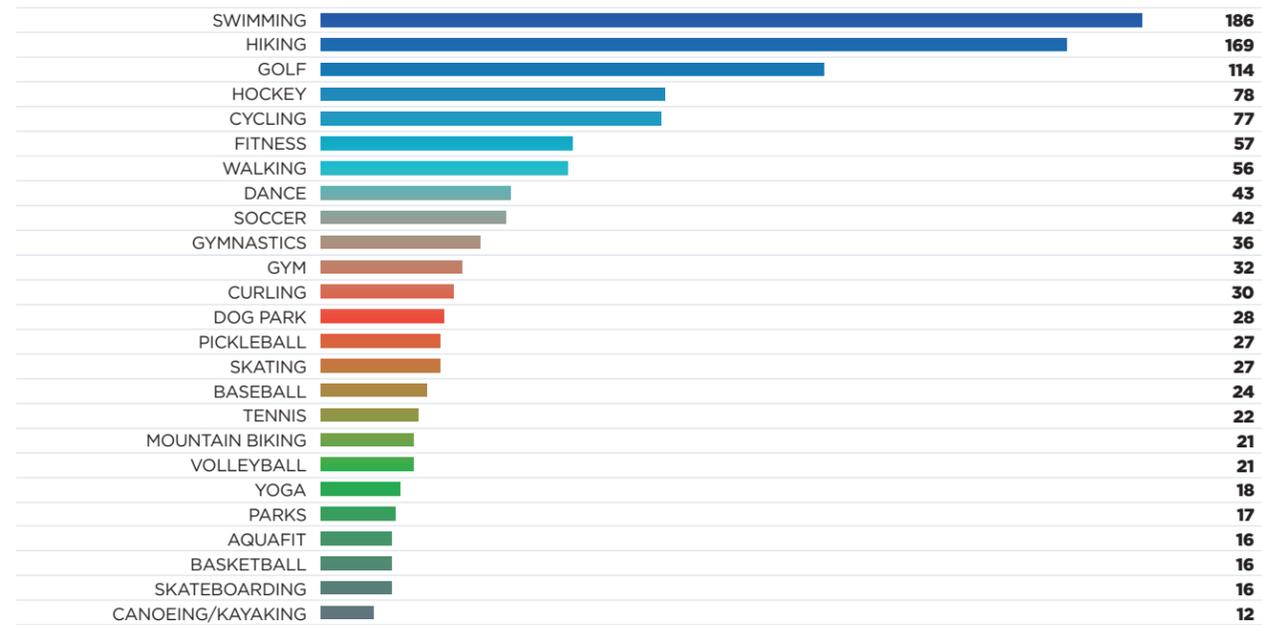
the last year staff hosted two Public Information Centres, two engagement tables at the Ilderton and Komoka Farmer's Markets, engagement through the Community Services and Youth Advisory Committee's and held multiple Key Stakeholder interviews. Sixty-five percent of those stakeholders contacted met with staff.

Survey Q1: Thinking back to before COVID-19, what activities would you or anyone in your household participate in during a typical year? Check all that apply.



ANSWERED: 833 SKIPPED: 8

Survey Q8: What recreational activities do you or members of your household participate in OUTSIDE of Middlesex Centre (in other communities)? List up to three.

