

Vision 2035 Parks and Recreation Plan

Township of Cavan Monaghan

Background Report (Phase One)

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The Rethink Group

Leisure Services Planning and Management

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Vision 2035 – Parks and Recreation Plan

Purpose: To update the 2011 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Vision 2035 – the Parks and Recreation Plan will:

- Assess service delivery, parks and open space, and indoor and outdoor facilities & facility utilization - including the Millbrook Arena, the remaining lands at the CMCC and partnership opportunities.
- Prepare a map of parks and open space.
- Research the profile of the community and current demand
- Apply leisure trends and predict future demand.
- Provide a Belief Statement, Guiding Principles, Vision 2035, a Strategic Action and Implementation Plan, and various supplemental recommendations.

Vision 2035 – Parks and Recreation Plan

Background Report (Phase One – 2022)

- **Researched** the profile of the community, parks and open space, facilities, how open space and leisure services are provided, facility utilization, and trends and other information impacting demand for services
- **Community engagement** included user group surveys, a household survey and dialogue with other stakeholders (additional community engagement will take place in Phase Two)
- **Map of parks and open space** (in progress).
- **Analysis, findings and conclusions**
- **Millbrook Arena:** Update on its physical condition, requirements and cost to retain the facility, plus gather public opinion about options for its future. (Barry Bryan Associates/Kirkland Engineering Ltd.)

Vision 2035 – Parks and Recreation Plan

Phase Two (2023): Vision 2035 – The Parks and Recreation Plan (the recommendations) – more about this later ...

Proposed Phase Three (2024): Conceptual Plans/Designs for:

- the preferred option for the Millbrook Arena and site
- the remaining lands associated with the Cavan Monaghan Community Centre
- possibly other parks (TBD)

Key Characteristics of the Community

2021 population: **10,300** (including 2.5% population undercount)

Until recently, the population had been **growing slowly**. However, in recent years, the **growth rate has surged** to 13.4% (average of 2.7% per year).

Age Profile: Although the Township's population is a bit younger than Peterborough and the surrounding area and has been getting younger, it is older than the provincial average.

Ethnicity, education and income were also researched.

Planned Settlement and Growth Pattern

Looking ahead to 2051, it is proposed that:

- 94% of new residential development will be located within an enlarged Millbrook Settlement Area.
- The remaining residential growth will be allocated to the seven hamlets, with no new rural subdivisions permitted - as per the Provincial Growth Plan.

The population is projected to **increase by an average of 2.37%/year** and grow to around **18,000 by 2051**.

The age profile is projected to **age considerably** over the next 30 years, with the age **65+ population** more than tripling in size.

These and other changes in the population will strongly influence the future demand for parks and recreation services.

Demand Assessment (Phase One)

Analysis of **facility utilization** and **local trends** in use – factored Covid-19 into the analysis + applied **national leisure trends**.

Consultation with **municipal staff**.

Household Survey of 319 households (equivalent to approx. 900 residents) – widely promoted via a newspaper article, the Township web site, social media (twice/wk. from June 22 to July 31st).

Detailed User Group Surveys (21 groups) – numerous reminders were issued.

Ongoing communication with **stakeholders** (Bd. of Ed., local interest groups, etc.).

Unmet and Growing Demand

The following facility and program gaps have been identified from various sources and trends (current and near term).

Markets: children (incl. pre-school), adults and older adults

Programs and Facilities (top requests and trends):

- aquatic (indoor pool, aquatic programming, waterplay facility)
- pre-school and children's programming, including day camps
- fitness/wellness
- gymnasium
- rectangular fields/soccer
- baseball/softball
- creative and performance arts
- racquet sports (tennis, pickleball, gym sports)
- cycling
- skateboarding

Unmet and Growing Demand

Household survey respondents identified the following as the **top 10 facilities** (out of 36) in which they would like municipal taxes invested (in ranked order).

- indoor swimming pool
- outdoor waterplay facility
- trails
- nature parks
- playgrounds
- libraries
- farmers market
- outdoor skating rink
- youth recreation centre
- indoor fitness facility (aerobic and equipment-based)

Unmet and Growing Demand

Household survey respondents identified the following as the **11–20 ranked facilities** (out of 36) in which they would like municipal taxes invested (in ranked order).

