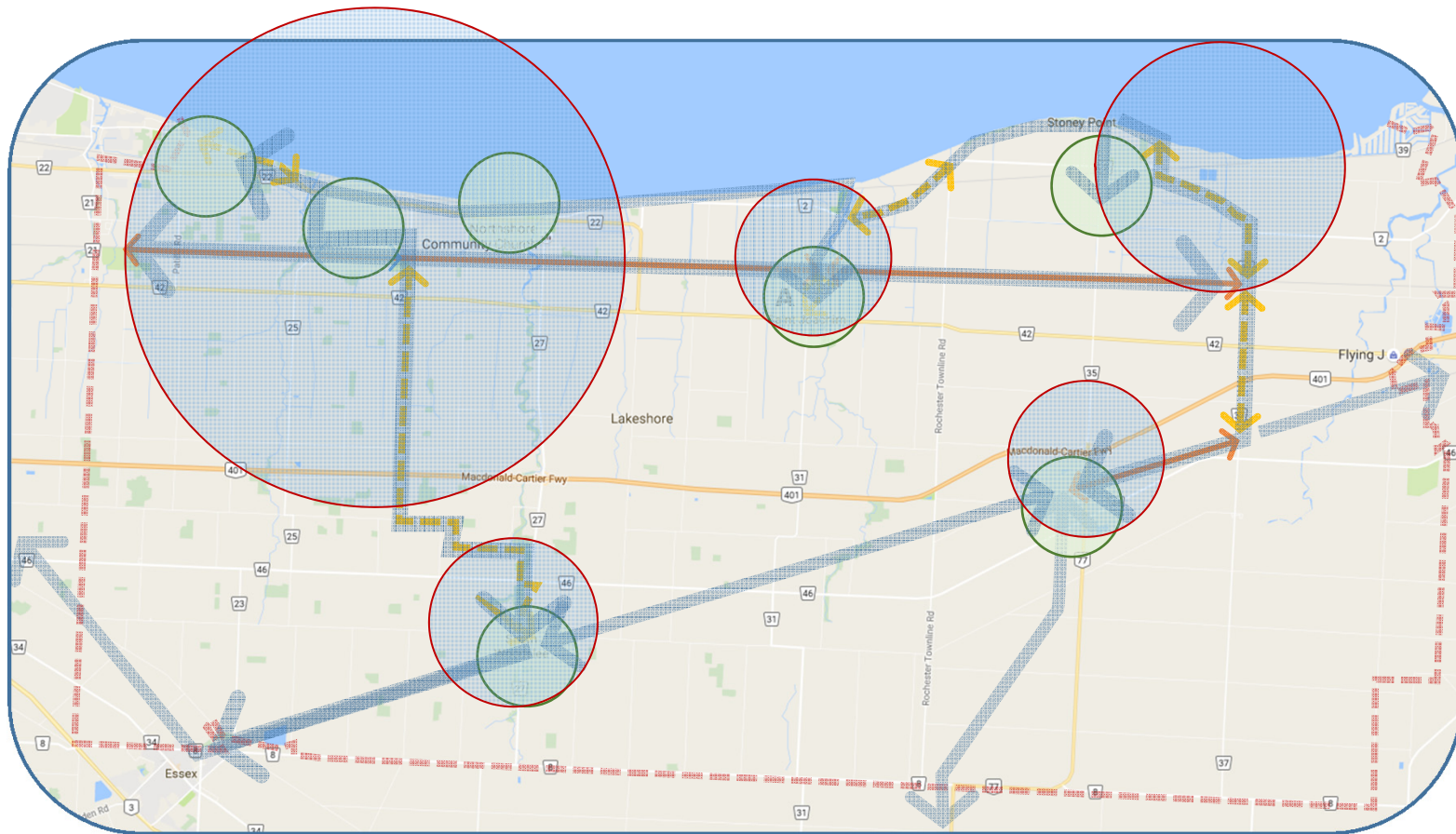


3.0 Community Consultation



3.0 Community Consultation

See [Appendix G](#)
The Results of the Public
Consultation

3.1 Community Consultation

The community consultation consisted of three open house sessions held at the Libro Community Centre, Comber Community Centre and at the Atlas Tube Centre, online surveys hosted on the municipal website, social media and individual correspondence throughout the consultation phase. The complete results of the survey are found in The Results of Public Consultation in Appendix G.

