

Public Engagement Preliminary Findings



Thanks for being here!

*The Municipality of West Grey is developing a long-term plan to
guide the future of parks, facilities, programs, trails
and recreation services in our community.*



Thank you!
Your voice makes a difference.

Visit our project page and
join the conversation!



What is a recreation master plan?

A long-term plan to guide the future of parks, facilities, programs, trails and recreation services in our community.



The plan helps us:



Understand community needs

Listen to residents and learn what matters most in our community.



Plan for the future

Identify priorities, opportunities and challenges ahead.



Make informed decisions

Use data and community input to guide investment and resource planning.



Improve parks and outdoor facilities

Create and maintain great places for people to play, connect and stay active.



Support healthy, connected communities

Build spaces and programs that bring people together.



Plan for growth and change

Prepare for population growth, changing needs and future recreation trends.

The Recreation Master Plan provides a roadmap for future priorities, while recognizing that feasibility, available resources and Council decisions will shape what moves forward.

West Grey's Master Plan Journey

Council has directed staff to complete a ten (10) year Recreation Master Plan utilizing internal resources. Staff began collecting background data including geographical statistics, facility usage statistics, asset management data and external resources and plans to form a foundation.



Staff solicited input from the community in a variety of different ways:

Public Community Survey



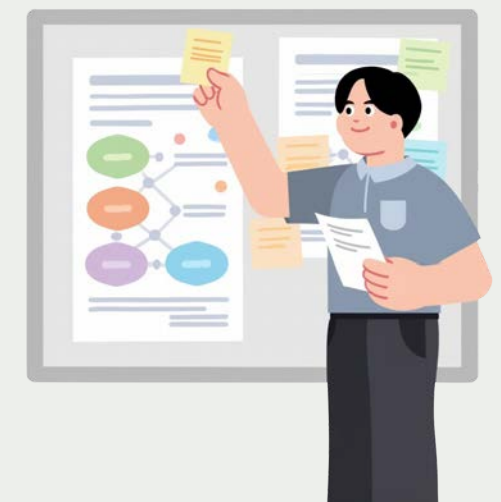
Youth Survey



Community Group Focus Groups (6)



Community Public Open Houses (4)



Staff have compiled data received from public input and are presenting the preliminary findings to ensure the issues resonate with residents and to determine if anything else has been missed.

Public Engagement Key Themes

Although each settlement area has varying experiences with facilities, parks and recreation in West Grey, some key themes emerged during conversations and survey results.



Key themes included:

Accessibility



Advertising & Communications



Programming



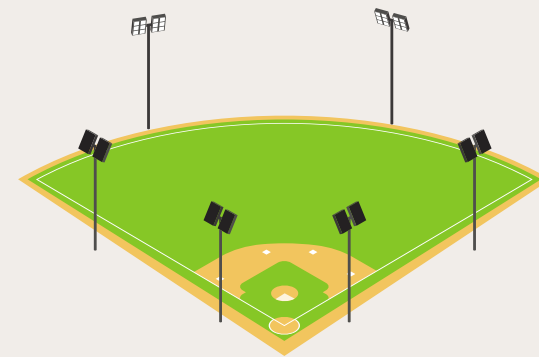
Indoor Facilities



Volunteer Recruitment & Retention



Outdoor Facilities



There were general concerns that did not fall within one of the above categories however, those thoughts will be shared separately.

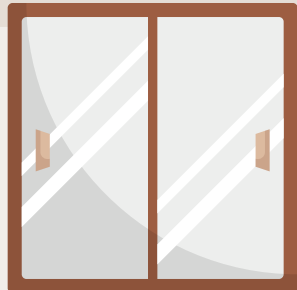
Theme: Accessibility

Throughout the public engagement process, staff heard about several recreational challenges relating to accessibility.



Some opportunities for improvement include:

Accessibility in recreation facilities



A front entrance vestibule with automated doors at the Durham Community Centre was mentioned.

Accessible programs



More accessible recreation opportunities in West Grey, including low- and no-cost options.

Pedestrian road crossings



Suggested for areas of downtown Durham on Garafraxa Street.

Accessibility features in outdoor washrooms



There is currently limited to no accessibility features in outdoor washrooms.

Built environment



Getting to the Durham Ball Diamonds is difficult for those with limited access.

Sidewalk improvements



It was noted that there is uneven pavement on some sidewalks and walkways.