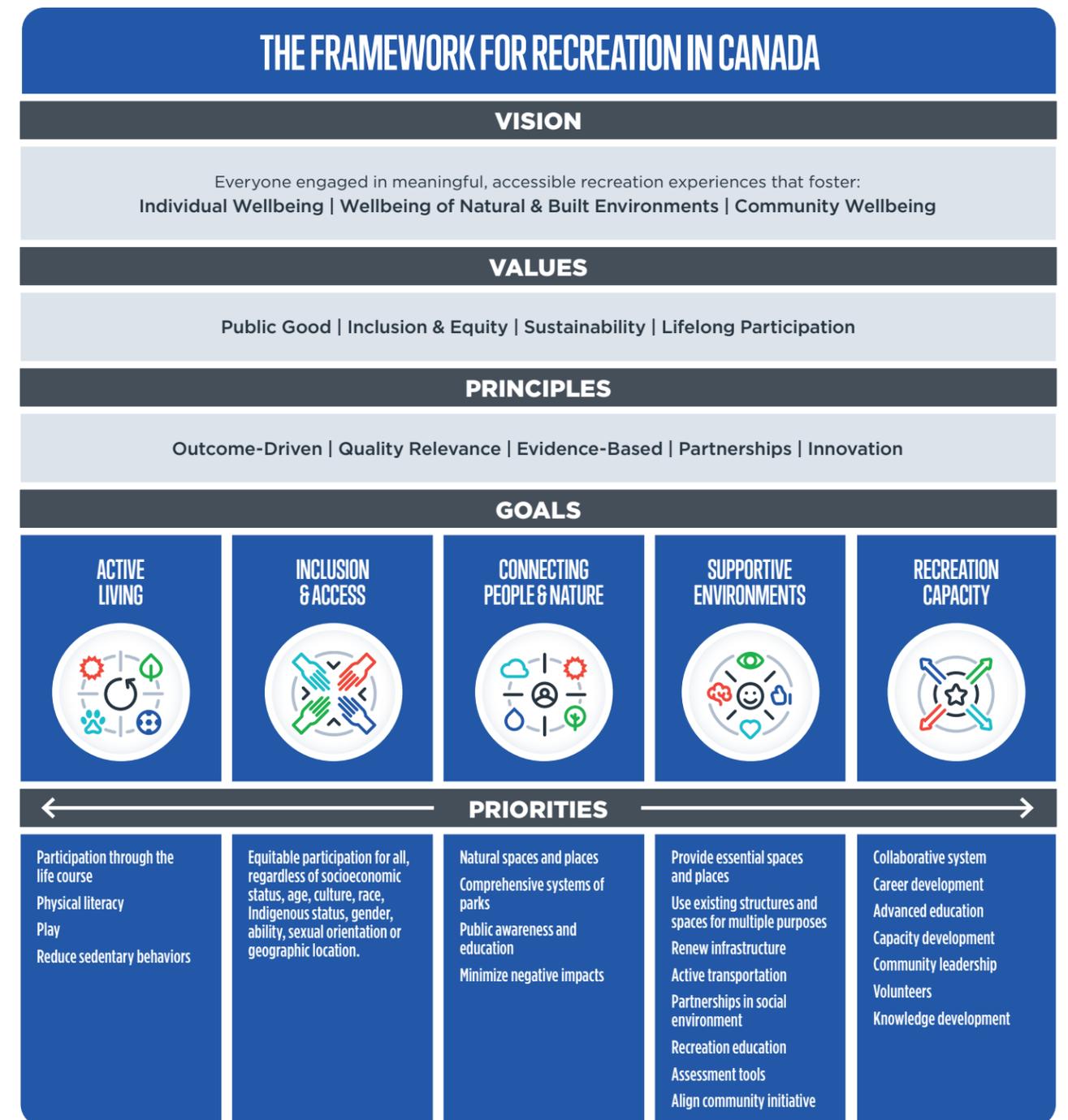


ANSWERED: 591 SKIPPED: 250

# Framework for Recreation in Canada

The Framework for Recreation in Canada is a joint initiative of the Interprovincial Sport & Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks & Recreation Association and is used as a guiding document by many municipal parks and recreation providers in Canada. Completed in 2015, the Framework is very much active and in use today with a focus on

improving the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the built and natural environments and used by municipal recreation leaders as a tool that guides decision making, planning and allocation of resources in the parks and recreation field. The Framework allows for consistent and coordinated actions to contribute to active and healthy communities.





COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2023-2027

# RECOMMENDATIONS



## Goal 1: Active Living

“Foster active living through physical recreation.”

**Active living plays an important role in providing immediate and long-term benefits to the health and wellbeing of people of all ages. Research indicates regular activity can improve not only physical health, but mental health and overall quality of life as well.**

### Framework for Recreation in Canada priorities for Active Living:

- 1 Enable participation in physically active recreational experiences throughout the life course, continuing to focus on children and youth but expanding to meet the needs and foster the participation of the growing number of older people in Canada.
- 2 Incorporate physical literacy in active recreation programs for people of all ages and abilities. Physical literacy is recognized as a precondition for lifelong participation in and enjoyment of sport in the Canadian Sport Policy 2012.
- 3 Support the child's right to play, and to participate freely and fully in “age-appropriate recreational experiences, cultural life, and artistic and leisure activities,” as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Enhance opportunities for children and youth to play outdoors and interact in nature in school, community, and neighbourhood settings. Engage parents and provide safe, welcoming, low- or no-cost opportunities for families and multiple generations to experience the joy of spontaneous active play together.
- 4 Inform recreation leaders about the importance of reducing sedentary behaviours and enable them to explore and implement strategies and interventions that address this important public health issue.