3.2 Community Engagement

3.2.1 Community Questionnaire

The questionnaire was structured into five section as follows:

SECTION A – Background

SECTION B – About Your Parks System in General

SECTION C – About Your Neighbourhood Park

SECTION D – About Your Community Park

SECTION E – About Your Sports Fields

SECTION F – Additional Comments

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SECTION A - Background

Approximately 342 people responded to the survey either in whole or in part. Of these, 293 responded on-line and 46 completed the paper survey. Some on-line respondents attended one of the Open Houses prior to completing the survey while others utilized the information on the Town of Lakeshore website as a background.

About two-thirds of the respondents were Adults (35 to 64 yrs.) with an additional 19 percent being Young Adults and almost 9 percent Seniors (65 and over). Almost 4 percent of respondents were considered to be Teens (13 to 18).

About two-thirds of the surveys were prepared by females. It is noted however that a large number of the respondents were couples and the responses may often represent their combined views and possibly the views of their teen and younger children.

Respondents were asked to describe the situation in their household using a series of pre-defined scenarios. Approximately 39 percent were couples with children in grade school. Another 12.5 percent had pre-schoolers and a further 15.6 percent had children in High School. We also heard from parents living with adult children, empty nesters and single people with a decidedly smaller group of people who lived with and cared for their parents.

Lastly, respondents were asked which area of Lakeshore is closest to where they live. The largest population responded from the area of Belle River (38.6 %) with good response from Stoney Point (19 %), Emeryville (11.2 %), Puce (10.1 %), Woodslee (9.2 %) and Comber (8.9 %). The remaining areas, Russel Woods, St. Joachim, Lighthouse Cove, Deerbrook, Ruscom and Staples having respondents in the range of 0 % – 5.5 %

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Conclusion

In general, the response to the survey appears to be a good sampling of the community, particularly from parents and perhaps grandparents with a vested interest in the park system.

SECTION B – About Your Park System in General

Questions 5 through 20 solicited information pertaining to user satisfaction with the parks system including such aspects as ongoing maintenance, the extent of development etc. Respondents were asked how willing they would be to invest more for parks facilities and maintenance and whether they had seen something in another community that they would like to see in Lakeshore. The purpose was to determine how people view the existing system and how they would like to see it change on a general level.

Background

Five fundamental issues underlie the questions in this section:

- The current level of satisfaction with the parks and park maintenance.
- The importance of a well-developed park system
- What does the Town do well in the parks and what does it do poorly
- The willingness to pay more if needed
- The importance of certain elements, features or programs etc. in parks
- What have you seen elsewhere (in other parks) that you like

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Discussion

- When asked how satisfied they are with the current park system, almost two-thirds were either satisfied or very satisfied, with 30 % being somewhat dissatisfied.
- Sixty-nine percent were also satisfied or very satisfied with the level of maintenance of the parks in the Town and fully 96.7 percent said it was important or very important (72.5 % very important) for them to have well-developed and maintained parks.
- In general, people are satisfied with the way that grass, pathways, sports fields, plantings, play equipment and safety surfaces are maintained.
- Areas of dissatisfaction seem to focus on the winter use of parks including providing for winter activities, trails for winter use, providing trash receptacles, having washrooms open and clearing pathways of snow and ice. As well, trails, planting new trees, park and parking lot lighting were also mentioned.
- When asked if they were willing to pay more in taxes to have more parks and facilities, 42 percent said they would and 35 % indicated they were not sure or it would depend on the park or facility. A slightly smaller number, 35 percent would be prepared to pay a bit more in taxes for a higher level of maintenance in the parks.
- Respondents provided a list of persons or organizations that might be willing to partner with Lakeshore on park-related projects. For reference, the list can be found in question 11 of this appendix.
- When asked about a range of specific park features, 73.4 percent said Natural Heritage Sites, Woodlots, Nature Areas, Wetlands and areas providing Wildlife Habitat were important or very important, while only 40.1 % were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of access to the natural area, woodlots etc. provided by the Town. Almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated that it is important or very important to have access to recreation trails for non-motorized use and the same amount were not satisfied with the availability of recreational trails. Almost 57 % of the respondents indicated it is important or very important to have access to trails for transportation – as well as recreation. Only about a third of respondents are satisfied with the availability of trails for transportation.

