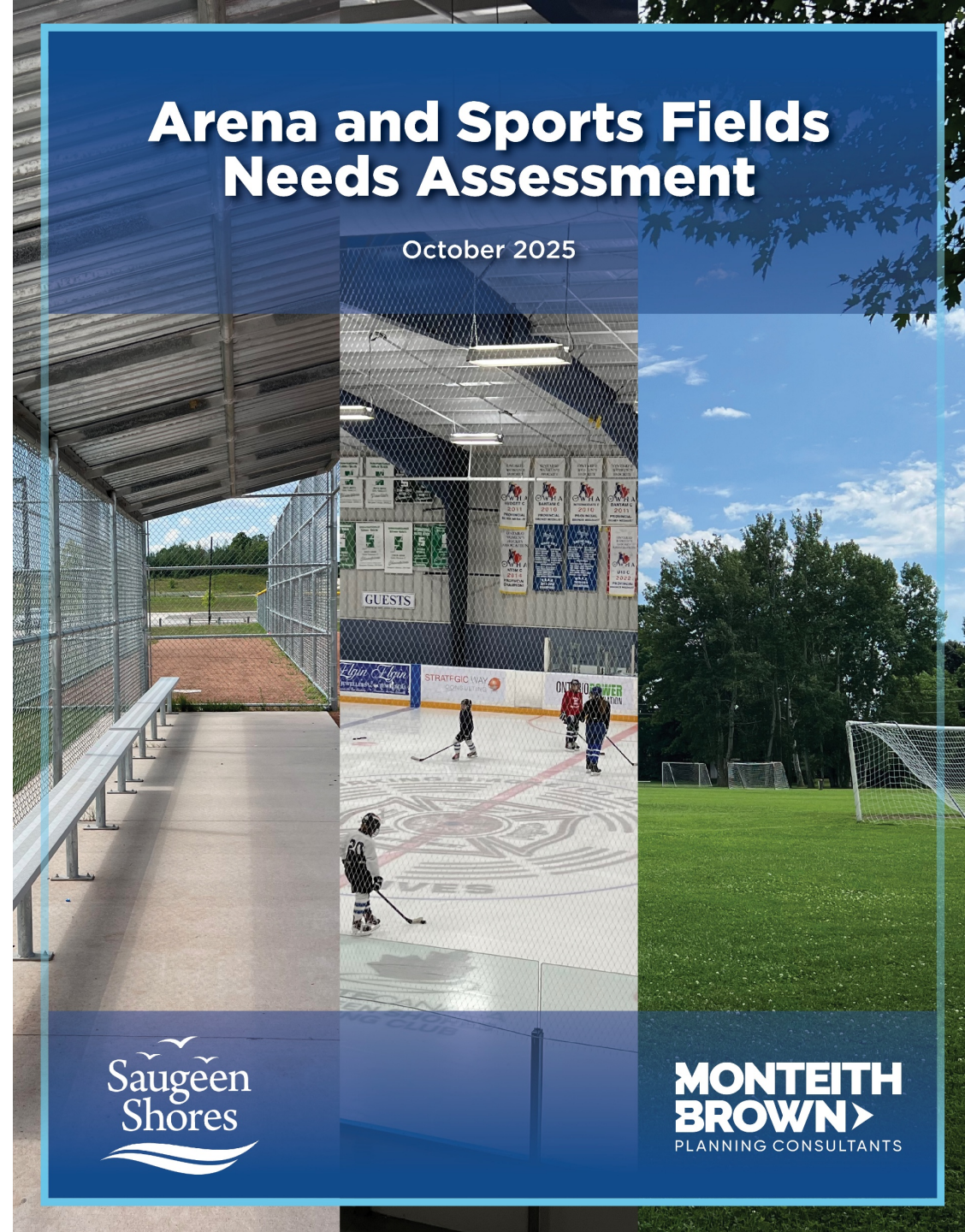




Arena and Sports Field Needs Assessment

Town of Saugeen Shores Council Presentation
November 2025



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October 2025



Purpose of the Study

The Study examines needs for ice pads, ball diamonds, soccer fields, and cricket fields in Saugeen Shores over the next 10 years to optimize the use of space and Town resources based on demographics, trends, inventories, participation and usage data, and stakeholder input.