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre’s Community Services Department is responsible for the delivery of recreation, cultural and active living opportunities. To date, the municipality has relied on private businesses to develop and deliver programming options to residents. Community groups rent municipal facilities such as community centres and arenas to deliver their programs. The municipality’s offerings have been limited to drop-in skating programs such as public skating, parent & tot skating, and shinny (pick-up hockey) for children, adults, and older adults.

From the Community Services Recreation Survey, 78% of those surveyed indicated they access recreational activities in London and another 21% in neighbouring Strathroy-Caradoc. Survey responses indicate that 74% of respondents accessed programs outside of Middlesex Centre simply because the program is not delivered in the community. The municipality has begun to address this deficit. In March 2022, the municipality hired a Customer Service/Recreation Program Assistant with 40% of this position being allocated specifically to recreation programming with a goal of expanding program offerings to all ages using municipal arenas and community centres.

Currently there are three municipal ice surfaces in Middlesex Centre: two at the Komoka Wellness Centre and one at the Ilderton Arena. Ice time is allocated

as per the 2011 Ice Allocation Policy. In 2011, the municipality reached a long-term license agreement with the Elgin-Middlesex Canucks which provides the club with approximately 29 hours of ‘prime-time’ ice per week. This accounts for 15% of available prime-time ice. Adult ice rentals currently account for a little over 15% of prime-time ice. This leaves minor sport associations such as Ilderton Minor Hockey, Ilderton Skating Club, and Mount Brydges Minor Hockey (which services Delaware, Kilworth & Komoka-area youth) to share the remaining 60% of prime-time ice. Through the CSMP consultation, all groups indicated their need to increase their access to ice time. As the population of Middlesex Centre grows, so do registration rates. Priority needs to be given to those youth who reside in Middlesex Centre to ensure adequate access to ice within their own community.

The municipality recognizes the importance arts and culture offerings to the quality of life of its residents and visitors, along with the local economy. Municipalities are seen as key stakeholders in the development of the arts, tailoring programs and services to suit their communities, designating space for arts and cultural purposes, and engaging with their communities. Of those completing the Community Services Recreation Survey, 75% said that having access to cultural programs such as cooking, art, and music is important to their households.

### Priority Recommendations:

- 1.1 Update the current Ice Allocation Policy to prioritize a ‘youth first’ access to ice time focusing on those who reside in Middlesex Centre.
- 1.2 Continue supporting sport field users such as minor soccer and baseball through the provision of services agreements to provide priority access to fields that support their program.
- 1.3 Provide Middlesex Centre led pre-registered programming for children, youth, adults, and seniors, following the principles and goals identified in the Canadian Sport Policy.
- 1.4 Consider additional senior specific programming options through partnerships with local community clubs and senior’s groups and collaborate with groups in the development and implementation of the programs.
- 1.5 Provide drop-in programming for children, youth, adults, and seniors with a focus on children and seniors, following the principles and goals identified in the Canadian Sport Policy.
- 1.6 Develop a Municipal Arts & Culture Policy with a focus on providing program offerings such as art, theatre, and music classes.



## Goal 2: Inclusion and Access

“Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.”

**Throughout the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, we support diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its forms, and reject discrimination based on age, disability, economic circumstance (i.e., income level and/or wealth), marital and family status, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and gender expression, race, religion, and sexual orientation, among others. Inclusion and diversity are a shared responsibility. Achieving diversity requires a commitment to human dignity, equity and inclusion that must find full expression in our organizational culture, values, norms, and behaviours.**

### Framework for Recreation in Canada priorities for Inclusion and Access:

- 1** Develop and implement strategies and policies, which ensure that no families or individuals in Canada are denied access to public recreation opportunities because of economic disadvantage.
- 2** Enable people of all ages to participate in recreation. Address constraints to participation faced by children and youth from disadvantaged families and older adults who are frail and/or isolated.

In April 2022, Middlesex Centre Council adopted a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy that outlines several principles and actions Middlesex Centre will take towards building an open, accessible, diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and community. The Strategic Plan 2021-2026 identifies the municipality’s corporate values as respect, cooperation, innovation, and integrity. The value of respect links these two

guiding documents, stating “We are an open, courteous, and inclusive workplace that values and celebrates the varied backgrounds and experiences of our community. We ensure every resident can participate in our community and engage with our municipal government.”

