

Township of Zorra



Recreation Department

Organizational and Operational Review



Final Report

July 18, 2011



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Purpose of the Review.....	1
1.2	Review Process.....	1
2.	Current Organizational Structure and Delivery System	3
2.1	Structure	3
2.2	Delivery System.....	4
3.	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Feedback and Interview Process.....	5
3.1	Interview Process.....	5
3.1.1	Council.....	5
3.2.2	Staff	7
3.2	SWOT Analysis	9
3.2.1	Council.....	9
3.2.2	Staff	11
3.3.3	Public and User Groups	12
4.	Comparative Analysis.....	14
5.	Gap Analysis	16
5.1	Recreation Department Staff.....	16
5.2	Recreation Programming	16
5.3	Marketing and Communications.....	17
5.4	Recreation Facilities	17
5.5	Council/Staff Relations	17
5.6	Rental Rates and Policies	18
6.	Recommendations and Options	18
6.1	Recreation Department Staff.....	18
6.2	Council/Staff Relations	19
6.3	Operation Improvements and Items for Further Review	19

Appendices

A – Notice of Project

B – Council Questionnaire

C – Staff Questionnaire

D – Recreation Department Comparative Questionnaire

E – Summary of Responses to Comparative Questionnaire



1. INTRODUCTION

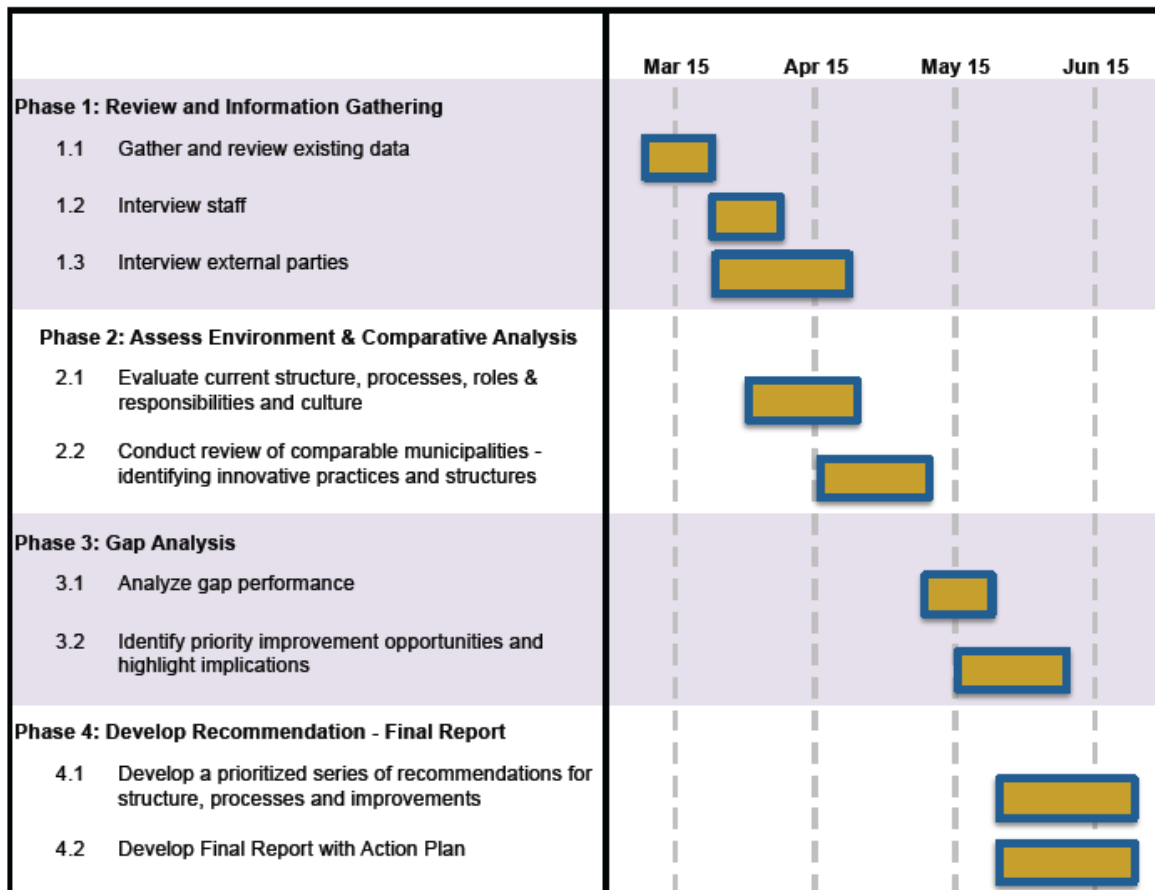
1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

As a result of direction given by the Council of the Township of Zorra, an Organizational and Operational Review of the Recreation Department was authorized and carried out by the Township’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

The purpose of the Review was to determine if the present organizational structure of the Recreation Department was efficient and if operational improvements could be achieved in order to build a better, more efficient and effective Department.

1.2 REVIEW PROCESS

The review process took the following four-phase approach:



Phase 1: Review and Information Gathering

In this Phase, the purpose and reason for the Organizational Review was conveyed to Council, staff, user groups and the public (Appendix A). The project plan was set out and the consultation plan was communicated. Existing job descriptions and facilities data was compiled as well a comprehensive review of operations was carried out.



This phase included targeted participation of management and staff through an interactive questionnaire (Appendix B). Councillors also participated through an interactive questionnaire (Appendix C). It was important to use a highly collaborative consultation process to conduct interviews as well as holding two public consultation meetings.

The following tasks were also carried out:

- interviews with Staff
- interviews with members of Council
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis and interviews
 - Council
 - Staff
 - Public and user groups
- identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats through submission of forms and two public input sessions

Phase 2: Assessment of Current Environment & Comparative Analysis

Phase 2 focused on an examination of the current environment and the challenges facing the Recreation Department. This assessment included an evaluation of the Department's organization structure and organizational culture. Based on the data gathered and Phase 1 tasks, an assessment of the current environment looked at the following:

- identification of current organizational structure and functional accountabilities
- an evaluation of the current management and reporting structure
- an assessment of leadership and management competencies
- a review of current planning, decision-making and implementation strategies
- a review of core competencies of existing staff
- an assessment of organizational culture

This phase also saw a comparative analysis of like municipalities and identification of innovative practices and structures and included:

- benchmarking of Township's organizational structure against comparable municipalities
- benchmarking of Township's service delivery against comparable municipalities
- in depth interviews with Recreation/Leisure Services staff from like sized municipalities

Phase 3: Gap Analysis

Building upon the work completed in Phases 1 and 2, this phase focused on identifying the gap between the current environment and a vision of organizational excellence. Performance challenges related to organizational structure and organizational culture were identified and documented in this phases.



Phase 4: Development of Recommendations

Recommendations for organizational and operational change were identified and are the culmination of all phases of work. Recommendations have been developed with a clear rationale together with anticipated benefits and the steps required in order to facilitate implementation. Additionally, an approach to prioritizing the recommendations has been proposed.

2. CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY SYSTEM

2.1 STRUCTURE

The Township of Zorra Recreation Department is responsible for operation and maintenance of the following facilities:

- Thamesford District Recreation Centre
- Thamesford Library and Resource Centre
- Thamesford Scout Hall
- Thamesford Outdoor Swimming Pool
- Harrington Hall
- Embro Town Hall
- Embro West Zorra Community Centre

In addition, the Recreation Department is responsible for operation and maintenance of 70 acres of parkland. This includes playground structures, baseball diamonds, soccer fields and passive parkland. Major parks include:

- Thamesford North Park
- Thamesford Lions South Park
- Thamesford Grace Patterson Park
- Embro Matheson Park
- Embro West Zorra Community Centre Park
- Harrington Community Park

The Department is led by the Facilities Supervisor who reports directly to the Township's Chief Administrative Officer. There is one Administrative Assistant reporting directly to the Facilities Supervisor. Two full-time Facilities Operators and three part-time Facilities Operators staff Thamesford District Recreation Centre (TDRC). Three full-time Facilities Operators staff Embro West Zorra Community Centre (EWZCC) during ice season. One employee transfers to the Public Works Department after ice has been removed from EWZCC.

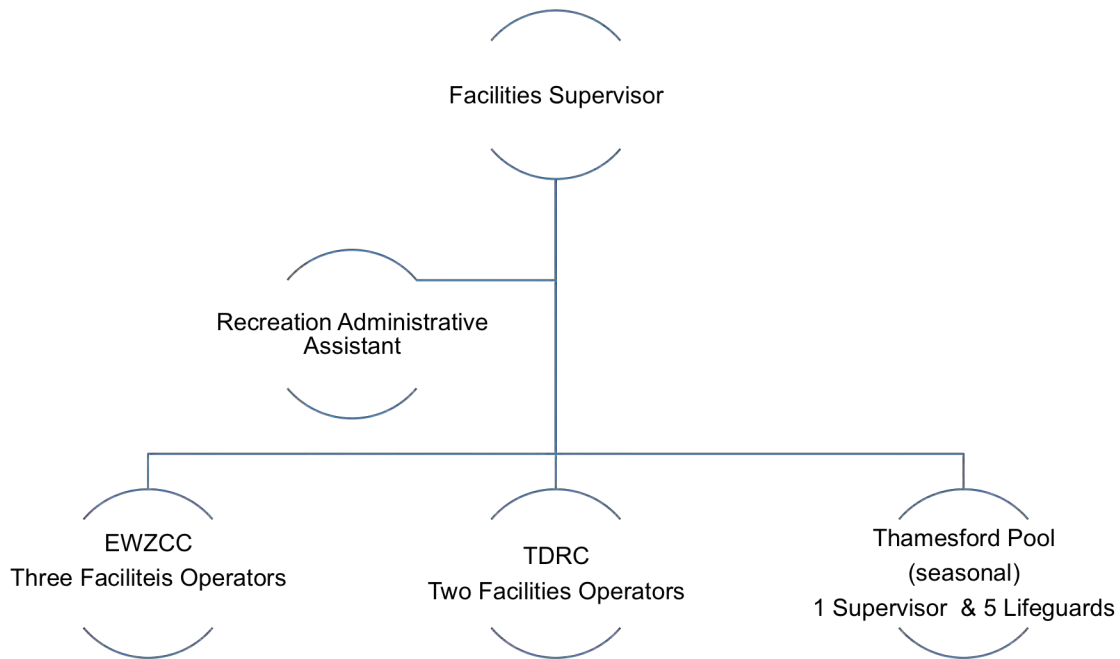
Thamesford Outdoor Swimming Pool operates from June through August and employs one head lifeguard and six lifeguards.



The Recreation Department organizational chart is shown below.

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Recreation Department Organizational Chart



The Recreation Department also provides support for the Zorra Recreation Advisory Committee (ZRAC). The primary purpose of the Committee is to review and provide public comments on the general recreation program of the Township of Zorra and report back to the Township Council.

The Township's Recreation Department was last restructured in 2008 when the Director of Recreation position was eliminated. The Facilities Supervisor assumed general control of the Department with respect to operation and maintenance of the facilities and staff at the Municipal Office assumed the policy and strategic planning functions.

2.2 DELIVERY SYSTEM

With the exception of swimming lessons, the Township does not deliver programs directly. The Township supports non-municipal organizations and groups through the provision of facilities and parks.

The following organizations and groups are main users of the Township's recreation and cultural facilities:

- Thistle Theatre



- Embro West Zorra Agricultural Society
- Caledonian Society
- Embro Minor Hockey Association
- Embro Minor Soccer
- Embro Minor Ball
- Embro NBC Hockey League
- North Oxford Hockey League
- Zorra Skating Club
- Thamesford Minor Soccer
- Thamesford Lions Club
- Thamesford Skating Club
- Zorra Girls Minor Hockey
- Thamesford Area Minor Hockey Association
- Thamesford Minor Ball
- Thamesford Trojans
- Thamesford NBC Hockey League
- Thamesford Men's Slo-Pitch League

3. INTERVIEW PROCESS AND STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS FEEDBACK

3.1 INTERVIEW PROCESS

In order to engage Council, Staff and members of the public and user groups, a multi-dimensional consultation process was used. Council members were interviewed individually and were asked a series of 15 questions (Appendix B) to understand opinions, perceptions and identifying areas for improvement to meet the needs of the public now and in the future. Members of Staff were also interviewed individually and were asked a series of 19 questions (Appendix C) to understand external opinions, personal opinions and identifying areas for improvement to meet the needs of the public now and in the future.

3.1.1 COUNCIL

Council members were asked a series of questions to elicit opinions and comments on the Recreation Department. Answers from the questions have been grouped into three general categories;

- What Should a Recreation Department Do?
- Areas of Concern?
- Suggestions for Improvement?



What Should the Recreation Department Do?

Members of Council were also asked what a typical Recreation Department should do and what kinds of services it should provide. It was a general consensus that a Recreation Department should provide services and/or facilities needed or wanted by a majority of the population. It was noted by several Councillors that programming should also extend to all ages of the population and not solely focus on youth sports. The present services offered by the Recreation Department are very limited and should be extended beyond public skating and summer programming at Thamesford Swimming Pool. There was also a general theme that Township facilities are under utilized on a year round basis. It was felt that both Community Centres sit dormant too often and efforts should be made to entice outside service providers to offer programming such as yoga, karate or other such activities. It was further suggested that contact be made with seniors groups to gather opinions what the Township could do to facilitate hosting seniors events. With respect to program offerings for seniors and other activities, it was also felt that user rates should be reasonable so as to attract groups to use Township facilities.

The expectations of what the Organizational Review should accomplish included:

- Methods for improved customer service
- Improved communication plan
- Targeted goals and prioritization of projects
- A chance for the public to have input on how and what the Recreation Department should be on a go forward basis
- Rationalization of staff resources

Areas of Concern

There was a wide range of opinions from members of Council with respect to the series of questions on this topic. Although answers were more wide-ranging several common themes did emerge.

- Improved customer service
- Openness from staff on implementation of new ideas
- Improved communications

Suggestions for Improvement

Members of Council were also asked what could be changed and how to structure the Recreation Department to best meet the needs of the public now, and in the future.

It was expressed that all Recreation Department staff need to improve customer service skills and the ability to communicate effectively with the public, user groups and amongst staff.