- picnic areas/pavilions
- multipurpose outdoor sport courts
- older adult recreation centre
- outdoor basketball courts
- rectangular fields
- gymnasium
- facilities to accommodate creative art, handcrafts and artisan activities
- baseball and softball diamonds
- tennis courts
- multipurpose activity and meeting rooms

Unmet and Growing Demand

For **63%** of household survey respondents, **only some of their leisure needs are being met within the Township.**

- only **2.7%** reported that **all of their household's needs are met.**
- **unavailable programs and facilities** were the main reasons for going elsewhere (**91%**).

90% of household survey respondents would like to see **parks and recreation services become a higher priority of the Municipality.**

User groups told us about the facilities they use and how much (Twp. and others), the positives and the challenges, and current and future demand. More will be learned in Phase Two.

Recommended Categories of Parkland

It's recommended that **municipal parkland** be categorized as follows:

- **Natural Heritage Open Space** (limited public access, depending on 'sensitivity' of the lands – includes **natural heritage corridors**)
- **Community Parks** (mostly for high level/specialized culture and recreation facilities – includes **open space linkages and trails**)
- **Neighbourhood Parks** (lower scale development, less 'active', much smaller recreation spaces – includes **walkways** that provide access to and link some open spaces)

Some parks are a **combination** of two or three of these categories.

Positive Attributes of Parks and Recreation

New CMCC – expanded and greatly improved quality of indoor facility offerings.

Enhanced leisure services delivery – The ability of the Municipality to deliver leisure services has improved recently with staff additions that are providing enhanced support to volunteers and introduction of a limited direct programming role to augment what community volunteers and others can provide.

The trail system is already extensive and will expand via some of the new residential communities.

Positive Attributes of Parks and Recreation

The large amount of **Natural Heritage Open Space**.

The large amount of **Community-level parkland** - although a good deal of it is natural heritage in nature and therefore, not suitable for active recreation and facility development.

The **positive trend in new facilities and parkland development**, with all being high quality (e.g., CMCC, Highlands Park and the outdoor facilities located at the CMCC). They've 'raised the **quality** bar' for public spaces.

Challenges

As the Township continues to **transition** from a small-population and largely rural municipality, **expectations for quantity, quality and type of facilities, parks and programming will continue to increase**, especially within the **Millbrook Settlement Area** - which is becoming more urban.

There is a significant **deficiency in Neighbourhood parkland** (quantity, quality and distribution) – especially within Millbrook.

Challenges

New residential developments are not meeting widely accepted targets and benchmarks for quantity, location and sometimes configuration of **dedicated parkland**.

- partly because of weakened Planning Act requirements,
- the degree of desire of developers to create attractive neighbourhoods, and
- the declining degree of leverage that Municipalities have

There is or will be a **shortage of some types of existing facilities** to meet current and future needs (e.g., rectangular fields, indoor multipurpose space, an adequate indoor soccer facility, some adult-scale and older adult facilities).

Challenges

Some types of facilities that are in high and growing demand are not available in the Township (e.g., aquatic facilities, gymnasium, fitness facility, various types of racquet sport courts, various adult and older adult facilities, creative and performing arts venues).

Partnerships and shared use agreements will be required to provide access to some types of facilities that are found nearby in larger communities (e.g., indoor aquatic facilities, indoor soccer facility, indoor fitness facilities, pump bike track, major skateboard facility, major indoor and outdoor performance venues).

Challenges

Except for Highlands, Cedar Valley and the developed portion of the CMCC property, **other parks and most facilities would greatly benefit from improvement** – to meet today’s accessibility standards and increasing expectations for quality and useability.

Although there is a good deal of Community-level parkland, **not enough of it is table land** – the type, size and quality of parkland needed to accommodate current and future community-scale outdoor and indoor sport and other facilities. Think about Maple Leaf Park.

Challenges

The ability of the Municipality **to acquire sufficient quality parkland** through development and redevelopment – and to **finance parks and recreation services** is greatly diminished by changes to the **Ontario Planning Act** as a result of **Bill 23**. These changes may impact smaller and rural communities the most.

For that and other reasons, there are a few **policies** and **planning tools** that the Municipality may want to either strengthen or adopt. Some will be provided in the Parks and Recreation Plan.

Opportunities

There is potential to cultivate additional **partnerships/strategic alliances**.

There may be potential for federal and provincial **grants**.