The Town's 2016 Recreation Master Plan continues to guide long-range decision-making for Saugeen Shores' recreation system, and the overall types of facilities and services delivered by the municipality.



Arenas Supply

The Town has **two ice rinks** at the Coliseum in Southampton and the Plex in Port Elgin.

The **Southampton Coliseum** was constructed in 1977, and over the past 10 years, major investments were made to replace mechanical equipment, boards, slab, lighting, sound system and more. Accessibility retrofits and interior and exterior cosmetic enhancements were also made.

The Plex was constructed in 2000 and is co-located with the municipal office, Rotary Hall, and the new Pryde Aquatic & Wellness Centre.



Sports Field Supply

- There are 12 ball diamonds at five parks, including six diamonds at the new Lamont Sports Park (LSP). 10 diamonds are lit that provide additional capacity, resulting in an adjusted supply of **17 unlit equivalent ball diamonds**.
- There are nine soccer fields including the two new fields at Helliwell Park, six at J.H. Robertson Park, and one at Biener Park. Two fields are lit, and larger fields can be programmed as smaller fields (e.g., a full field can be used as two smaller fields), which allows for greater program capacities. This results in an adjusted supply of **13 unlit equivalent soccer fields**.
- There is a temporary **cricket field** at Biener Park.



Themes from Stakeholder Consultation

- User groups are **proud** of arenas and sports fields that exist in Saugeen Shores, including the Plex and LSP. Having a place to play cricket is also appreciated.
- **Organizations are growing** compared to pre-pandemic levels, which is driven by overall population growth and interest in sports. **Growing diversity** is also having an impact on sport participation.
- There is a **desire for more** arena and sports field time to accommodate new participants and grow their organizations. Additional arenas and sports fields were requested, and it was suggested that the Town's allocation process be reviewed to ensure that time is being scheduled appropriately and considers the needs of new organizations.
- **Suggested enhancements** to existing facilities included dryland training space for arena users, washrooms at LSP, and seating and shade areas. Some of the Town's ongoing capital projects are expected to address some of these suggestions.

Key Arena Considerations

- There are approximately 1,200 minor ice players. The number of participants are expected to grow to 1,400 players by 2036.
- The Town's arenas have an overall usage rate of 82% for the 2024/25 season.
- Over the past two ice seasons, a total of 258 hours of ice time were turned back by user groups. This suggests that groups are using less time than they are being allocated and that there is some capacity to accommodate additional use.
- A recommended target of 1 ice pad per 500 minor players suggests that there would be a need for a third ice pad shortly after 2036.



Recommended Arena Strategies

	<i>Timing</i>
1. Develop an ice allocation policy .	2026
2. Prepare a design and funding plan for a second ice pad at the Plex and consider a range of funding sources.	2029–2031
3. Create a plan to update and modernize the Green Room at the Southampton Coliseum.	2029–2031
4. Undertake accessibility retrofits at the Southampton Coliseum including adding an elevator and removing barriers from public areas.	2029–2031
5. Refresh and update the Needs Assessment and/or Recreation Master Plan to reconfirm ice pad needs. Consider the needs for curling at this time.	2029–2031
6. Subject to confirming needs, construct the second ice pad .	2036+

Key Ball Diamond Considerations

- There are a total of 1,800 minor and adult ball diamond players. The number of players is expected to reach 2,000 participants by 2036.
- Ball diamond utilization is low with a Town-wide usage rate of 28% in 2025; LSP diamonds have a collective usage rate of 45%. This suggests that there is capacity to for additional use, but the Town does not track time used for practices.
- A better understanding of total ball diamond usage is needed before any new ball diamonds are constructed.