Accessibility considerations extend beyond physical access and include communication, programming and inclusive participation.

Theme: Indoor Facilities

Residents and visitors highly value the indoor recreation facilities, however the concern about age and lifespan is a key theme.



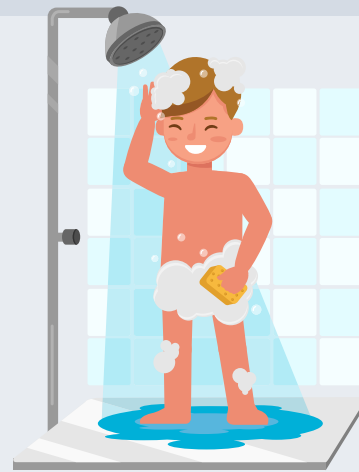
Recurring topics included:

Dressing rooms



Quantity and size of dressing rooms in both Durham and Ayton remain concerns because of league regulated requirements.

Dressing room washrooms



Washrooms in dressing rooms are not conducive to the new rules regarding dressing rooms.

Facility age



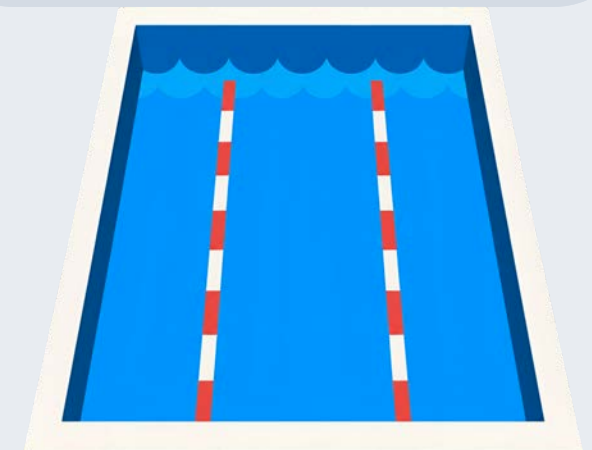
Older facilities are showing their age.

Ice plant replacement



What happens if the ice plant goes down and needs to be replaced?

Swimming Pool



Respondents have expressed interest for an indoor swimming pool.

Feedback highlighted opportunities to improve the availability, condition and functionality of indoor recreation spaces.

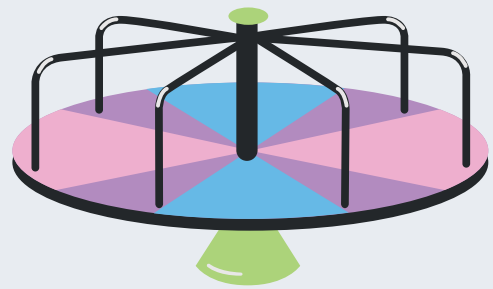
Theme: Outdoor Facilities

Outdoor facilities are highly valued throughout the Municipality. They serve as community hubs, centres of the community and provide affordable recreation options.



Recurring topics included:

Playground updates & installations



Community input prior to playground installation was requested (no equipment for children under three years old at Ayton Centennial Park).

Garbage & vandalism



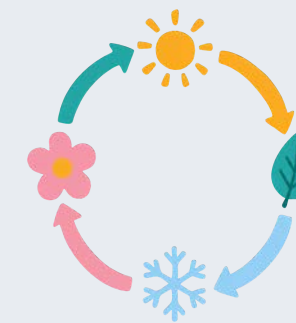
Garbage and vandalism are ongoing issues, but residents largely feel that this is more about a waste violator issue than a Municipal staff issue.

Additional parks & playgrounds



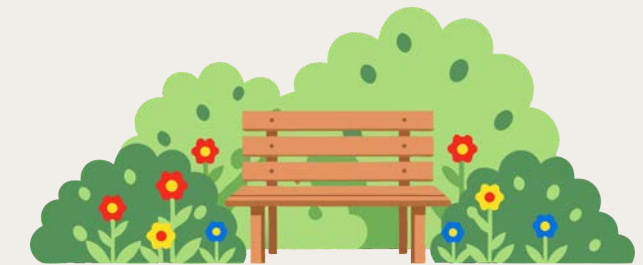
There should be consideration for additional parks and playgrounds as the community continues to grow (Durham new subdivision).

Year-round use of Neustadt Lions Park



Year-round park use availability (plow the laneway at Neustadt Lions Park for winter access).

Trail and trail amenities



Dedicated trails and trail amenities (garbage cans, benches, pet waste sites, etc.).