March 2022 saw the completion of Middlesex Centre’s first Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. One-third of Middlesex Centre’s residents, about 6,600 people, are 55 years of age or older, and this number is forecast to increase by 98% between 2021 to 2046. The Age-Friendly Community Action Plan was developed through extensive consultation with Middlesex Centre residents, community stakeholders and an active Project Task Force, and identifies 92 strategies to support healthy and engaged aging in the municipality.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the overall mental and physical health of youth in our community and across the country. When dealing with the various public health measures, closures of schools and facilities, and disruptions to minor sports and other activities, youth paid a heavy price. In response, in March 2022, the municipality partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of London in the delivery of drop-in and pre-registered programs at the new Ilderton Youth Centre. As this only represents one area in Middlesex Centre, the recommendation is to adopt a similar model in the communities of

Komoka and Delaware. By having dedicated youth centres in our community, there is a safe place for youth to gain life skills and participate in social and recreational programs.

Over the past 12 years, Middlesex Centre has been actively making upgrades and modifications to its parks, playgrounds, and facilities with the goal of having fully accessible facilities by 2025. The municipality has been successful with several Enabling Accessibility grants, however there is still work to be done. It is recommended that the municipality complete a detailed accessibility audit to identify the remaining gaps with compliance under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

As the municipality continues to offer new programs and services in its Recreation & Culture Division, it is committed to ensuring community members have affordable access, removing barriers and ensuring equal access to programs for low-income residents. By doing so, all residents, particularly children and youth, will have the opportunity to participate in recreation programs and community events.

### Priority Recommendations:

- 2.1** Implement the principles for diversity, equity and inclusion set out in the municipality’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy by engaging with underrepresented communities and organizations and identify barriers to residents accessing programs and services.
- 2.2** Implement action plans and strategies identified in the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.
- 2.3** Continue with the Ilderton Youth Centre and use as a model to implement a dedicated youth drop in with access to programs in the Komoka-Kilworth and Delaware areas using the Komoka and Delaware Community Centres.
- 2.4** Complete an accessibility audit of facilities and parks to identify areas for AODA improvements.
- 2.5** Consider the development of an Affordable Access to Recreation & Culture Policy for Middlesex Centre residents.
- 2.6** Continue upgrading play structures to be fully accessible by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to universal accessibility for people with disabilities.



### Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature

“Help people connect to nature through recreation.”

**Being in nature, be it a forest, meadow, wetland or along a riverbank, can reduce stress and improve physical and mental health. Municipalities can help people of all ages and abilities connect with nature through the stewardship and provision of outdoor spaces.**

#### Framework for Recreation in Canada priorities for Connecting People and Nature:

- 1 Work in partnership with community and provincial/territorial planners and Indigenous communities to provide natural spaces and places in neighborhoods, communities and regions through the retention and addition of natural areas, forests, parks, trails, and recreational waters (rivers, lakes, canals, and beaches).
- 2 Work collaboratively at all orders and levels of government (local, regional, provincial/territorial, federal and with Indigenous governing bodies) to create and maintain a coordinated, comprehensive system of parks and protected areas across Canada that allows year-round access to nature. Share best practices and findings in planning, design, management, ecosystem monitoring and public information.
- 3 Develop public awareness and education initiatives to increase understanding of the importance of nature to wellbeing and child development, the role of recreation in helping people connect to nature and the importance of sustainability in parks and recreation.
- 4 Ensure that operational policies and practices in parks and recreation limit the use of non-renewable resources and minimize negative impacts on the natural environment.

The municipality currently owns 105 hectares (259 acres) of forests and woodlands. As new community developments continue to grow, the municipality will see this increase in future years. It is recommended that the municipality develops an Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan (UFSMP) to guide the management of its urban forests. The purpose of an UFSMP is to provide criteria and indicators to assess trees and woodlots, and to recommend actions to ensure the health of municipally owned trees and woodlots. Further, an UFSMP will assist the municipality in reaching goals such as increasing canopy cover and biodiversity, improving woodlot monitoring, and promoting stewardship.

For the last three years, the municipality has partnered with the Middlesex Centre Pollinator Team, a volunteer led group whose mission is to promote the preservation and creation of pollinator-friendly habitats and to educate the community on the importance of pollinators. Middlesex Centre is a signatory to the Mayors Monarch Pledge, joining hundreds of communities across North America in taking action to help save the monarch butterfly.