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- Respondents provided a list of items or features in parks in other communities that they would like to see in Lakeshore. For reference, the list can be found in question 18 of this appendix.
- Forty percent of respondents indicated Dog Parks are important or very important, with 27.8 percent indicating that they don't own a dog. When asked of the dog park they use is adequate, almost 11 percent said it was with 80 percent indicating that they don't use a dog park. Six respondents indicated what improvements they would like to see.
- The high priority respondents place on trails and their dissatisfaction with their access to trails should become a major pillar of the park system as it continues to develop. Winter use of parks and trails was also important to respondents. Consideration should be given to developing additional trail facilities and continuing to upgrade existing trails. As well, the securing and development of natural heritage areas and woodlots and other natural areas should continue whether through outright purchase, or strategic partnerships. A natural extension of this thought is to incorporate more natural areas within the existing parks either by allowing an adjacent wooded area to encroach naturally or by actually planting species that will assist this process. The notion that natural heritage areas and parks are different places should be reconsidered in favour of combining the two where possible.
- The strongest support for something seen in a park in another community is for the following items:
 - Splash Pad (13)
 - Skateboard Park (9)
 - Rubber Safety Surface for Play Structures (7)
 - Outdoor Pool (5)
 - Hard Surface Play Area (5)
 - Exercise Equipment (4)
 - Canoe/Kayak launch (3)

A complete list can be found at question 18 in Appendix G.

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Conclusion

There is a consensus that the Overall Park System in Lakeshore has been reasonably well-developed and maintained and that this should continue or improve. A large portion of the respondents (96.7%) feel that it is important to have well-developed and maintained parks. Most surprising is that almost 42 percent would be prepared to pay more to add additional facilities and almost 35 percent to improve maintenance even further. We must be aware however that this isn't approval to increase spending as would be in the case in a U.S. style tax referendum, but it can be considered as a strong show of support for the status quo and possible improvements.

Clearly, the municipality is taking care of its' core responsibilities in terms of maintenance of the parks. There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the basics: cutting grass, providing pathways, sports fields, waste and recycling containers, play equipment, maintaining sports fields and maintaining play equipment. In this regard, existing programs and procedures should be maintained.

On the other hand, there is some dissatisfaction with the provision of trails for winter activities, winter maintenance of pathways, tree planting and park lighting. All of these should be reviewed to determine whether improvements are possible.

The high priority respondents place on the natural environment and trails should become a major pillar of the park system as it continues to develop. Consideration should be given to developing additional trail facilities and continuing to upgrade existing trails. As well, the securing and development of natural heritage areas and woodlots and other natural areas should continue whether through outright purchase, or strategic partnerships. A natural extension of this thought is to incorporate more natural areas within the existing parks either by allowing an

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adjacent wooded area to encroach naturally or by actually planting species that will assist this process. The notion that natural heritage areas and parks are different places should be reconsidered in favour of combining the two where possible.

Recommendation

Recommendations for this section will be drawn from this information as well as other sections of the report and found under the discussion of each park.

SECTION C – About Your Neighbourhood Park

Questions 22 through 32 are intended to obtain input about the respondents' neighbourhood park. A neighbourhood park was defined as a park serving their particular neighbourhood, possibly within walking distance and probably not include a parking area.

Discussion

When asked for the name of the neighbourhood park that best serves the neighbourhood where they live, Optimist (22.6 %), Stoney Point (17.4 %) and Lions (11.7 %) Parks were identified the most. We suspect some of the indication for Lions Park were meant to be for Ladouceur Park (7.8 %). Only 2 parks were not indicated as a park that serves a particular neighbourhood. These two parks, Pleasant Park and Staples Community Park are in outlying area and geography may have played a part. From this, we conclude that respondents were well distributed through the community.

Respondents claim to utilize their neighbourhood park often. About 64 percent visit the park (either the respondent or their family) once or twice a week or more. Twenty-two percent visit once or twice a month and just 7 percent use the park once or twice a year. About 7 percent indicate that they go to their neighbourhood park rarely or never.

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When they are at the park, respondents or their families enjoy walking for leisure and walking for fitness as well as walking the dog. Using play equipment was the third highest use indicated at 38.3%. Many respondents indicated they enjoy more passive activities such as sitting on a bench to watch nature or people while at a neighbourhood park.

When asked what activities respondents would like to do in their park that aren't currently available the following responses were the most popular:

- Splash Pad (13)
- Access to trails and biking (10)
- Baseball (6)
- Tennis (5)
- Skate Park (5)
- Exercise Equipment (4)
- Pickleball
- Themed and/or age appropriate play equipment

A complete list can be found in question 25 of this appendix

Conclusion

Respondents seem to be interested in using parks for fitness, leisure, and more passive activities as well, they indicated a desire for more trails or access to trails for fitness, leisure, and dog walking. This indicates parks are being used by all age groups. Parents and/or grandparents are using the parks and trails and are not just visiting parks to transport their children to the playground or for organized sports.

There is interest in the natural environment. Typically, natural areas and parks are seen as different things. Neighbourhood parks consist of fine grass, trees, and the natural environment is held at bay by mowing and clearing. There may be a reason to consider blurring the line between these things. Part of the recreational neighbourhood park could consist of a naturalized area. Certainly, there should be an area of grass to facilitate free play, but areas that are unlikely to be used in

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that way could be naturalized. This makes particular sense where the park is adjacent to a woodlot or could provide access to a nearby trail.

Clearly, people are using their neighbourhood parks and are generally happy with them. However, they are asking for enhanced amenities in terms of better play equipment, better trails, splash pads, skate parks, recreational sports surfaces and exercise equipment etc.

Many people identified a community park as their “neighbourhood park”. From this, it can be concluded that community parks may also fulfill the role of a neighbourhood park for people who live nearby. As such, neighbourhood elements such as play equipment, walking paths, etc. should be included in community parks.

Recommendation

Recommendations for this section will be drawn from this information as well as other sections of the report and found under the discussion of each park.

SECTION D – About Your Community Park

Questions 27 to 34 seek to determine how community parks are used. Unfortunately, there was some misunderstanding in the difference between a neighbourhood and community park. A community park services the entire municipality and will often include facilities for use by groups. It will usually have parking available.

Discussion

When asked how often they or their family go to a community park, 57 percent indicated that they go once or twice a week or more while about one-third use a

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community park once or twice a month. Four and a half percent only have reason to go to the park once or twice a year and 4 percent use the parks rarely.

Over half of the respondents (57.3 %) identified Atlas Tube Centre (site) as the community park they would use most. In addition, Stoney Point (23.6 %), Millen Centre (15.1 %) and Comber Fairground (14.7 %) are all community parks that are well used by the residents of Lakeshore.

People use community parks much the same as neighbourhood parks with most favouring passive activities. As with neighbourhood parks walking for leisure, fitness and walking the dog were high on the list of activities people do in their community park. Almost one-third of the respondents go to their community park to use the play equipment and one-third visit the parks for baseball, soccer or racquet sports. Non-league sports and leisure activities were high on the list at about 20 percent.

People could “write in” other activities and many liked to skateboard, swim, bike, play tennis etc. The complete list can be found with question 29 in this appendix.

In terms of new opportunities, respondents expressed overwhelming interest in a splash pad. Other new opportunities listed were skateboarding, walking/biking trails, pickleball, tennis, ball hockey and basketball.

Conclusion

The six main community parks each have a unique theme or concept. Most have sports activities as a large component. Others, such as Pleasant Park provide more of an opportunity for leisure or more passive activities. Millen Centre, Comber Community Centre, and Atlas Tube Centre site have community centres, a library and or an arena associated with them. The uniqueness of each park should be maintained and enhanced. Additional facilities should be added where needed to support the main theme and programs of the park. Facilities to be developed in these parks should be focused on “community-based needs” rather than the

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needs of the neighbourhood adjacent to the park. However, a small portion of each should be used to provide neighbourhood uses.

Recommendation

Recommendations for this section will be drawn from this information as well as other sections of the report and found under the discussion of each park.

SECTION E – About Your Sports Fields

Questions 36 through 41 are intended to obtain information about sports fields. Sports fields are areas for organized sports such as baseball and soccer but could include non-team sports such as Tennis.

Discussion

When asked what park-based organized sports their family participate in, baseball (67.2 %) and soccer (55.7 %) were by far the most popular. Other popular activities are Basketball (17.5 %), Tennis (13.7 %) and Volleyball (13.1 %).

Optimist Park ball diamonds at almost 32 percent were indicated as the most used with Stoney Point Park soccer fields (21.7 %) and Ladouceur Park ball diamonds (20.6 %) getting a lot of use. Also getting a fair amount of use are Comber Community Centre ball diamonds (13.9 %) and Centennial Park ball diamonds (13.3 %).

There is a fair level of satisfaction (58.6 %) with the condition of the sports fields and courts in Lakeshore. Unfortunately, 41.4 percent are either somewhat or very dissatisfied. Somewhat fewer (41.6 %) are satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of amenities such as player's benches, stands, and parking. Some requests for additional facilities include (better) washrooms, parking, bleachers, sports lighting more benches near courts and fields, shade for both spectators and

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players, and specific improvements to basketball and tennis courts. A complete list can be found with question 39 of the survey.

Conclusion

The level of satisfaction on the condition of fields and courts has room for improvement as do the associated facilities. Effort should be directed to field and court maintenance improvements. A facilities and amenity review (underway) should be conducted to identify needs. The Town should continue to work with customers to identify needs.

Recommendation

Recommendations for this section will be drawn from this information as well as other sections of the report and found under the discussion of each park.

SECTION F – Additional Comments

Respondents were able to submit any additional comments. (Refer to Appendix G for comments and full survey results)

Discussion

When given the opportunity for open-ended comments, many took the opportunity to praise the park system in Lakeshore. “I LOVE,LOVE, LOVE that the county will be connected by trails ...”, “Thanks for making me LOVE LAKESHORE.”, “We think Lakeshore has done a great job creating parks.”, and “Overall satisfied” all point to a high level of support. Even comments with complaints or concerned were generally specific to a particular park or facility and don’t point to any dissatisfaction with the park system in general.

Very few respondents mention concern with the cost of maintaining and developing parks.

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See [Appendix H](#)
Parks & Recreation Master
Plan Open House Panels

3.2.2 Open Houses

Open houses were held at the Libro Community Centre, Comber Community Centre and the Atlas Tube Centre. Park inventory and analysis results were made available to attendees for review. Additional information was provided explaining what the parks master plan is, why it is needed and the purpose of the open house. As well information regarding existing trails in the Town of Lakeshore and new trends in parks was provided for review by all who attended. Additional comments were noted and have been included in Appendix H.

3.2.3 User Groups

The following list represents the community park stakeholders who were contacted for input into the planning process for their respective organizations. They are as follows:

Belle River Minor Baseball	Stoney Point Soccer Association
Belle River Minor Soccer Club	Town of Lakeshore Accessibility Committee
Belle River Men's Soccer	Town of Lakeshore Cricket Club
Belle River Mixed League	Town of Lakeshore Recreation Committee
Comber Youth Baseball	Town of Lakeshore Youth Committee
St. Clair Sailing Club	Woodslee Baseball

Recommendation

Recommendations for this section will be drawn from this information as well as other sections of the report and found under the discussion of each park