There needs to be a concerted effort to maximize usage at Township facilities. Staff, Council and the Zorra Recreation Advisory Committee need to investigate how programming for all residents can be implemented but not necessarily carried out by Township staff. This should include a complete review of rates charged and implementation of policies to entice rentals of facilities.

Recreation Department staff should be utilized where needed and sharing of staff between Thamesford and Embro needs to occur.

3.1.2 RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

All seven full-time Recreation Department staff members participated in the interview process and were asked a series of questions to elicit opinions and comments on the Recreation Department.

General perceptions and comments?

Staff were asked a series of general questions regarding their own perceptions and external perceptions about the Department. Response below list what Staff hoped the review would accomplish.

- Improved communications
- More positive working environment for staff and user groups
- Building a stronger more responsive Department
- Build a better understanding and relationship with Council
- Weed out inefficiencies
- Elicit public comments on what is wanted and needed

Staff were also asked what they enjoyed most and least about working for the Township of Zorra?

- Enjoys serving the public
- Enjoys serving the local community where they live and seeing friends and neighbours
- Likes the variety of tasks and varied seasons
- Good pay and benefits
- Great potential for improvement
- Recognition of a job well done by the public
- Negativity (lately) about Recreation
- Interference from member of Council in day to day operations
- Not enough staff
- Lack of commitment by Council to established policies and rates – staff being asked to cut deals



- Lack of respect from arena users – they feel like they own employees

With respect to perceptions and external opinions from the public and user groups there was not a general consensus in the answers. However, it was felt that user groups in Thamesford and Embro had differing expectations in levels of service required. It was also felt there was lack of understanding by the public of what duties and responsibilities staff are expected to carry out. With respect to Council's opinion of the Department, it was felt there was negativity towards the work carried out by Recreation. Again, it was felt there was lack of understanding by Council of what duties and responsibilities staff are expected to carry out.

Areas of Concern

There was a series of questions dealing with what is working in Recreation and what is not working. There were questions dealing with morale, impediments to job performance and frustrations felt by staff.

- Each arena is run differently
- Workers responsibilities need to be clearly defined
- Improved communications
- TDRC is in need of upgrades
- There needs to be a five-year plan for each facility
- Buildings are not as clean as they should be as it is hard to do on one person shifts. More day time maintenance is required

With respect to barriers for carrying out the job duties and major frustrations, the following points were noted:

- Budgets do not allow for routine maintenance of equipment
- Councillors interfering by directing staff to charge lower rates
- Not enough part-time help
- Lack of sharing of employees between Thamesford and Embro

Suggestions for Improvement

Staff members were also asked what could be changed and how to structure the Recreation Department to best meet the needs of the public now, and in the future.

The theme most mentioned was that Recreation is understaffed during the ice season making it difficult to carry out required and routine maintenance. More than one employee felt there should be one worker with supervisory responsibilities at each arena. Similarly, it was also suggested the Township make greater use of part-time staff to assist full time workers. There was a recommendation that university students be hired to run summer programs for students and/or seniors. This position could be made co-op to try and leverage full year coverage.



Another common theme was the need to have commonality at both arenas from scheduling, equipment, supplies and standard operating procedures. This would allow seamless use of full-time and part-time staff at each arena.

Staff also feel that meetings with Council should be held to better appreciate issues that arise over the course of a year.

3.2 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ANALYSIS

The second phase of consultation was the use a strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT) analysis. SWOT analyses have been conducted by many organizations over the years and is a tool used to understand an organization's:

- **Strengths** - focusing on the elements that make the organization what it is
- **Weaknesses** – minimizing/correcting areas that leave the organization vulnerable
- **Opportunities** - maximizing prospects and valuing change
- **Threats** - ensuring awareness of risks or perils to the organization

Strengths and Weaknesses are typically internal while Opportunities and Threats are external.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Recreation Department (Internal)

In this part of the analysis, factors, which are internal to, or within the control of the Department, should be identified. These may include: staffing strengths/weaknesses, skills or resources, structure, finances, staff/directors, and style of leadership within the organization or systems such as communications channels.

Opportunities and Threats Facing the Recreation Department (External)

All organizations are affected by outside influences over which they may have little control. The Recreation Department is no different in that many factors have varying degrees of impact, both positive and negative. Factors to be addressed here will relate to the goals and objectives of the Recreation Department. They may include activities of competing centres, government policies, society/community influences or trends, markets, the economy, lifestyles, the environment, demographic trends, technological advances or alternatives.

Council, staff and the public were consulted individually and asked to complete a SWOT analysis. A separate review of group was carried out.

3.2.1 COUNCIL

All five members of Council completed a SWOT analysis and provided input on each section.

Strengths

- We are fortunate to have two recreation facilities for a municipality of Zorra's size
- Newly renovated Embro West Zorra Community Centre



- A wide range of parks and facilities (soccer fields, baseball diamonds, passive park etc.)
- An outdoor swimming pool
- Handicapped accessible facilities
- Stable population willing to support projects
- An adequate number of staff

Weaknesses

- Washrooms not fully accessible and out of date
- Thamesford District Recreation Centre appears to be out of date
- Lack of clarity around staff responsibilities
- Less than optimal use of facilities
- Staff are not typically receptive to new ideas and methods of operation
- Income is not rising as fast as expenses
- More facilities than the population can adequately support – two community centres fighting for tax dollars
- Debt from infrastructure projects may inhibit funds available to upgrade Thamesford District Recreation Centre or add new recreation facilities

Opportunities

- Partnering with Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board
- Awareness of the benefits of physical activity
- Establishment of an off-leash dog park
- Skateboard park
- Extension of pool season
- Offering of day programs for PD days and summer programs
- Provide additional services for renters of facilities such as set up and tear down
- Harmonization of staff to work at both centres
- Establishment of programs for all population groups not just for youth
- Opportunity to replace Thamesford District Recreation Centre with a year-round multi-function facility that would be a draw for residents looking to locate in our community

Threats

- Competition for surrounding centres that have recently upgraded facilities (St. Marys, Thames Centre, Woodstock, Stratford)



- Proximity to larger urban centres (London, Woodstock, Stratford, Ingersoll) limits the types of programs that could be offered locally
- User group numbers are declining and/or disbanding
- Increased overhead costs for facilities
- Declining youth population in rural Ontario

3.2.2 STAFF

All seven staff members completed a SWOT analysis and provided input on each section.

Strengths

- Well trained staff
- Educated and competent staff
- Well maintained and kept facilities
- Front-line staff are competent, work well together and have a good relationship with user groups
- Thamesford is close to London and can draw users
- Provides community with facilities for youth and adult sports
- Good supply of parkland
- User fees and rental rates are competitively priced
- Handicapped accessible facilities
- Arenas are staffed by local residents who care about the community
- Major functions (Embroid Fair, Highland Games etc.) are well run
- An adequate number of staff

Weaknesses

- Not enough support from Council and too much interference from Council
- Not enough staff – could use more student help
- Users have higher expectations
- Poor communication
- Each arena is run differently and schedules are different at each arena
- Lack of training
- Neither community centre has drawing capacity such as a pool, gym facility, fitness room or walking track
- Different rules for different users

Opportunities

- Use of university students to offer recreation programming



- Recreation staff could run leagues
- Staff/user groups to run events and profit share
- Offer summer programming – inline hockey, roller skating, basketball, badminton, etc.
- Updated facility can attract new customers
- Look at daycare opportunities in larger facility
- Staff wanting to build a better relationship with Council

Threats

- Economy has, and will impact recreation usage – cost of recreation for user, tax payer and Township
- Volunteer burnout
- Lack of funding from senior governments
- Small tax base
- Competition for surrounding centres that have recently upgraded facilities (St. Marys, Thames Centre, Woodstock, Stratford)
- Proximity to larger urban centres (London, Woodstock, Stratford, Ingersoll) limits the types of programs that could be offered locally
- Aging facility in Thamesford
- An inadequate number of staff

3.2.1 Public and User Groups

The Township received nine SWOT analysis forms from members of the public and user groups. There were also two public input sessions held (Thamesford and Embro) where members of the public had an opportunity to provide comments on the review process.