The municipality is also committed to building sustainable infrastructure. In 2017, Middlesex Centre opened the newly constructed Coldstream Fire Station, Canada’s first Net-Zero-Energy fire hall and the municipality has added several green vehicles to its fleet inventory. The municipality recently updated its Energy Conservation

and Demand Management Plan and identified a target to reduce its consumption of fuels and electricity by an average of 1% year over year. To do so, it is recommended that each facility and park related projects include energy saving strategies. These are just a few of the initiatives that show municipality’s commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and easing the effects of climate change.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents to the Community Services Recreation Survey identified ‘Walking or Hiking’ as an activity they participate in regularly, and 91% indicated trails and pathways as important recreation infrastructure, showing residents’ interest in seeing the municipality’s trail network expanded. Trail networks in our communities support our overall health, the economy, and the environment. There are currently 6 kilometers of municipal trails, with the Ilderton Rail Trail being the main trail. Many informal trails exist on either municipal, private, or provincial lands and are well utilized. Recognizing the importance of this amenity to our communities, it is recommended that the municipality continue to build on its trail network and further promote the trail network to residents. Although the Trails Master Plan was completed in April 2014, this document serves as a fundamental resource when planning the expansion of trail networks and should continue to be used. Capital costs for this amenity can be a challenge and need to be identified in the long-term capital budget, asset management plan and development charges study.

#### Priority Recommendations:

- 3.1 Develop an Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan.
- 3.2 Construct additional pollinator gardens at municipal facilities, parks, and community gateways.
- 3.3 Implement Climate Change adaptation strategies in facilities and parks such as rainwater harvesting, solar generation, geothermal and increases to the municipal tree canopy.
- 3.4 Promote municipal, county, and provincial trail networks.
- 3.5 Continue to develop and increase the municipality’s trail network and inventory through new residential developments and existing parks and open space areas. Focus on completing the trail loop in the village of Ilderton to include Deerhaven and Meadowcreek Parks along with new trail construction in the Clear Skies and Timberwalk Developments.
- 3.6 Building on the Paws in Parks program, construct two off leash dog parks. Analysis of potential sites will include public consultation. Seek community involvement and develop partnerships to ensure the financial sustainability of the program.



## Goal 4: Supportive Environments

“Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and help to build strong, caring communities.”

**Municipalities play an important role in building and maintaining safe, accessible community spaces for recreation – be it parks or trails, gymnasiums or arenas, youth centres or multipurpose rooms. These supportive environments are welcoming to all residents, creating spaces for recreation, socializing, learning and community gathering.**

### Framework for Recreation in Canada priorities for Supportive Environments:

- 1** Provide recreation facilities and outdoor spaces in under-resourced communities (including on-reserve and in remote and rural areas), based on community and/or regional needs and resources.
- 2** Work with partners to increase the use of existing structures and spaces for multiple purposes, including recreation (e.g., use of schools, churches, vacant land, and lots).
- 3** Enable communities to renew recreational infrastructure as required and to meet the need for green spaces by:
  - securing dedicated government funding at all levels, as well as partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sectors for the necessary development, renewal and rehabilitation of facilities and outdoor spaces
  - developing assessment tools and evidence-based guidelines for investing and reinvesting in aging recreation infrastructure
  - developing and adopting innovative renewal strategies that will endure over time, use less energy, and provide affordable access for all.

**4** Lead and support community efforts and planning processes for active transportation and public transit. Participate in the planning and design of communities to encourage the placement of workplaces, schools, shops libraries, parks, and sport and recreation facilities in proximity so that active modes of transportation are easier to use. Encourage development and maintenance of active transportation routes that connect people to the places they want to go.

**5** Enhance mental and social wellbeing by creating supportive social environments in the settings where people live, learn, work and play. This requires strengthened partnerships with schools, social service groups, the arts community, law enforcement, transportation and urban planners, community organizations and the private sector.

**6** Develop and implement targeted recreation education campaigns that increase knowledge about how recreation contributes to enjoyment and quality of life, and help people acquire the skills and attitudes they need to plan for making recreation a part of their lives.

**7** Develop a common understanding of community wellbeing through the development and use of standardized assessment tools and indices that will help communities assess and measure their status on community wellbeing.

**8** Adopt a strategic approach to community building that features alignment and collaboration with other community initiatives (e.g., Age-Friendly Communities, Healthy Cities/Communities, Community Food Centres).