Recommended Ball Diamond Strategies

Timing

7. Develop an **Athletic Field Allocation Policy**.

2026

8. **Monitor and track** total ball diamond use including games, practices, and tournaments.

2026

9. Through the new Athletic Field Allocation policy, **direct usage to LSP and Jubilee Park**.

2026

10. Remove **two to three ball diamonds** from Biener Park, Cameron Park or Lakeview Park.

2026–2028

11. Prepare a **facility fit design** for LSP Phase 3 with two lit softball diamonds and cricket.

2027

12. **Refresh and update** the Needs Assessment to reconfirm ball diamond needs.

2028

13. Subject to ball diamond needs, prepare a **design and funding plan** for Phase 3.

2029–2031

14. Undertake improvements to the **Jubilee Park** ball diamond.

2029–2031

15. If required, **refresh and update** the Needs Assessment/Recreation Master Plan.

2029–2031

16. Construct **two lit ball diamonds** at LSP.

2036+

17. Following development, evaluate the need to **decommission additional diamonds**.

2036+

Key Soccer Considerations

- There are 909 minor and adult soccer participants. The number of participants is expected to grow to 1,100 players by 2036.
- The Town's soccer fields are primarily used between Monday and Thursday, translating into a usage rate of 59%. Weekend use is low unless there is a tournament. Time is also being booked in other communities.
- The soccer organization follows Ontario Soccer's guidelines and as a result, fields are not used during certain days and times (e.g., Fridays).
- A recommended target of 1 field per 80 participants suggests that there is a need for one additional soccer field by 2036.



Recommended Soccer Field Strategies

Timing

18. **Monitor and track** total field use including games, practices, and tournaments.

2026

19. Promote the use of existing Town fields to **maximize use**.

2026

20. Encourage the **use of non-Town-owned** soccer fields.

2026

21. Maintain the **soccer field at Biener Park** on a temporary basis.

2026

22. Negotiate a **long-term use agreement** at J.H. Robertson Park for soccer.

2026

23. Explore the feasibility of **expanding Helliwell Park** by consulting with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority. Consideration should also be given to the Helliwell Park Master Plan. Public consultation is recommended.

2026-2028

24. Prepare a **design and funding plan** for expanding Helliwell Park to include a third soccer field (possibly lit) and the potential for a fourth future field.

2029-2031

25.Refresh and update the Needs Assessment/Recreation Master Plan to reconfirm needs.

2029-2031

26. Subject to confirming needs, **construct one or two new fields** at Helliwell Park.

2036+

Cricket Field Considerations

- There are approximately 200 cricket players in Saugeen Shores, which is projected to grow to 250 players by 2036.
- The temporary field is used about 20 hours per week, translating into a usage rate of 45%, suggesting there is capacity for additional use.
- The temporary cricket field at Biener Park has constraints including field and pitch quality and is undersized (less than 1 hectare in size), which limits playability.
- Saugeen Shores continues to diversify, which will continue to drive demand for a permanent cricket field that can be used for games, practices, and tournaments.



Recommended Cricket Strategies

	<i>Timing</i>
27. Prepare a facility fit design for LSP Phase 3 to include two lit softball diamonds with a cricket field.	2027
28. Prepare a design and funding plan for LSP Phase 3 for cricket.	2027
29. Construct a cricket field at LSP with supporting amenities.	2028-2029



Implementation Strategy

- Timing for implementing recommendations should be used as a guide and may be impacted by factors such as new participation and usage data, funding, etc. Town staff will bring recommendation forward for Council to discuss and approve.
- A funding plan will be needed with consideration given to using a range of funding sources (e.g., grants, partnerships, sponsorships, etc.).
- Updating the Needs Assessment and/or Recreation Master Plan will be needed to reassess needs to confirm that recommendations continue to align needs.

Questions and Comments