Strengths

- Strong volunteer base and community support
- Community support
- Availability of facilities (arenas)
- Booth & washrooms at ball diamonds
- Familiar staff, helpful staff
- Improvements to Embro West Zorra Community Centre
- Convenient location of facilities
- Well-maintained

Weaknesses

- Baseball facilities not setup for older players (mound, net)



- Poor seating at Thamesford District Recreation Centre
- Safety issues at Thamesford District Recreation Centre bleachers
- No dialogue between Council and user groups
- Formal process needed to raise issues
 - More open process
 - No feedback
- User groups should be treated as “customers”
- Facilities could be made more available – possibly at reduced rates
- Inconsistent communication regarding rental rates
- Facilities not always available at night if no staff working – school auditorium as well
- Smaller user groups do not feel value for rental rates
- Recreation opportunities geared towards younger population
- Could staff work evenings in summer while groups are in the parks
- Part-time jobs &/or volunteer hours for local kids
- Reduce energy = reduced costs (turn off lights, lower a/c)
- Pool closes before end of summer

Opportunities

- Ticket ice available (similar to that offered in St. Marys)
- Offer reduced rates to user groups to increase use of facilities
- Strong rec facilities encourage new residents & small business
- Better advertising for minor sports & other activities
 - Possibly in front of library
 - 10,000 cars a day travel Dundas Street in Thamesford
- Off leash dog park
- Splash pad (Trillium grant?)
- Skate park
- Earlier ice times at TDRC
- Rent out facilities (ie hall at arena)
- Cost reduction / eliminate costs
- Unused facilities = lost revenue – why not rent out facilities for less rather than leave unused
- Online booking system for ice/hall rentals
- Make ice available off-hours
- Township website – update facility info & rec events, sporting events
- Value added rentals – people willing to pay for extra services (weddings)



- Investigate green energy opportunities
- Invest in facilities to encourage more participants (concession booth – North Park; netting; mound)
- ZRAC needs user groups represented
- Formal process to raise concerns
- Better use of Embro West Zorra Community Centre & Thamesford District Recreation Centre for seniors programs
- Set standard for recycling
- Offer sports in arena in off-season such as volleyball
- Better control over canteen inventory

Threats

- Competition from other arenas
- Volunteer burnout
- Potential liabilities to Township in emergencies
 - Contact person & number could be made available
 - Night game – no lights in arena – who do you call

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In order to develop recommendations for any structural changes that may benefit the Township of Zorra, it was appropriate to look at other similar organizations in order to compare structures and service delivery. Having carried out five interviews, it was very clear there was not one management structure or service delivery method that was consistent. In fact, there was not one common or consistent structure from the five municipalities. The table below provides data on similar sized municipalities and the five municipalities chosen for review.

In order to compare structures and service delivery, selected municipalities were asked of a series of questions (Appendix D). The purpose of this questionnaire was to ascertain whether a common or consistent management structure was utilized by like sized municipalities. It was hoped this part of the exercise would play an important role in making recommendations on any structural realignment of Zorra's Recreation Department. Given the incongruence in management structures and delivery systems, the scope of this part of the review has been abbreviated. However, an overview of certain relevant functions and operational items has been carried out and a summary of questions is attached as Appendix E.



Township of Zorra

Recreation Department Organizational and Operational Review Final Report

Facilities Survey

	Population		Urban Population		Rural Population		# of Arenas		# Com Centres		Baseball Diamonds		Soccer Pitches		Tennis Courts		Basketball Courts		Swimming Pools	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Single Pad	Twin Pad	Attach to Arena	Free Standing	Lit	Unlit	Lit	Unlit	Lit	Unlit	Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor
South Huron, MU	9,982	5,236	52.5	4,746	47.5	2	0	1	4	7	2	1	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Mapleton, TP	9,851	1,692	17.2	8,159	82.8	1	0	1	2	4	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wellesley, TP	9,789	2,090	21.4	7,699	78.6	2	0	1	3	4	2	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brockton, MU	9,641	4,905	50.9	4,736	49.1	1	0	1	3	6	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grey Highlands, MU	9,480	1,409	14.9	8,071	85.1	4	0	3	4	3	4	0	8	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Huron East, MU	9,310	3,804	40.9	5,506	59.1	2	0	2	1	7	2	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
North Dumfries, TP	9,063	3,742	41.3	5,321	58.7	1	0	1	1	3	4	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Perth, MU	8,839	4,220	47.7	4,619	52.3	1	0	1	2	6	2	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Minto, Town of	8,504	4,687	55.1	3,817	44.9	3	0	2	1	5	2	1	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
South Bruce Peninsula, T	8,415	2,322	27.6	6,093	72.4	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1
Zorra	8,125	1,904	23.4	6,221	76.6	2	0	2	0	3	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Central Huron, MU	7,641	3,082	40.3	4,559	59.7	1	0	1	3	5	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Plympton-Wyoming, T	7,506	2,080	27.7	5,426	72.3	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	1
East Zorra-Tavistock, TP	7,350	2,659	36.2	4,691	63.8	1	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Bluewater< MU	7,120	1,128	15.8	5,992	84.2	3	0	3	1	5	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drummond/North Emsley, TP	7,118	16	0.2	7,102	99.8	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mono, T	7,071	2,185	30.9	4,886	69.1	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0
Blue Mountains, T	6,825	2,217	32.5	4,608	67.5	1	0	1	0	4	0	3	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
North Middlesex, MU	6,740	1,691	25.1	5,049	74.9	1	0	1	3	4	1	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huron-Kinloss, TP	6,515	1,446	22.2	5,069	77.8	2	0	1	4	2	4	3	6	0	8	0	7	0	0	1
South Bruce, MU	5,939	2,287	38.5	3,652	61.5	2	0	2	1	5	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Southwest Middlesex, MU	5,890	2,095	35.6	3,795	64.4	1	0	1	3	4	1	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Averages	8,032	2,586	32.1%	5,446	67.9%	1.45	0.00	1.14	2.00	4.18	2.05	0.45	4.09	0.73	0.91	0.00	0.73	0.05	0.68	

Municipalities reviewed in depth.