In 2022, the municipality launched its Recreation & Culture Division with a goal to provide recreation and culture pre-registered and drop-in programs with a focus on youth and those 55+. To maximize the use of space both in municipal and school board facilities, it is recommended that the municipality develop a reciprocal agreement with the Thames Valley District School Board through a joint agreement. This allows both agencies to share services and, in the end, cut costs to the taxpayer. The agreement would allow for the municipality to use the schools’ gymnasiums and the board to use municipal arenas at no cost.

A recommendation from the 2012 Community Services Master Plan was to consider a full-size soccer field at Kilworth Optimist Park in the new park development. As the development continues to take shape, so does the park plan that will include the new soccer field. Del-Ko-Brydge Minor Soccer Association is an active club and has identified the need to expand on the municipal inventory of fields. In consultation with the

soccer club, consideration should be given to have two mini fields constructed within the full field to allow further expansion of their program. As there are no soccer fields with lighting, it is recommended that the new field be constructed to include field lighting and irrigation at a later date.

With several new developments being built in Middlesex Centre, each new subdivision should include recreation elements that may not already be in the community. As the community and population grows, so does the need for the municipality to expand and grow its parkland. Middlesex Centre was created out of three former townships (Delaware, Lobo & London). As a result, the amenities found in each of the former townships looks very different. With that, there are gaps in the parks system that needs to be addressed. Improved connections to parks have a positive effect on biodiversity and creates a more livable and green community.

As the sport of pickleball continues to rise in popularity in Ontario, the need to have appropriate infrastructure is important to provide the appropriate number of courts for both tennis and pickleball players. Utilizing existing tennis and basketball courts, the Municipality has 13 courts throughout its park system. Consideration should be given to the location of the new courts due to the noise issue surrounding the game of pickleball.

Another growing and popular sport in Ontario is disc golf. Many of those surveyed indicated they would like to see a disc golf course in our community. Disc golf is a sport that can be played all year round and is a great way for people of all ages to stay active in nature. The sport itself allows for any skill level to enjoy, provides constructive use of parkland, fosters economic growth, and encourages social interactions. With its relatively low-cost investment and high yield in park use, it is recommended that the municipality establishes a disc golf course in the municipality. Consideration needs to be given to its location and how it may impact other park users. Consultation with disc golf players is important through the design/construction phase.

With its end of life approaching, the municipality should be addressing the long-term replacement of the Ilderton Arena and Curling Centre. Built in 1972, the Ilderton Arena is now 50 years old and is approaching the end of its functioning lifecycle. The cost to renovate the facility in 2015 was \$6.4 million however this cost only reflects the renovation for a

portion of the facility. Engineering constraints do not allow for a renovation that would include an NHL sized ice surface. In 2017 the municipality completed a consultant led Indoor Recreation Facility Study that recommended that a new state of the art facility (with similar features to the Komoka Wellness Centre) be constructed in Ilderton either on the existing site shared with the Ilderton Agricultural Society or at a new location. The new arena should be built as a community hub with other services provided, and allow for potential expansion and construction a second ice pad (2034+).

With Municipal Council formally approving the sale of the lands behind the Wellness Centre in 2021, a one-acre portion was allocated for a civic square (referred to as Unity Square). With a variety of mixed housing and commercial space to be constructed on the property, the addition of Unity Square looks to be an extension of the community and enhance the surrounding buildings and neighborhoods and further contributes to the community as a whole whether socially, economically, culturally and environmentally. The municipality should consider a number of design elements in the new space that will support community events such as Canada Day and the Farmers Market as well as supporting year round activities such as concerts in the park, cultural events and skating in the winter.

## Priority Recommendations:

- 4.1 Develop a Reciprocal Agreement with the Thames Valley District School Board to encourage Community Use of Schools and Board access to municipal facilities.
- 4.2 Construct a new full-size soccer field at Kilworth Optimist Park with irrigation and lighting.
- 4.3 Continue to develop parkland within new residential subdivisions to include active recreation elements like playgrounds, sports fields, splash pads, trails etc. and consideration to expanding the municipal trail network as outlined in the Official Plan.
- 4.4 Construct pickleball courts in north and south end of the municipality. Further analysis of potential sites will need to be completed along with public consultation and engagement with the pickleball community to identify ideal locations of the new courts.
- 4.5 Establish a Disc Golf Course in the municipality.
- 4.6 Develop a new neighbourhood park consisting of a play structure, tennis/pickleball courts and green space at the Bryanston Community Centre.
- 4.7 Develop a long-term plan for the replacement of the Ilderton Arena and Curling Centre.
- 4.8 Develop a detailed landscape plan for the construction of a civic square within the Unity Square development in Komoka, with a focus on supporting year-round outdoor activities and offering a space for large community events.