Residents shared a range of ideas for enhancing outdoor spaces, amenities and opportunities for recreation.

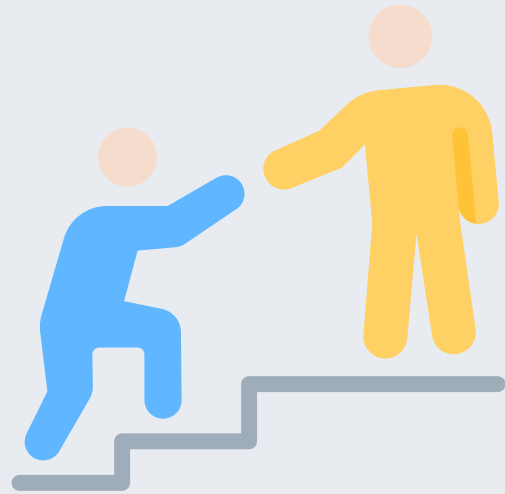
Theme: Programming

It was noted that many organizations provide a wide variety of programs around West Grey, but there was discussion about the role that the Municipality can play in programming.



Suggested roles included:

Support



Play a support role for the organizations that are offering programs (low to no cost facility rental rates, offset insurance costs, help with program promotion).

Collaborate



Work with local individuals and service clubs to offer well rounded programs for all ages (wood working, cooking, gardening, etc.).

Direct Programming (Youth)



Offer programming directly through the Municipality, such as youth programming, especially during the summer months (day camp).

Meeting community recreation needs can take many forms, from supporting local providers to partnering on initiatives or delivering programs directly.

Theme:

Advertising & Communication

It is felt that West Grey could do a better job at supporting the community by helping to promote community events and happenings.



Suggestions to improve promotion and communication included:

Incorporating a community newsletter into the tax bills



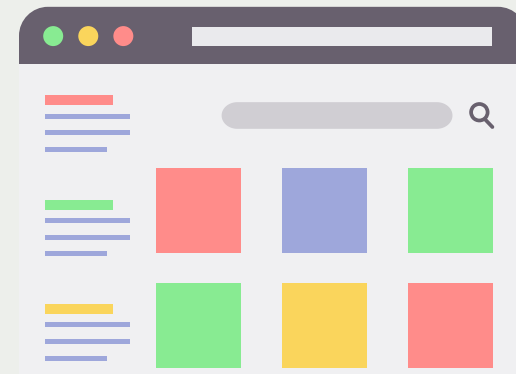
Want to stay in the know? Sign up for the Municipality's eNewsletter to receive updates on community events, programs, services and more.

Potential mail outs



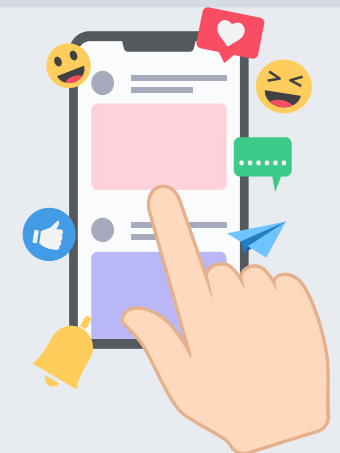
Event and program information is currently shared through posters at Municipal facilities, arenas and community bulletin boards.

Creating a community event website



Did you know that the Municipality of West Grey Website has a Public Community Calendar?

Sharing events and activities via social media



The Municipality uses social media to share updates, announcements, Municipal programs, events and activities.

Residents identified opportunities to make information about programs, activities and events easier to find and access.

Theme: Volunteer Recruitment & Retention

All groups that we spoke with rely heavily on volunteers to fulfill their organization's goals and aspirations.



In most, if not all cases, the concerns shared were:

Decreasing volunteer numbers



The number of volunteers is decreasing on an annual basis.

Increasing volunteer age



The age of volunteers in these groups is increasing, and the younger generation does not seem to be stepping into these roles.

Volunteer burnout



Many volunteers are part of multiple organizations and are experiencing volunteer burnout.

Lack of succession planning



There is a lack of succession planning to fill the void when the current volunteers are no longer able to do so.

Residents recognized the important role volunteers play in recreation and identified opportunities to better support and engage them.