Management Staffing

The Township of Wellesly was the only municipality employing a Director of Recreation. The Township of South Bruce is in the midst of recruiting a Facility and Recreation Manager who will oversee operation of both arenas as well as all municipal facilities. Huron Kinloss Township operates the Ripley Community Centre under the direction of the Director of Facilities while the Lucknow Community Centre is operated by the Lucknow Lion's Club, Lucknow Kinsmen, and the Lucknow Agricultural Society under the direction of an Arena Manager. The arenas are run completely independently. Huron East operates Seaforth & District Community Centre and the Brussels, Morris and Grey Community Centre that are managed by an Arena Manager in each centre. The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock has a contract Arena Manager.

Arena Staffing

(including Management)

Wellesly – St. Clements

Wellesly – Wellesly¹

Full-time

1

1

Part-time

5 (winter only)

5 (winter only)

¹ One full-time worker floats between St. Clements and Wellesly



East Zorra-Tavistock	3	5 students
South Bruce – Mildmay	2	2 (laid off in summer)
South Bruce – Teeswater	2	2 (laid off in summer)
Huron East – Brussels etc.	2	3 (winter only)
Huron Kinloss – Ripley	2	2

None of the municipalities surveyed utilize two person shifts except in East Zorra and Wellesly where part-time help is utilized during minor hockey or junior hockey games. The other municipalities do not hire net peggers as the respective minor hockey associations and/or referees will peg the nets.

There are operational issues that were identified for further review that will be investigated in greater detail such as:

- Contract out canteen
- Grass cutting and flower bed maintenance by municipal forces
- Review of Municipal Alcohol Policy to permit the use of private security firms
- Use of on-line scheduling and facility booking software

5. GAP ANALYSIS

The purpose of Section 5 is to identify gaps within the existing Recreation Department Structure. Recommendations listed in Section 6 are as a result of the gap analysis.

5.1 RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

In review of all existing data, interviews, SWOT analyses and personal observations, there appears to be general support for the Recreation Department staff. However, there are concerns that staff attitudes and moral have been falling over the past year, as has performance. One of the common themes is that staff does not appear to be overly busy during the winter season and are not keeping the facilities as clean as they should be. Other items directed towards staff out of the SWOT analyses include:

- Too comfortable in existing positions
- Low tolerance to demanding community members i.e. poor customer service
- Regular maintenance such as emptying of garbage containers, refilling of paper towel and soap dispensers not occurring
- Staff not motivated to carry out jobs to the best of their abilities

5.2 RECREATION PROGRAMMING

The Township of Zorra historically performed limited direct recreation programming, relying instead on volunteer organizations to develop and co-ordinate recreation programming for children, youth, adults and seniors. However, demands on volunteer's time, fundraising requirements, program safety and risk management concerns, new types of leisure activities for people of all ages, and the burnout of long-time volunteers



are concerns most volunteer organizations reported during this process. The role of the volunteer and the Township's reliance on volunteers is a major gap.

No members of the current staff have professional training or education in the field of recreation programming. The Township also faces threats from neighbouring municipalities that offer programs and whether there is a population base to support local programs. The Township does have an adequate number of recreation facilities as well as three elementary schools. The Thames Valley District School Board now has a resource person responsible for community outreach to facilitate sharing of resources.

5.3 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Recreation Department and community based sports, recreation and social organizations do not currently have a joint method of promoting their facilities and services to the residents of Zorra. Many municipalities co-ordinate with sports, recreation and social organizations to produce annual or semi-annual recreation guides. There may interest from community organizations (soccer/ball/hockey/figure skating/seniors clubs etc.) in promoting their programs. There is also competition from sports organizations across the Township in promoting and advertising (Thamesford Minor Hockey/Embroid Minor Hockey, Thamesford Minor Ball/Embroid Minor Ball, Thamesford Minor Soccer/Embroid Minor Soccer, Thamesford Skating Club/Zorra Skating Club).

5.4 RECREATION FACILITIES

The purpose of this review was not to carry out a master plan or review of municipal facilities. However, it should be noted there concern expressed by Council, staff, user groups and the public over the condition of Thamesford District Recreation Centre. The issues identified include:

- Limited seating for an arena home to a Junior D hockey team (Thamesford Trojans)
- Trojan dressing room too small
- Lobby is too small
- Inadequate washroom facilities
- No heated viewing area
- Ice surface is undersized
- Bench areas are too small and not enough room to expand

5.5 COUNCIL/STAFF RELATIONS

The Recreation Department staff expressed concern that Council members have not been supportive of staff when policies have been enforced and user groups have taken exception. The perception from staff is that if someone complains, the position taken by staff will be overturned. Staff also expressed concern that rental rules established by the Zorra Recreation Advisory Committee and endorsed by Township Council are being questioned by members of Council when user groups/members of the public express



dissatisfaction to Council. It is also felt that Council members are becoming too involved in the day-to-day operation of recreation facilities.

5.6 RENTAL RATES AND SPECIAL POLICIES

There was a general frustration expressed by Recreation Department staff, Council and user groups that rental rates are not being applied equitably and that an in depth review of all rental rates and policies governing rental forgiveness need to be examined.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS

6.1 RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF

Recreation Department staff have the most interaction with members of the public and spend the most time being scrutinized by the public. As such, it is common that misunderstandings and misconceptions can occur. This has been highlighted in public comments and comments from Council concerning:

- Customer service with user groups is lacking
- There is a perception from the public that staff are not always busy (too much time spent on computer)
- Accountability from staff about care of facilities
- Staff are not receptive to implementation of new ideas

Unfortunately, when accusations and comments are made, staff do not have the ability to defend their actions or provide background information. Often comments are relayed well after occurrences and it is difficult for management to follow up and report. With respect to time spent in the office and not out cleaning the facility, it must be remembered that staff are entitled to two fifteen-minute breaks and a lunch/supper break. These are often interrupted especially during evening shifts when the facilities are only staffed by one person.

It is recognized that points raised are valid and do deserve to be acted upon. Township staff have not undergone customer service training and conflict resolution training.

- Recommendation 1:** **That all Recreation Department staff be required to attend customer service oriented training.**
- Recommendation 2:** **That all Recreation Department staff be required to attend conflict resolution training.**
- Recommendation 3:** **That a complaint/compliment system policy be implemented. This policy will be prominently displayed and publicized at each facility. Similar to the by-law**



enforcement policy, anonymous complaints will not be acted upon.

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It is apparent that Council and staff are feeling frustrated over issues surrounding rental rates and when users should be charged. Staff are of the opinion that once rates have been set by ZRAC and endorsed by Council there is a duty to enforce these rate policies. Council has expressed that staff are not flexible enough and can be obtuse when dealing with user groups looking for lesser rates. An example of this is the seasonal rate charged to the women's soccer team in Embro. Even though they only play a six game home schedule they are being charged a seasonal rate. The rate policy as established only sets a seasonal rate, therefore staff are obligated to charge the rate set by Council.

Recommendation 4: **That a complete review of user fees be carried out and that Recreation Department staff be included in the review to provide feedback and comments on the applicability of rates and policies.**

Recommendation 5: **That Council hold an informal meeting with Recreation Department staff at each centre at least once every other year.**

Recommendation 6: **That future Council orientation sessions include a specific training session for roles and responsibilities.**

6.3 OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS AND ITEMS FOR FURTHER REVIEW

During the consultation phase of the review, there were a number of operational improvements identified that should either be implemented or require further review.