There is potential to **improve** the quality and distribution of parkland that is **dedicated to the Municipality**.

The potential of the **remaining land at the CMCC**.

Opportunities

There are opportunities to **augment parkland** in built-up and developing Neighbourhoods. (e.g., partnerships, conversion of municipal properties into parkland, conversion of some Community-level parkland into Neighbourhood parkland, etc.).

There is considerable **natural heritage open space land** throughout the Township and **potential trail linkages/corridors** that can be added and created. That will provide the opportunity for more trails, outdoor education and nature appreciation, and picnic areas.

Opportunities

The Millbrook Arena and Site

A recent engineering report estimated that **at least \$5.25 million** will be required to maintain this 72-year-old facility in a safe and accessible, but **status quo state** for another 25 years (with limited opportunity for additional uses).

In the **household survey**, respondents were asked about their degree of support for the following options re: the future the Millbrook Arena and site.

1. Invest at least \$5.25 million to increase accessibility, but otherwise maintain the building in status quo state.
2. Invest considerably more than \$5.25 million to increase useability and improve the interior and exterior appearance.
3. Replace the building with a signature downtown park, incorporating Needlers Lane and nearby open space.
4. Sell the property for commercial and residential development.

82.5% of household survey respondents would like to see the property **repurposed into a park** to complement the downtown and provide valuable culture and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

Phase Two - Vision 2035 - The Parks and Recreation Plan (2023)

Background Report will be updated throughout Phase Two.

Additional park assessment and **community engagement** will be completed.

The recommendations will be founded on the **planning context** and **findings and conclusions (Background Report)**, a **Belief Statement, Guiding Principles and Vision 2035 ... the 'Big Picture' look ahead.**

A **Strategic Action Plan** (and mapping) will be prepared to provide direction to 2035 and beyond for:

- **Leisure services delivery,**
- **Culture and recreation facilities** (with particular focus on the Millbrook Arena and the remaining lands at the CMCC - as well as revitalization of older parks),
- **Parks and open space** (incl. planning and provision guidelines for parkland and facilities),
- **Programming,** and
- **Implementation** (timing, costing, funding/financing).

Phase Two - Vision 2035 - The Parks and Recreation Plan

Community Engagement (Phase Two):

- Additional communication and discussions with **interest and user groups** to learn more about needs - and to advance the recommendations
- A **Community Forum** – To provide input into the emerging Draft Plan (residents, stakeholders, municipal staff and Council)
- Feedback to what is posted on the **Township website** (e.g., summary of the **Background Report**, the **household survey** results and the **Draft Parks and Recreation Plan**)

Proposed Phase Three Vision 2035 – The Parks and Recreation Plan (2024)

Conceptual plans/designs for:

- The **Millbrook Arena and site.**
- The remaining lands at the **CMCC.**
- **Possibly other parks** (e.g., Maple Leaf, new sports park, Old Millbrook School, Edgewood)

A Decision on the Future of the Millbrook Arena

Since the future of the **Millbrook Arena and property** will influence decisions about how best to provide and locate other culture and recreation facilities (including how best to develop the remaining lands at the CMCC and pursue opportunities for facility partnerships), Council direction about the future of the Millbrook Arena will clarify how we proceed with Phase Two.

Direction on the Future of the Millbrook Arena

Information to Consider:

- The poor and deteriorating physical condition of the 72-year-old building
- Accessibility deficiencies (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)
- Under-sized playing surface (75' x 175' – the standard is 100' x 200')
- Facility is underutilized and there are inaccessible components
- Very limited on-site parking and location in a floodplain
- Estimated \$5.25+ million to retain the building as status quo for 25 years
- Much more investment will be required to increase useability and appeal
- The minimum investment would support many other types of facilities
- The annual operating deficit (\$30,000 and increasing)
- Strong community support for the 'downtown park' option
- A better option for indoor soccer may be available for one-tenth the cost

Next Steps

1. Provide Council with the opportunity to review the Background Report (Phase One).
2. Report back to Council in May for further discussion and direction regarding the future of the Millbrook Arena – within the context of the entire Parks and Recreation Plan.
3. The direction provided by Council will determine now the Parks and Recreation Plan will take shape, especially how the remaining lands at the CMCC will be utilized, but also the resources that will be available to invest in other facilities and parks.