## Goal 5: Recreation Capacity

“Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.”

**Developing community leadership in recreation, for both professional staff and volunteers, and ensuring the financial sustainability of recreation facilities and programs is essential to the long-term growth of recreation services in a community.**

### Framework for Recreation in Canada priorities for Recreation Capacity:

- 1 Increase collaborative efforts among provincial/territorial governments, local governments, voluntary organizations, Indigenous communities, the private sector, and recreation associations to support and nurture a vibrant recreation system that serves as the primary means for achieving the vision and goals in this Framework.
- 2 Implement career awareness, preparation, and development strategies to attract and educate new leaders.
- 3 Support advanced education in recreation. Use long-term market studies to inform curricula development and capture supply and demand needs in the industry.
- 4 Develop and implement high-quality training and competency-based capacity development programs for organizations and individuals (professionals and volunteers) working in recreation, particularly in under-resourced rural and remote areas.

5 Develop a strategy to enhance community-based leadership in recreation.

6 Rejuvenate and update volunteer strategies to reflect societal changes and take advantage of community and individual capacities. Engage volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life. Make a special effort to recruit and support volunteers from a variety of ethnocultural and racialized populations and other groups that face constraints to participation. Recognize and support the role of the not-for-profit sector in developing and engaging volunteers.

7 Support a pan-Canadian, comprehensive knowledge development strategy that increases support for:

- recreation research and data collection carried out by universities and colleges, the not-for-profit sector, provincial/territorial, local and Indigenous governments, with special attention to applied research at the community level
- the national recreation information system so that all those planning and delivering recreation services have access to the latest evidence
- collaborative efforts among governments, recreation associations, colleges, and universities to develop new recreation programs and services that meet the evolving and expanding needs within communities.

Over the years through several public consultations, surveys, and general feedback, residents have indicated that they would like a municipal pool constructed somewhere in Middlesex Centre. As noted in the 2012 CSMP, there was insufficient demand at the time to support an aquatic facility and it was recommended that the municipality reconsider the need in 2022. Through the completion of the 2017 Ilderton Indoor Facility Needs Study, it was noted that although the Municipality is projected to reach a population of over 26,700 by 2031, a population of 40,000 plus is generally the minimum threshold for considering the construction of an indoor aquatics centre. It is recommended that a cost benefit analysis be completed internally and reported on to Council and the public to understand the full costs and the impact to the tax levy a municipal pool can have on the community.

To better guide the minimum design requirements for the construction of works within the municipality's existing and future parks and open space, it is recommended that Infrastructure Design Standards be developed.

As operation and capital costs continue to increase, rates for renting municipal arenas, sports fields, community centres and pavilions and program registrations need to be adjusted from time to time. Currently the municipality operates on a model whereby ice rentals achieve a minimum of 50% cost recovery, community centres are at 40% and sport fields are at 20%. These percentages and applicable rates require a review and adjustment at regular intervals to ensure these cost recovery models are being met.

Douglas B. Weldon Park, being the municipality's largest and most visited park, is made up of mostly passive recreation amenities. The site currently has tennis/pickleball courts, trails, off-leash dog area, pavilion, playgrounds and two baseball diamonds and is mostly made up of green space. With many of those visiting the park coming from outside of Middlesex Centre, the municipality should consider paid parking to help offset maintenance and capital costs related to the operation of the park and its services. A thorough public consultation should be completed when considering this recommendation.

With the current Land Use Agreement between the municipality and the Komoka Railway Museum dating back to the 1990s, it is recommended that this be updated to better reflect language used in today's agreements and ensure all legislative compliance is being adhered to.

The municipality is encouraged to continue partnering with the various service clubs in Middlesex Centre. Many past and current projects have been allowed to move forward because of the ongoing partnership. The municipality values the various service clubs and the contributions they have made to continuously improve our community.

The municipality continues to have a strong partnership in place with the YMCA based out of Komoka. This partnership allows for new innovative programs and services to build a healthier community. Currently the gym space at the Komoka Wellness Centre is underutilized during non-prime time hours. The municipality should look to further build on the partnership to allow for improved access to gym space to accommodate municipal recreation programs.