Canteen Booth

Three of the five municipalities surveyed contract out canteen operations. In larger municipalities it is not uncommon that food and beverage services be tendered out. In smaller rural municipalities it is more likely that local sports or cultural organizations are selected to operate canteen sales. This is the case at North Park Booth in Thamesford during the baseball/slo-pitch season.



It was also noted there is a disparity in gross profit margin between Thamesford District Recreation Centre and Embro West Zorra Community Centre. There have been preliminary discussions regarding this matter but in order to clear this matter and eliminate questions of theft, there should be further investigation.

Recommendation 7: That a review of accounting and costing of goods be carried out on canteen booth sales at Thamesford District Recreation Centre and Embro West Zorra Community Centre.

Recommendation 8: That a study be prepared on the feasibility of contracting out canteen sales.

Municipal Alcohol Management Policy

The Township's present Alcohol Management Policy was adopted by Council in 1995 and a review was carried out in 2005 with several minor amendments made at that time. It was identified through the review process as an issued that should be thoroughly reviewed. Most municipalities in Ontario do have Alcohol Management Policies and it would be prudent for the Zorra Recreation Advisory Committee to carry out a thorough review of this policy. Recreation Department staff should be invited to provide comments on the review as they deal directly with users of the facility in relation to the Alcohol Management Policy.

Recommendation 9: That the Zorra Recreation Advisory Committee be instructed to carry out a thorough and comprehensive review of the present Alcohol Management Policy and that comparative policies be obtained for review. This review should examine:

- **The use of Township supplied bartenders**
- **The use of private security firms in place of the Ontario Provincial Police**
- **Licensing of the facilities for the sale of alcohol on a permanent basis**
- **The requirement for Council approval to serve alcohol in the presence of minors**

Operational Initiatives

There were a number of suggestions and comments made that did warrant inclusion in this review not classified under any specific heading. It is my opinion the following items are important and worthy of implementation.



- Recommendation 10:** In order to harmonize operations at each centre, standardization of equipment and supplies from cleaning products to canteen supplies be implemented.
- Recommendation 11:** Review Beaty Room cleaning costs to determine if this would be better carried out by Township staff.
- Recommendation 12:** That a Business Plan be prepared for Township staff (including potential student workers) to carry out grass cutting and flower bed maintenance.
- Recommendation 13:** That a consultant be retained to prepare and evaluate a Request for Proposal for implementation of an on-line scheduling software program.
- Recommendation 14:** That staff carry out an after season wrap up meeting with user groups (hockey/figure skating in spring and soccer/baseball in fall) to review the past season and to prioritize items for the upcoming season. ZRAC chair
- Recommendation 15:** That further in depth review be carried out to determine what role the municipality should play in offering or facilitating recreation programming for all segments of the population.

This report and the recommendations contained herein are presented for Council's consideration.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald W. MacLeod", written over a horizontal line.

Donald W. MacLeod
Chief Administrative Officer



March 23, 2011

Dear Recreation User Group:

As a result of direction given by Council, an organizational and operational review of the Recreation Department is to be carried out. The Township's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will be responsible for conducting the review and preparing a report for Council's review. The purpose of the review is to determine if the present organizational structure is efficient and if operational improvements could be achieved.

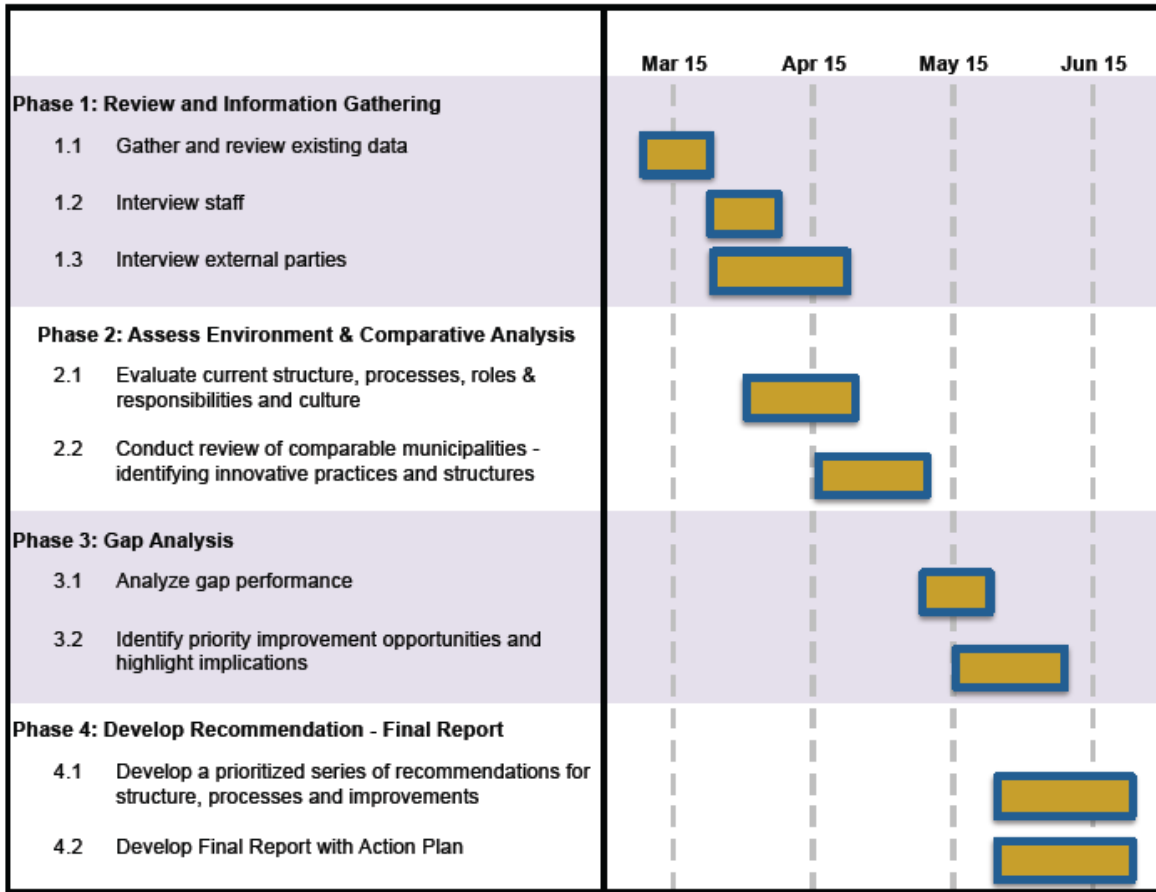
This review will commence immediately and will include:

- Review of job descriptions by CAO and employees to review of job descriptions
- Individual interviews with all staff
- Individual interviews with Council members
- Interviews with user groups including:
 - ⇒ Thistle Theatre
 - ⇒ Embro West Zorra Agricultural Society
 - ⇒ Caledonian Society
 - ⇒ Embro Minor Hockey Association
 - ⇒ Embro Minor Soccer
 - ⇒ Zorra Skating Club
 - ⇒ Thamesford Minor Soccer
 - ⇒ Thamesford Lions Club
 - ⇒ Thamesford Skating Club
 - ⇒ Zorra Girls Minor Hockey
 - ⇒ Thamesford Area Minor Hockey Association
 - ⇒ Thamesford Minor Ball
 - ⇒ Thamesford Trojans
- Research and review of delivery systems from South-Western Ontario municipalities
- Analysis of data and preparation of interim report for Council's review and comment
- Submission of final report to Council

The table below outlines the process and the anticipated time frame to conduct the review. The final report will be presented to Council on June 21, 2011, in a closed session. Findings from the report will be made public once Council has given direction to the CAO.