Theme: Areas for Concern

During the course of the community consultation process, some residents had additional concerns that do not fit well within the key themes, however the concerns are valid and need to be considered throughout this process:



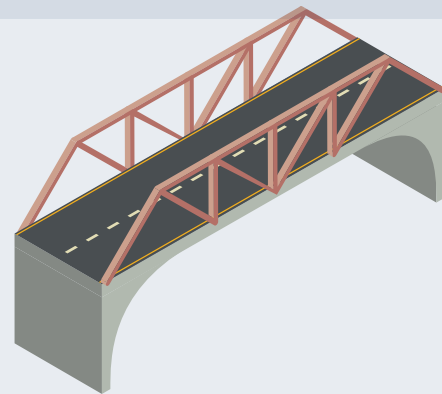
Recurring topics included:

Omittance of some recreation facilities from survey



Some expressed disappointment that facilities such as the Durham Fitness Centre and Elmwood Community Centre were mentioned in the public engagement sessions

Bridge repairs



Some respondents believe that there should be no public funds spent on recreation until roads and bridges are repaired.

Motorized vehicles on pedestrian trails



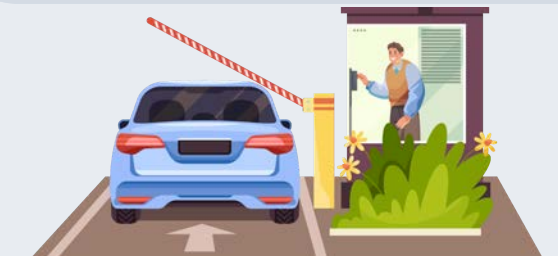
Some residents do not think that motorized vehicles (ATV's, snowmobiles, etc.) do not belong on pedestrian trails in town.

Disconnect between settlement areas



Although amalgamation was more than 25 years ago, there is still a disconnect between each settlement area.

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority



Concerns regarding SVCA installing a fence at the Durham Conservation area and requiring payment to enter their property to utilize the trail system. There is also a desire to have the Varney Pond reopened.

These concerns may fall outside the scope of the Recreation Master Plan but will be shared with the appropriate entities for consideration.

Next Steps

We will be collecting all feedback received at this Open House and including with what has already been heard.

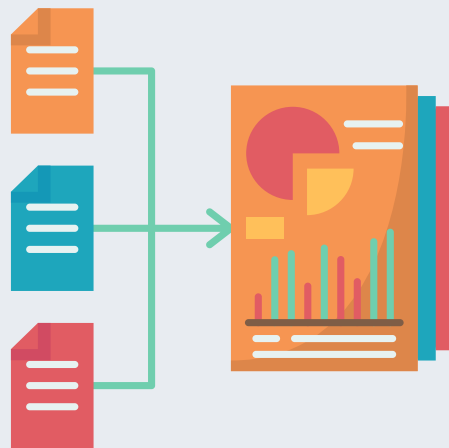


Investigate Financials and Resourcing



7% of the Municipal Budget is dedicated to Parks and Recreation.
With finite resources, feedback will help shape priorities and guide impactful investment.

Create Master Plan Document



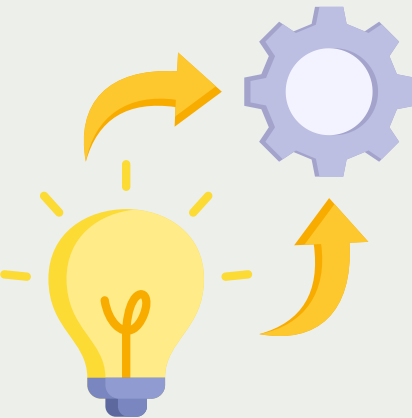
Staff are developing the Master Plan using the feedback and priorities identified through community engagement, along with research and analysis to inform the recommendations.

Present Master Plan to Council



Staff will present a draft Recreation Master Plan to Council in early 2027 for review and input. Following any required amendments, the final plan will return to Council in mid-2027, with Council determining whether to adopt the plan and its recommendations.

Implement Master Plan



Once approved, staff will begin implementing the Master Plan's recommendations based on established priorities, available resources and Council direction.

Annual Report to Council



Staff will provide an annual update to Council on progress toward the Master Plan's recommendations, including accomplishments, ongoing priorities and any challenges or changes that may impact implementation.

Community feedback is one part of the process; feasibility, resources and Council direction will help shape the final recommendations.

Recreation

MASTER PLAN



Questions?



Thank you!
Your voice makes a difference.

Visit our project page and
join the conversation!



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