Over the last ten years, the Community Services Advisory Committee (referred to as CSAC) has played an important role in shaping our community. Many projects, initiatives and challenges have come to CSAC for their advice and recommendations. In 2021, the Youth Advisory Committee was created as part of the municipality's commitment to providing youth programs in the community. During the next term of Council, the terms of reference for both committees should be updated specifically the Youth Advisory Committee to allow for those 9 years of age or older to take part on the committee.

With the introduction of the Recreation & Culture Division and its launch into program registrations, a new booking and registration software is required. The new software will offer solutions and the ability to streamline processes for registrations, facility rentals, billing, point of sale and financial reporting. With this software, facility scheduling will allow for an intuitive customer interface. Customers can view facility and program availability online. Registration modules allows for an efficient way to manage registrations, enrollments and invoicing for all programs, classes, and camps.

Middlesex Centre community centres have played a vital role acting as hubs in each community providing space for people to socialize, recreate, learn, and access municipal services. As it has been some time since the municipality marketed the spaces, focus should now shift to a comprehensive marketing campaign to increase facility rentals and highlight the value these centres bring to a program or event.

With the newly established Recreation & Culture Division now offering recreation and cultural programs, it is recommended to further market this service area through an effective branding strategy. Doing so raises awareness and encourages residents to participate in programs while conveying a high standard of quality, experience, and reliability.

Programs and services for both children and older adults are encouraged to have a standard of programming that provides an important framework for staff to follow. It is recommended that the Municipality adopt the HIGH FIVE® framework in the development of its programs. HIGH FIVE® is a quality standard that is built on a framework consisting of program assessments, awareness, policies and procedures, and staff training and development.

## Priority Recommendations:

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- 5.1 Complete a cost benefit analysis for an indoor aquatic facility in Middlesex Centre.

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  - 5.2 Develop Infrastructure Design Guidelines for Parks & Open Space.

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  - 5.3 Complete a Rates and Fees Review every 3 years to determine cost recovery models for Ice, community centres and sports fields.

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  - 5.4 Consider paid parking at Douglas B. Weldon Park.

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  - 5.5 Update Land Use Agreement with the Komoka Railway Museum.

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  - 5.6 Continue to partner with local service clubs in identifying projects of shared interest that support improvements to recreation infrastructure, programs, and special events.

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  - 5.7 Expand the partnership with the YMCA at the Wellness Centre to allow for community and municipal access to gym space.

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  - 5.8 Continue with the Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) and further expand the Youth Advisory Committee to include youth at 9 years of age.

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  - 5.9 Establish a new registration and facility booking software to support program offerings and facilitate registrations and facility rentals.

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  - 5.10 Through increased marketing, highlight the community centres as affordable community space for events and programs.

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  - 5.11 Establish branding for the Recreation & Culture Division to raise awareness and exposure of the programs being offered and highlight to residents the benefits of active living programs.

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  - 5.12 Train recreation staff to meet the HIGH FIVE® standard of Principles of Healthy Child Development and the HIGH FIVE® for Older Adults, Principles of Healthy Aging.
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# NEXT STEPS

Recommendations will be reviewed annually and projects will be identified each year when developing the departmental workplan. Recommendations will be looked at in terms of timeline and cost:

**In Progress:** Action on this item is already underway

**Short Term:** Target of 1-2 years

**Medium Term:** Target of 2-3 years

**Long Term:** Target of 3-5 years

**\$** Low cost with minor impact to operating and/or capital budget (under \$25,000)

**\$\$** Medium cost with moderate impact to operating and/or capital budget (\$25,000 - \$100,000)

**\$\$\$** High cost with considerable impact to operating and/or capital (over \$100,000)

**1 IDENTIFY  
CRITICAL NEEDS**

**2 RESEARCH  
AND SELECT EVIDENCE  
BASED STRATEGIES**

**3 PLAN  
FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**4 IMPLEMENT  
AND MONITOR**

**5 EXAMINE  
REFLECT & ADJUST**

**RETURN  
TO 1 IF  
NEEDED**



**Municipality of Middlesex Centre**

10227 Ilderton Road  
Ilderton, Ontario, NOM 2A0

**LOCAL:**

519-666-0190

**TOLL FREE:**

1-800-220-8968

**WEB:**

[middlesexcentre.ca](http://middlesexcentre.ca)