Proposed Work Schedule



In order to assist in this process, we are asking all user groups to complete the attached **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis**. Additionally, the CAO will be conducting interviews with each user group for further input. It is extremely important that you participate in this process, as your input will help shape the future of the Township's Recreation Department. All information provided will be kept **strictly confidential** and at no time will names be associated with comments made. Individual comments may be reflected in the report, but the source will remain anonymous.

An instruction sheet and SWOT template are attached. Please return the anonymous SWOT analysis using the stamped return envelope no later than **April 8, 2011**.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact the Township's Chief Administrative Officer, Don MacLeod at 519-458-2490 ext. 226 or by email at dmacleod@zorra.on.ca.

Yours truly,

Mayor Margaret Lupton



Instruction for Completion of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

SWOT Analyses have been conducted by many organizations over the years and is a tool used to understand an organization's:

- **Strengths** - focusing on the elements that make the organization what it is
- **Weaknesses** – minimizing/correcting areas that leave the organization vulnerable
- **Opportunities** - maximizing prospects and valuing change
- **Threats** - ensuring awareness of risks or perils to the organization

Strengths and **Weaknesses** are typically internal while **Opportunities** and **Threats** are external..

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Recreation Department (Internal)

In this part of the analysis, factors, which are internal to, or within the control of the Department, should be identified. These may include: staffing strengths/weaknesses, skills or resources, structure, finances, staff/directors, and style of leadership within the organization or systems such as communications channels.

Opportunities and Threats Facing the Recreation Department (External)

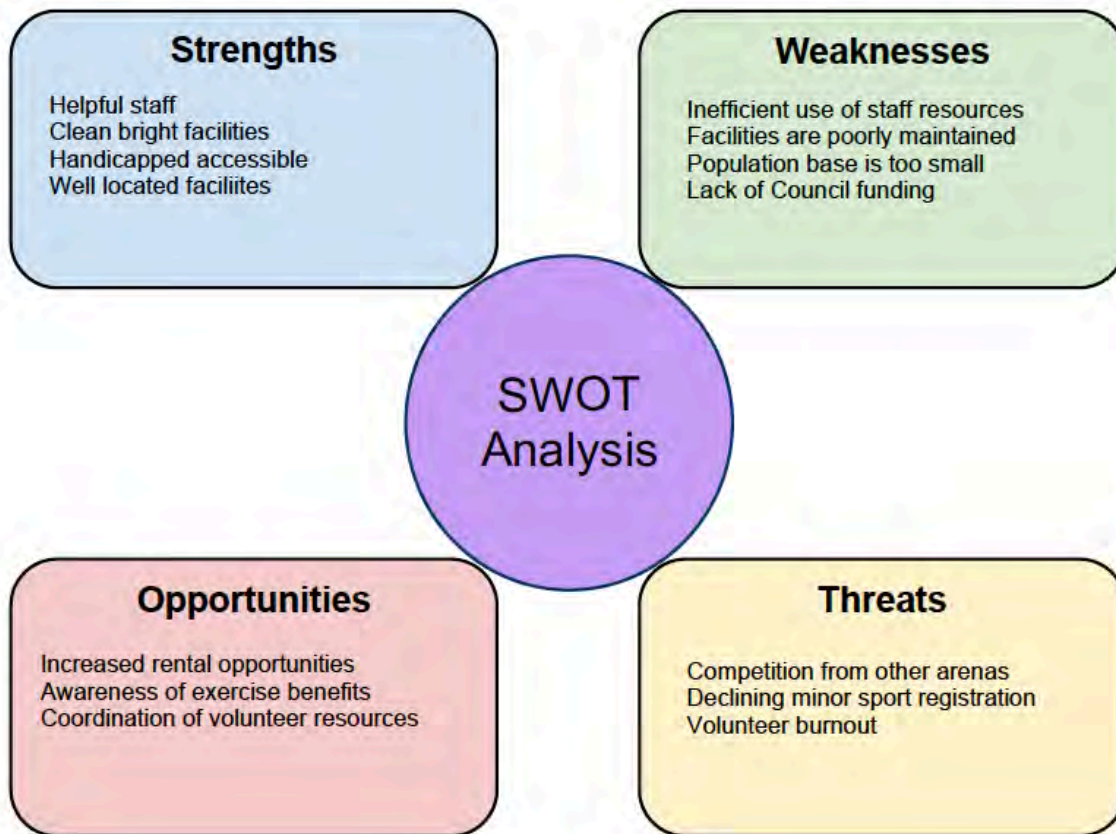
All organizations are affected by outside influences over which they may have little control. The Recreation Department is no different in that many factors have varying degrees of impact, both positive and negative. Factors to be addressed here will relate to the goals and objectives of the Recreation Department. They may include activities of competing centres, government policies, society/community influences or trends, markets, the economy, lifestyles, the environment, demographic trends, technological advances or alternatives.

Please complete the chart on the next page and return no later than **April 8, 2011**. A brief sample SWOT analysis is found below.



APPENDIX "A"

Sample SWOT





SWOT Analysis (User Group)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats



Council Questionnaire

I have three general questions to start.

1. What is your expectation of what the Organizational and Service Delivery Review will accomplish?
2. Tell me why you think it was necessary?
3. Have you had any direct involvement with the Recreation Department in a personal role? If yes, tell me what your experience was like.

The next set of questions deal with opinions and perceptions about the Recreation Department.

4. What is your opinion of what a Recreation Department should do? What kinds or services should it provide?
5. In your opinion what is working in the Recreation Department and what is not working? Start with what is working?
6. How do you feel the Recreation Department is perceived by:
 - The public
 - User Groups
 - Council
7. How do you feel relationships can be enhanced?
8. Are there any issues with user groups that you feel should be identified?

The next set of questions deal with identifying what needs to be changed and how we can structure Recreation Department best meet the needs of the public now, and in the future.

9. What do you think is the single most important item that needs to be addressed in the Recreation Department; lack of programming, customer service (be very specific), etc.
10. Do you feel the Department should expand its role and offer recreation programming? If so, what kinds of programs do you see being offered? Given the financial constraints the Township is under, is it feasible?
11. If you could waive a magic wand and design the Department, what would it look like?
12. What would be the smallest change that could have the biggest impact?
13. What could we do to make our facilities more user-friendly?
14. In general, how could the Recreation Department be improved?
15. Any final comments?



Staff Questionnaire

I have a couple of general questions to start.

1. What do you think the Organizational and Service Delivery Review will accomplish?
2. Tell me if you think the Review was necessary?
3. What do you enjoy most about working for the Township of Zorra Recreation Department? What do you least like about working for Township?
4. Do you feel valued as an employee by:
 - Your supervisor
 - Council
 - The public

The next set of questions deal with external opinions and perceptions about the Recreation Department.

5. How do you feel the Recreation Department is perceived by:
 - The public
 - User Groups
 - Council
6. How do you feel relationships can be enhanced with the above mentioned?
7. Are there any issues with user groups?

The next set of questions deal with your opinions and comments about the Recreation Department.

8. What is working in the Department and what is not working? Start with what is working?
9. Are the job duties well defined and do you know what is expected of you? Do you feel supported by your co-workers and/or supervisor?
10. Are there any barriers for carrying out your job to the best of your abilities?
11. Are there any major frustrations?
12. What do you feel staff morale is like in general? Not now, but in recent past.
13. What can we do to improve staff morale?

The next set of questions deal with identifying what needs to be changed and how we can structure Recreation Department to best meet the needs of the public now, and in the future.

14. If you could waive a magic wand and design the Department, what would it look like?
15. What would be the smallest change that could have the biggest impact?



APPENDIX "C"

Recreation Department Organizational Review | **Township of Zorra**

16. Do you feel the Department should expand its role and offer recreation programming? If so, what kinds of programs do you see being offered? Given the financial constraints the Township is under, is it feasible?
17. What could we do to make our facilities more user friendly?
18. In general, how could we improve the Recreation Department?
19. Any final comments?



Municipal Questionnaire

Staffing

1. How many full time staff do you have?
2. How many of these staff work in the arenas?
3. Do you have mandatory two person shifts?
4. When ice is removed, what duties to the full-time staff take on?
5. Are the full time staff dedicated to one arena or do they flow back and forth?
6. Do you have set shifts or do they rotate?
7. What shift(s) does the Arena Manager (or highest ranking employee) work?
8. Is the arena manager a working manager?
9. Do you use part-time help at the arenas during the winter? Is it permanent part-time or student workers?
10. During ice season if there is a function in the hall would you schedule more than one employee?
11. Who pegs nets?
12. Do you hire part time parks staff?

Who Does What

13. Who prepares the work schedule?
14. Is your ice schedule computerized? If yes, what program do you use?
15. Is your invoicing computerized? If yes, what program do you use?
16. Who carries out booking of ice rentals and invoicing of same?
17. Is department accounting handled by a Recreation staff person or by the municipal office?
18. Who supervises the pool?
19. Is your canteen municipally run or contracted out?
Who carries out canteen ordering?
20. Who supervises the canteen staff?
21. Who maintains baseball diamonds, soccer fields etc.?
22. Is your grass cutting carried out by municipal forces or contracted out?

Management/Policy

23. Who prepares policies/reports for Council?
24. Which staff member reports to Council?
25. Do you have a Recreation Advisory Committee?
26. Are there regular staff meetings held? Who attends, are minutes kept?
27. Do you carry out recreation programming i.e. exercise classes, seniors events?



APPENDIX "D"

Recreation Department Organizational Review | Township of Zorra

28. Do you allow stags and does?
29. Do you allow double ups - Friday night stag and Saturday wedding or Saturday wedding and Sunday event?
30. Do your staff set up for functions in the community centre?
31. Who is responsible for clean up?
32. Is there a charge for set up/tear down?
33. Do you use OPP or private security staff?
34. Do you have a municipal alcohol policy?
35. Do you produce a recreation newsletter?
36. When was the last time your recreation structure was reviewed?
37. When was the last time your recreation department was restructured?
48. Do you actively advertise/market your facilities?



APPENDIX "E"

Recreation Department Organizational Review | Township of Zorra

		East Zorra- Tavistock	Huron East (Brussels Arena Only)	Huron Kinloss (Ripley Arena Only)	South Bruce	Wellesly
1	How many full time staff do you have?	3	2	3	3	4.5
2	How many of these staff work in the arenas?	3	2	2	3	3
3	Do you have mandatory two person shifts?	For Games	No	No	No	For games
4	When ice is removed, what duties to the full-time staff take on?	Park	Parks	Parks/Beaches	Parks/Cemeteries	Parks
5	Are the full time staff dedicated to one arena or do they flow back and forth?	Only one	No	No	Dedicated	Time to time
6	Do you have set shifts or do they rotate?	Rotate	Rotate	Rotate	Rotate	FT are mostly days
7	What shift(s) does the Arena Manager (or highest ranking employee) work?	Days and some Weekends	Shifts	No	N/A	No
8	Is the arena manager a working manager?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
9	Do you use part-time help at the arenas during the winter? Is it permanent part-time or student workers?	5 students	2	2	2 in each arena	40 Part-time
10	During ice season if there is a function in the hall would you schedule more than one employee?	No	No	No	Not usually	No
11	Who pegs nets?	Staff	Not staff	Not staff	Not staff	Staff
12	Do you hire part time parks staff?	No	No	No	No	Students
13	Who prepares the work schedule?	Arena Manager	Arena Manager	Director of Facilities	Arena Manager	Full timers
14	Is your ice schedule computerized? If yes, what program do you use?	Excel	No	Web based calendar	It will be	Yes
15	Is your invoicing computerized? If yes, what program do you use?	Yes - Simply Accounting	No	No		CLASS
16	Who carries out booking of ice rentals and invoicing of same?	90% by AM	Arena Manager	Admin Staff	Arena Manager	Part-time co-ordinator
17	Is department accounting handled by a Recreation staff person or by the municipal office?	Arena Manager	Municipality	Municipality	Municipal Office	Municipality
18	Who supervises the pool?	N/A	Arena Manager	Director of Facilities	Facility Manager (new position)	N/A
19	Is your canteen municipally run or contracted out?	Men's Club	Municipality	Volunteers	Minor Hockey	Municipality
	Who carries out canteen ordering?	Arena Manager	Arena Manager	Volunteers	Minor Hockey	Part-time Concession Co-ordinator
20	Who supervises the canteen staff?	Men's Club	Arena Manager	Volunteers	Minor Hockey	Part-time Concession Co-ordinator
21	Who maintains baseball diamonds, soccer fields etc.?	Different in each centre	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality
22	Is your grass cutting carried out by municipal forces or contracted out?	Different in each centre	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality - Public Works	Municipality
23	Who prepares policies/reports for Council?	Arena Manager	Arena Manager	Director of Facilities	Facility Manager (new position)	Director of Recreation
24	Which staff member reports to Council?	To the Rec Committee	Arena Manager	Director of Facilities	Facility Manager (new position)	Director of Recreation
25	Do you have a Recreation Advisory Committee?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Five Committees
26	Are there regular staff meetings held? Who attends, are minutes kept?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
27	Do you carry out recreation programming i.e. exercise classes, seniors events?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
28	Do you allow stags and does?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
29	Do you allow double ups - Friday night stag and Saturday wedding or Saturday wedding and Sunday event?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes. If both agree
30	Do your staff set up for functions in the community centre?	Yes. Charge additional	Users do set up & tear down	Yes	Yes. Charge additional	No
31	Who is responsible for clean up?	Users	Users do set up & tear down	Users do tear down	Municipality	Renters
32	Is there a a charge for set up/tear down?	Yes			One fee for both	N/A
33	Do you use OPP or private security staff?		Private. Twp hires	Either	Both	OPP for now
34	Do you have a municipal alcohol policy?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
35	Do you produce a recreation newsletter?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
36	When was the last time your recreation structure was reviewed?	N/A	N/A	N/A	Recently	6 Years ago
37	When was the last time your recreation department was restructured?	N/A	N/A	N/A	Recently	
38	Do you actively advertise/market your facilities?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes