

Lakefield Campground Utilization Study

FINAL REPORT

July 6, 2021



Township of Selwyn

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Prepared by:



Executive Summary

The Lakefield Campground Utilization Study provides the Township of Selwyn with a recommended operational model pertaining to the Lakefield Campground, building upon the 2020 Service Delivery Review for the Parks & Recreation Department. Based on the Service Delivery Review and subsequent decisions of Township Council, three operating scenarios are explored through this Study:

- 1) Seek a competitive market bid;
- 2) Outsource Campground Operations to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority; and
- 3) Cease campground operations.

Process

The Study involved a number of research, consultation and analytical tasks to arrive at its conclusions. Notably, the Study methodology included:

- A scan of trends and best practices from a national, provincial and regional perspective.
- Workshops and interviews with Township of Selwyn Advisory Committees and key project stakeholders.
- A community survey to test preferences and priorities specific to the Lakefield Campground as well as review and consideration of written submissions from the general public.
- Discussions with municipalities that presently operate campgrounds along with those that previously operated such facilities in order to understand their operating models and form case studies to inform this Study.
- An assessment of the historical operating performance of the Lakefield Campground, including contributions to the municipal operating budget.
- A review of quotations provided by professional engineers and qualified contractors to understand the Campground's infrastructure replacement costs.
- Analysis of the three Study Options using a number of evaluation criteria and identification of a Preferred Option.

Evaluation Criteria

Each of the three Study Options were assessed using an “impact-based” analysis. To assist with the standardization of how the Options were evaluated, 21 criteria were developed specifically for the Study based on the degree to which each was envisioned to positively or negatively affect the Township. These criteria were organized under six Categories:

1. Fiscal & Economic
2. Environment & Sustainability
3. Public Transparency & Accountability
4. Business Operations
5. Township Staffing Implications
6. Integration with Public Services

Preferred Option

Based on the Study’s Evaluation Criteria, the Preferred Option would be to Outsource Campground Operations to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (Option 2). Comparing Study Options using the impact-based analysis criteria described in Section 8.0, the Preferred Option has been identified on the basis of:

- **Ability to Mitigate Environmental Concerns:** ORCA’s environmentally-focused mandate and ownership of the adjacent Imagine the Marsh Conservation Area provide reasonable basis to presume that ORCA would address environmental concerns of operating a campground that have been identified through consultations.
- **Proven Experience:** ORCA already has the requisite organizational infrastructure/systems in place along with demonstrated experience in managing campgrounds that increases the likelihood of a seamless transition to a new campground operator and positions ongoing campground operations for success.
- **Continuity of Service:** Continuity of service would be maintained to campground visitors and the businesses that rely upon them.
- **Retention of Economic Benefits:** The campground can be expected to continue generating economic spin-offs through resident and non-resident spending, particularly for the local food and retail sector.

- **Positive Revenue Generation Potential:** Continuity of, and potential to increase revenues received by the Township can be expected under a new agreement. This would retain the ability to use net operating profits to subsidize other municipal services.
- **Reinvesting in Community Assets:** A degree of public accountability, an ability to reinvest proceeds from operations back into its local and regional assets.
- **Cost Avoidance:** Outsourcing operations could avoid additional staffing expenditures being incurred by the Township for administering, maintaining, and supervising the land. Changing this long-established use could increase potential for unforeseen new costs associated with enforcing laws and by-laws, wildlife management, etc.
- **Low Operating Risk:** There is a relatively low risk of ORCA withdrawing from an operating agreement with the Township due to financial or staffing constraints compared to a private operator. As a tax-funded agency, certain mechanisms to ensure public accountability and transparency are already in place.

In the event that the Township and ORCA are unable to reach a mutually acceptable operating arrangement for the Lakefield Campground, it is recommended that the Township would then pursue a Competitive Market Bid for third party management of the campground.

If the Township were to consider the Option to permanently Cease Campground Operations, it would need to be assured that economic benefits, potential tax-impacts of removing a historical revenue stream, and costs of site decommissioning / redevelopment would be sufficiently offset by a demonstrable community benefit associated with the end use.

Short-Term Timing

The first step for the Township is to confirm its preferred Option. On the basis that Option 2 (Outsource to ORCA) is selected, the Township will need to undertake the following steps at a minimum.

Task	Suggested Timing
1. Engage ORCA through its Board of Directors and Chief Administrative Officer to confirm interest in exploratory talks for assuming campground management and operations.	2021 Q3
2. Assuming approval is received from Step 1, engage ORCA Staff to discuss areas of common interest and alignment (e.g. values, strategic priorities) along with anticipated roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes. The desired mix of transient and seasonal sites, as well as off-season storage, should also be discussed.	2021 Q3
3. Refine roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes for each party in a draft Operating Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). At a minimum this draft should articulate how each party will address maintenance and hazard removals, revenue sharing / compensation structure, capital infrastructure and renewal, insurance requirements, term of agreement and renewal clauses.	2021 Q3 to Q4
4. Present the draft Operating Agreement/MOU to Township Council and ORCA Board of Directors and carry out mutually accepted revisions as necessary.	2021 Q4
5. a) Present the final Operating Agreement/MOU to Township Council and the ORCA Board of Directors for approval.	2022 Q1
b) <i>If agreement is NOT reached/approved with ORCA, initiate RFP/EOI for the Competitive Bid Option and proceed through municipal procurement process.</i>	2022 Q1
6. Assuming approval to proceed is received from both parties, initiate necessary site works and improvements to the campground (majority of works assumed upon expiry of current campground agreement in October 2022).	2022 Q2 to 2023 Q1
7. ORCA assumes management of Lakefield Campground.	2023 Q2

Key Considerations for a New Operating Agreement

Implementing the Preferred direction for the Study is contingent upon the Township and ORCA reaching an operating agreement that reflects core values and expectations of each party while providing a viable business operation. In crafting an operating agreement, the Township is encouraged to explore provisions based on the Study's review of best practices and feedback collected through community consultations such as, but not limited to, the following:

Ownership, Maintenance & Compensation

- Expectation that ownership of land and buildings are to remain in public ownership.
- Maintenance responsibilities assigned to each party, notably seasonal or less-frequent activities such as start-up and winterization, hazard tree / tree branch removal, etc.
- Defining municipal expectations regarding property aesthetics and cleanliness.
- Determining the annual compensation structure through operating management fees, land leases, ancillary services, etc. along with the amount of compensation provided to the Township.
- Length of term for the agreement, renewal provisions, sunset clauses.

Campground Design & Layout

- The total number of campsites to be operated, including the portion of which will be fully serviced, partially serviced and/or unserviced.
- The mix of seasonal and/or transient campsites.

Environmental Stewardship

- Values and expectations with respect to the campground's role in maintaining environmental health/integrity of Hague Point.
- Recognition of adjacent environmentally sensitive areas and how to manage operations in proximity to these zones.

Contributions to Infrastructure Renewal

- Upfront and/or ongoing contributions to repair or replace capital infrastructure such as water and electrical servicing, internal roads and pathways, built structures, etc.
- A preferred intent that campground operations and non-taxation revenues will be the primary sources of funding campground infrastructure renewals, along with a defined and acceptable payback period.

Customer Service

- Provisions to ensure equitably in the availability and booking of campsites to the public, and if applicable how seasonal renters will be selected if demand is greater than supply.
- Whether there will be a “phase-in” period for campers to allow a period of time to adapt to new operating policies, changes to site regulations/rules, fee structure, etc.

Amenities & Services

- How to address campers’ property along with if/how to treat their storage in the off-season;
- Determining the types of boating amenities that could be provided including docking/launch areas, boat rentals, etc.

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Appendices:

- A. Community Survey Tabulated Results
- B. Additional Public Feedback (*under separate cover*)
- C. Frequently Asked Questions

The disclosure of any information contained in this Lakefield Campground Utilization Study is the sole responsibility of the Township of Selwyn. The Study is attributable to work conducted to inform the Township of Selwyn's Terms of Reference for the Study and any findings contained herein should not constitute final recommendations since subsequent works will need to be undertaken by the Township. This Study has been prepared in consideration of information and documentation provided to Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd., and reflects the Consultant's judgment in light of the information available to us at the time of preparation of this report.

Any use which a third party makes of the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of such third parties. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. accepts no responsibility for damages, if any, suffered by a third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report.

1.0 Study Purpose

The purpose of the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study is to provide Township of Selwyn Council and Staff with a recommended operational model pertaining to the Lakefield Campground. It is intended to build upon the Township of Selwyn Service Delivery Review for the Parks & Recreation Department that identified five Options¹ for the municipality to consider for the campground.

In October 2020, the Township provided notice to the existing Campground Operator of its intent to not renew the current operating agreement; this agreement is set to expire in 2022 (whereby any consideration given to the current operator would be combined within an option to seek a competitive market bid). In addition, at the Special Meeting of Township Council in May 2021, Council resolved to remove the Township-operated Campground Option from the Study. Accordingly, the number of Options noted through the Service Delivery Review has been reduced to the following three for the purposes of this Lakefield Campground Utilization Study:

- 1) Seek a competitive market bid;
- 2) Outsource Campground Operations to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority; and
- 3) Cease campground operations.

The Study investigates these three options through research, targeted consultations with the public and project stakeholders, and exploration of potential benefits and impacts to the Township as a result of pursuing each course of action.

Study Exclusions

The scope of work for the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study excludes comprehensive organizational reviews, condition assessments, negotiations with prospective partners or campground operators, preparation of user fee / pricing structures, and quantification of specific community economic impacts. Additionally, the scope of work does not include defining a vision or end use for the property should the Township decide to cease operations. As a result, additional studies and investigations may be required to confirm assessments and findings contained herein.

The Lakefield Campground Utilization Study provides the Township of Selwyn with a recommended operational model pertaining to the Lakefield Campground.

¹ Township of Selwyn. 2020. Service Delivery Review for the Parks & Recreation Department. pp.47-52

2.0 Site Context & History of the Campground

Lakefield Campground is located within the Lakefield settlement area, situated on lands known as Hague Point. Hague Point is located on the west side of the Otonabee River corridor and forms part of the Lakefield Marsh and a designated Provincially Significant Wetland complex.²

Figure 1: Hague Point Site Context



Note: Overlays are not to scale nor do they reflect actual boundaries. For illustrative purposes only.
Mapping Source: County of Peterborough GIS

² Rodenburg, J. 1989. The Lakefield Wetland Report.

The lands occupied by the campground are owned by the Township of Selwyn. The adjacent Douglas Sports Centre, the Lakefield Beach and the Millennium Trail that runs along the shoreline are also municipally-owned properties that are publicly accessible and are treated as distinct and separate components from the Lakefield Campground.

Access to the Lakefield Campground is gained by Hague Boulevard and the Millennium Trail, the latter of which encircles the shoreline around Hague Point and terminates at the marsh. A section of residentially designated land is situated between Hague Boulevard and the trail's edge, between the public beach and D'Eyncourt Street.

The total lands occupied by non-residential components on Hague Point amount to 30 acres (12.5 hectares) of which the campground occupies roughly 12 acres (4.9 hectares).

Campground operations were first documented in the early 1950s as a modest private operation with the former Village of Lakefield assuming operations shortly thereafter. Sewer, water and electrical servicing was added to 50 sites in the mid-1970s while a washroom/concession building was constructed in the early 1980s with contributions from the Lions Club.

In 1996, the former Village of Lakefield entered into an agreement with the private operators that have managed the campground for the past 25 years. As previously noted, the Township declined its option to extend the current operating agreement as is the right of either of the two parties; therefore, the agreement will expire in October 2022.

"I greatly value walking and enjoying the natural beauty of Hague Point. I visit regularly. As the Village becomes busier and housing expands around the Village, I feel it has become increasingly necessary to preserve the natural beauty of our community and make more parkland available for the increasing numbers of residents and visitors."

~ Written Submission

"There are numerous groups who play a part in maintaining and enjoying the many attributes of the point and marsh... Our family treasures this area. We frequent it often for walks, bike rides and I take great advantage of the area as an amateur photographer. There is no denying this area is a special place. Which is why we feel the campground should stay. Certain improvements mentioned should be completed but [the campers] group should be respected as well as all of the other groups."

~ Written Submission

County of Peterborough Land Use Designations

The Peterborough County Official Plan designates the lands encompassing the park and campground as Recreational Open Space while the shoreline is designated as an Environmental Constraint Area.³ The lands are denoted as a Special Policy Area through which a municipally-owned campground is a permitted use under the Recreational Open Space Designation. The land use designation also permits other public park and recreational uses to take place.

County of Peterborough Official Plan

Recreational Open Space

Section 6.3.2.6 b) - Permitted Uses

The predominant use of land within the Recreational Open Space designation shall be for active and passive recreational and conservation uses. The uses permitted shall include public parks, pedestrian walkways and bicycle pathways, public access areas for such activities as cross-country skiing, angling and swimming and other similar public or private open space recreational uses. In addition, facilities such as arenas, swimming pools or other similar public recreational facilities shall also be permitted.

Section 6.3.2.6 d), i), c) – Site Specific Special Policy Areas

Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, on those lands designated Recreational Open Space located adjacent to the westerly shoreline of the Otonabee River, south of Katchawanooka Lake and north of Hague Boulevard, the permitted uses shall include a campground owned and operated by the Township of Selwyn, or its delegate.

³ County of Peterborough. Official Plan. Schedule A1-1: Land Use Plan – Urban Component Village of Lakefield

3.0 Current Operating Profile

The Township and the private operator's Agreement has guided roles, responsibilities, and compensation. Under the Agreement, the Township's responsibilities relate to capital maintenance of existing infrastructure along with support for start-up and winterization activities at the beginning and end of the camping season. The private operator is responsible for scheduling, booking and day-to-day maintenance of the campground, as well as providing financial compensation to the Township each year.

"When I drive through that red gate I feel like I'm home. I can't name everybody as I drive to my place, but I recognize them all."

~ Written Submission

The Lakefield Campground season runs between May through October. There are a total of 128 campsites identified on the operator's website (current as of March 2021). The operator's posted rental rates on its website are as follows:

Table 1: Lakefield Campground Posted Rental Rates

Rate Category	Tenting (11 sites)	Hydro/Water (64 sites)	Hydro/Water/Sewer (40 sites)	Premium/Marshfront (13 sites)
Per Day	\$45	\$50	\$55	\$60
Per Week	\$245	\$280	\$310	\$340
Per Month	\$720	\$830	\$920	\$1,010
Seasonal - Waterfront	\$3,100			
Seasonal - Regular	\$2,700 to \$2,800			

Source: Lakefield Park & Campground website, accessed March 2021

The Agreement with the private operator articulates a base compensation rate to be remitted by the operator to the Township of Selwyn, with an annual escalation of 3%. In 2019, the Township received \$62,250 from the operator under the operating agreement fee and incurred total expenditures of \$5,400 for a net operating surplus of \$56,850; the operating surplus is greater than in the previous two years due to lower campground maintenance expenses in 2019.

\$52,000 per year

The Township's annual average operating profit from campground operations between 2017 and 2020 (excluding transfers to reserves)

Draft figures for the year 2020 indicate year-over-year revenue growth for a net operating surplus of \$56,300 less transfers to reserves. Each year, the Township directs \$10,000 from campground operating proceeds into a capital reserve fund intended to fund future infrastructure replacement.

"Now more than ever our citizens need accessible green spaces within our towns and cities to support public health, environment, economic and social well-being."

~ Written Submission

Table 2: Municipal Operating Budget for the Lakefield Campground, 2017-2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020 (Draft)
<u>Revenues</u>				
Campground Operating Agreement Fee	\$53,200	\$62,450	\$62,250	\$64,500
<u>Expenditures</u>				
Campground Wages & Payroll Benefits	\$2,650	\$2,450	\$2,600	\$1,800
Campground Maintenance	\$9,650	\$5,900	\$2,800	\$6,400
Campground Operating Surplus	\$40,900	\$54,100	\$56,850	\$56,300
Less: Annual Contribution to Municipal Reserve Fund	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Net Contributions to the Township Operating Budget	\$30,900	\$44,100	\$46,850	\$46,300

Note: Figures rounded to the nearest \$50. This reflects revenues received and expenditures incurred by the Township; revenues and expenditures of the campground operator are not shown.

Source: Township of Selwyn Budget Worksheets, 2020

4.0 State of Capital Infrastructure

Capital infrastructure associated with the campground consists of the campground administration/washroom building (also contains showers and a concession area), an internal roadway, water and sanitary sewer lines, electrical servicing, and concrete shuffleboard.

Hydro and sewer infrastructure was installed in the mid-1970s while the washroom building was built in the early 1980s. Neither have undergone major renewal/replacement activities in the time since and are thus largely in their original condition that is now at an advanced lifecycle state.

Cost of Infrastructure Replacement

In May 2021, Township Staff obtained a quote from an engineering firm that identified approximately \$600,000 in infrastructure renewal costs for a new watermain, sanitary sewer laterals, road works as well as some selected improvements.⁴ A separate quotation indicated that the cost to upgrade electrical servicing infrastructure ranges from \$122,500 to \$149,500 depending upon the ultimate electrical servicing plan⁵ although there would be a sizeable cost savings if only upgrading electrical services for a portion of the campsites.

Figure 2 illustrates the current configuration of campsites at the Lakefield Campground based upon availability of servicing and where infrastructure upgrades have been identified through the above noted quotations. Depending upon the improvements undertaken, Table 3 illustrates that the Township could reasonably expect to expend between \$672,500 and \$721,500 to renew aging campground infrastructure.

\$672,500 to \$721,500

The estimated cost of replacing the campground's watermain, sewer laterals, electrical and road infrastructure (2021 dollars)

⁴ D.M. Wills Associates Ltd., Cost Estimate prepared on May 21, 2021.

⁵ Heffernan Electric, Cost Estimates prepared on May 20, 2021.

Figure 2: Campground Servicing Improvements Map



Note: Overlays are not to scale nor do they reflect actual boundaries. For illustrative purposes only.
Source: Township of Selwyn, 2021

Table 3: Infrastructure Renewal Cost Estimates

	Infrastructure Improvement	Electrical Upgrade Option 1: 30 Amp Service	Electrical Upgrade Option 2: 50 Amp Service	Total Cost Estimate (2021 Dollars)
Area 1	\$487,000*	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$527,000 to \$567,000
Area 2	\$113,400**	\$32,200	\$40,000	\$145,600 to \$153,400
Area 3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$601,400	\$32,200	\$120,000	\$672,600 to \$721,400

* Includes replacement of watermain and sewer laterals/risers along with site and lane rehabilitation works - sanitary main is documented to be in good condition and is not included in estimates.

** Includes replacement of watermain and risers along with site and lane rehabilitation works

Notes: 1. Refer to Figure 2 for Campground Areas.

2. Stated cost estimates have been quoted by qualified engineering consultants and electricians, which were obtained to inform the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study. Costs include 25% allowance for contingencies and engineering.
3. Costs are stated in 2021 dollars exclusive of HST and cost escalations due to materials, labour and construction. Additional fees may apply for approvals and works carried out by regulatory authorities (e.g. Hydro One) and as confirmed through further engineering and environmental assessments.
4. Infrastructure upgrades are not required for Area 3 and thus status quo is assumed
5. Cost estimate assumes works would be carried out concurrently and achieve economies of scale – isolating specific works could result in a higher cost estimate.
6. There may be potential cost savings through use of Township materials (e.g. gravel) and the fact that not all sewer laterals may need replacing

The Township would be responsible for funding capital replacement or improvement costs through campground revenues and/or a potential agreement with a third party tasked with operating the campground. Infrastructure renewals would need to be funded through means such as (but not limited to):

- directing a portion of campground operating profits obtained through an annual lease and/or the municipal share of operating revenues;
- imposing a temporary infrastructure replacement surcharge on campsite rentals;
- internally financing from a municipal infrastructure reserve fund (with interest); and/or
- debenture/loan (which would increase the capital expenditure to reflect interest and amortization).

The Township will need to determine whether the payback period for its capital investment is appropriate. Using revenues received through current operating agreement for example, the Township's 4-year average operating surplus from campground operations was approximately \$52,000 (net of municipal expenditures, less transfers). If entirely devoting that surplus to paying back a \$721,500 infrastructure replacement cost, it would take the Township 14 years to pay back the cost of capital (exclusive of debentured interest and escalations to the construction costs). However, the Township may be able to negotiate an annual revenue contribution that is greater than the historical average through a new operating agreement, as well as draw from other funding sources described above, which may be able to shorten the payback period.

In addition, the above noted capital replacement costs do not include renovations or replacement of the campground washroom and shower building. Further investigation will be required through a Building Condition Assessment or similar study to understand remaining lifecycle and required costs to maintain the campground washroom and shower building.

It also bears noting that the capital replacement cost could differ from the quoted amount should the Township and the future campground operator reconfigure the number and type of campsites provided. For example, a reduction in the number of campsites or a shift to more non-serviced transient sites may reduce renewal costs. Campground layout and campsite mix would be determined subsequent to the completion of this Study should the Township choose to engage a third party to manage the campground.

Costs of Site Decommissioning

While the preceding paragraphs speak to capital costs required to keep the campground operational, a capital expenditure will also need to be borne in the event that the Township chooses to permanently cease campground operations. Whereas continued campground operations would continue to carry ongoing infrastructure renewal costs over asset lifecycles, site decommissioning costs would likely be a one-time expenditure.

The Township's engineering consultant indicates that buried sewer and watermain could be left underground provided that they are capped and sealed correctly. Township Staff indicate that if the Parks & Recreation Department and Public Works Department were tasked with capping/sealing work, an estimated \$25,000 would be expended in Staff wages, equipment rentals and contracted services.⁶ Combined with the \$35,500 quoted to remove above-ground electrical equipment and infrastructure,⁷ the Township could expect to spend \$60,500 to decommission servicing infrastructure (2021 dollars). Potential demolition costs of internal roadways would be over and above this amount should these no longer be needed through the envisioned new use of the land.

\$60,500

Estimated cost of
decommissioning water, sewer,
and electrical infrastructure
(2021 dollars)

Land Redevelopment Costs

In addition to campground decommissioning costs, the Township can expect to incur costs of repurposing/redeveloping the land to another use should a campground not be retained. The actual redevelopment cost will depend upon the approved plan for the lands presently occupied by the campground, as well as any further redevelopments in the adjacent areas that may be required to implement the future vision for Hague Point as a whole.

At one end of the spectrum is a re-naturalized open space with little to no built infrastructure and thus would require the least amount of capital to be expended. At the other end of the spectrum would be an intensive park development intended to serve as a prominent destination that generates strong visitor traffic from across the Township and regional markets. Under a destination park scenario that supports higher order community activities and tourism, park redevelopment costs would be more substantial due to:

- potential extension of servicing infrastructure as required to support the future use;

To Be Determined

The cost of redeveloping the
campground to another use
that would need to be defined
through a separate and
subsequent planning process

⁶ Parks & Recreation Department internal analysis and preliminary estimate, May 2021

⁷ Heffernan Electric, Cost Estimates prepared on May 20, 2021. Quoted Price excludes removal of buried/underground electrical infrastructure

- development of a parking lot(s) as parking spaces at the Marshland Centre and Lakefield Beach are already heavily used during peak periods; and
- construction of buildings and built-up outdoor spaces, and other amenity improvements.

Depending upon the type of park (or another land use altogether), the Township's share of redevelopment costs could range from tens of thousands of dollars to millions of dollars.

Operating Implications

In addition to capital costs of replacing or redeveloping land and infrastructure, the Township will incur ongoing operating costs regardless of whether Hague Point contains a campground or is redeveloped for another use. Ongoing asset management priorities will need to be addressed along with regular maintenance and supervision of the grounds.

In the event that the Township ceases operation of the campground altogether, it can expect to incur staffing costs to maintain parkland or other public areas. Currently, the campground operator is responsible for day-to-day maintenance costs which would no longer be the case if camping operations cease. The costs of maintaining the public land would thus be transferred to the Township, noting that Parks & Recreation Department Staff already maintain the adjacent Douglas Sports Centre, Lakefield Beach and the Millennium Trail.

In addition, the Township's net operating surplus generated through the campground (approximately \$50,500 per year less transfers to reserves) is used to subsidize Parks & Recreation Department that operate below their break-even point. Ceasing campground operations would remove this historical revenue stream, thereby requiring an increased tax contribution in the absence of any net proceeds generated through a new end use.

\$50,500 per year

Approximate amount of operating revenue that the Township would need to replace if ceasing campground operations and continuing to maintain the Parks & Recreation Department at current levels (all else being equal).

Departmental operating expenditures can also be expected to increase if having to assume grounds maintenance and/or supervision previously carried out by campground operators.

5.0 National & Provincial Outlook

KOA's 2020 North American Camping Report points to a continued rise in interest in camping over the last few years. Between 2018 and 2019, 2.7 million new households started camping, with a total of more than 91 million "camper households" throughout North America. People that are seeking new or unique camping experiences are driving this growth including through "glamping" with enhanced accommodations and services/amenities. Isolating the report's findings to Canada finds that among active campers, the percentage of "life-long campers" has increased from 31% to 36% between 2015 and 2019 while the share of relatively new campers has stayed around 15% over the same period though the report also notes that Canadian campers are less likely to have tried new/unique camping experiences.⁸

While the KOA report does not explicitly identify the number of Canadian camper households, subtracting the 82 million camping US households would leave approximately 9 million camper households in Canada. By comparison, a 2015 industry report by the Canadian Camping & RV Council (CCRVC) estimated nearly 5.8 million camping households in Canada of which 1.8 million reside in Ontario.⁹ While a direct comparison between the two sources would not be appropriate, it may infer a growth trend based on information shown in the KOA report. The CCRVC report also identified the following for 2014:

- 4,200 campgrounds in the country containing over 423,000 campsites. Of these, 505 campgrounds are operated by municipalities (12%) of which there were 51 municipal campgrounds in Ontario.
- The Canadian camping industry generated \$4.7 billion in economic impacts along with 60,000 jobs and \$1 billion in taxes.
- 45% of campsites in Canada were seasonal, although the share of seasonal sites in Ontario was greater at 55%. Further isolating private, non-profit and municipal campgrounds in Ontario found that 62% of those campsites are seasonal.

"My wife and I and my 12 year old son travel from Caledonia every weekend to spend time in the town of Lakefield...We choose Lakefield. EVERY year...We shop at Foodland, Home Hardware, the LCBO, Giant Tiger, Stuff Store, the Lakefield Pantry, Trinkets and Treasures, Gerrys bait shop, Hard Winter Bakery, the Kawartha Buttermilk factory, Leahy Farm, Overstock Liquidation, McLean Berry farm, the Lockside Trading Company, Village Pharmacy, IDA, the Beer store, Paris Marine, Central Smith Ice cream, Craftworks at the Barn. Horlings garden Centre, Griffens garden Centre, Kingdon Timbermart, and my son and I get our hair cut every third Friday at Joes Barbershop. We regularly dine at Jacks Fish and Chicken (breakfast and dinner), Canoe and Paddle, Stuff'd, Tim Hortons, Pizza Hut, McDonalds, Subway, Two Fat Greeks, Pizza Villa Bridgenorth, and Chemong Lodge. We visit at least once a year the following; Peterborough lift lock, the Lakefield fair, Wanderlight Alpaca farm, Quarry golf course and Wild Water and Wheels...Aside from the economics of the above list, the simple fact is [that] our family has fallen in love with the town of Lakefield."

~ Lakefield Campground User
Written Submission

⁸ Kampgrounds of America (KOA). 2020. The 2020 North American Camping Report.

⁹ Canadian Camping & RV Council. 2015. Camping Industry Portrait in Canada and Ontario.

- The average operating season for Ontario's private, non-profit and municipal campgrounds was 162 days in 2014, approximately one month longer than federal and provincial campgrounds. Occupancy rates for private, non-profit and municipal campgrounds was 78% for seasonal sites and ranged between 34% and 65% for overnight sites depending upon the availability of servicing.

Recent statements from Ontario Parks officials indicate that there is an almost 100% increase in reservations, with bookings jumping from 29,504 in the first weeks of 2020 to 58,475 for the same period in 2021. Ontario Parks attributes this to the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial stay-at-home orders and lockdown control measures. Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia are experiencing similar levels of demand for their provincial campsites.¹⁰ More regionally, the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority reports it has received between 21,000 and 24,500 visitors annually to its two campgrounds between 2016 and 2020.¹¹

In quantifying who campers are, the KOA Report finds:

- Over half of camping households have young children (compared to 1 in 3 households in 2012) and as the overall demographic of camping families continues to trend younger, the number of households with minor children can be expected remain high.
- Growing participation in camping among the youngest generations (Millennials and Generation X), and these age groups account for a greater share of new campers; longer-term, this could also increase participation rates if the younger generations pass along their interest in camping to their children.
- 71% of North America campers are Caucasian, with Hispanics now being the second largest and fastest growing group representing 11%, an increase of 5% since 2014; for the first time, the ethnicity of North American campers nearly aligns with Census figures and that minority populations now make up the majority of new campers.
- Household income among campers was found to be in line with that of the overall income with 1 out of 2 camping households earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 (USD) annually.

¹⁰ Butler, C. February 25, 2021. CBC News. Sick of pandemic lockdowns, eager campers flood Ontario park-reservation sites.

¹¹ Otonabee Region Conservation Authority. Board Report 2021-008. 2020 Annual Campground Report. Staff Report dated February 18, 2021.

The Camping in Ontario Annual Directory lists 55 campgrounds within Kawartha and Northumberland that range in size and operation. Of these campgrounds:

- 54 have full-season only sites, 40 have overnight sites and 30 offer roofed lodging.
- Over half of campgrounds (29) dedicate less than 25% of their total campsites to transient/overnight bookings, generally resulting in an operating ratio for this area of 25% overnight and 75% all season.
- The majority of campgrounds in this area operate from the beginning of May until mid-October.
- 47 of the campgrounds offer fully serviced sites with electricity, water and sewage. Some sites within these campgrounds may be unserviced, but these are typically overnight sites.
- An internet hotspot is offered at 18 campgrounds within this region.¹²

Common infrastructure found in over half of Ontario's campgrounds include playgrounds, community shelters, snack or convenience stores, and beaches. This infrastructure tends to be found in private, not-for-profit and municipal campgrounds as they are more driven by family needs. Modern campgrounds, especially the private operations, have moved far beyond their "roughing-it" roots to attract an audience beyond hard-core campers. Alexandra Anderson, Executive Director of Camping in Ontario says "Camping is no longer just the event any more. It's the camping and what else can we do with the camping".¹³

Along with the addition of roofed accommodations, the most requested services in Canadian campgrounds are: wireless internet, pool and water play area, improved electrical grid and renovated comfort stations.¹⁴ It should be noted that although wireless internet is a newly requested service, the KOA report found that two-thirds of teens claim that they would still want to go camping even if they could not stay connected.

Against the backdrop of the 2019 global pandemic, the influx of potential new campers from diverse backgrounds coupled with the notion of camping as a safe travel option reinforces the influence camping will continue to have in the outdoor recreation economy.

The campground brings in a lot of non-local spending which increases Selwyn's tourism market and helps its retailers to access new customers. Hague Point would need to be developed as a destination rather than passive parkland if the intent is to help local businesses.

~ Comment from
Stakeholder Interview

¹² Camping in Ontario. 2021 Annual Directory/Repertoire Annuel de 2021. www.campinginontario.ca

¹³ RV Business. June 18, 2012. Ontario Parks Keep Pace with Camping Trends.

¹⁴ Ibid. Canadian Camping & RV Council, 2015

6.0 Selected Case Studies of Municipal Campgrounds in Ontario

Town of Saugeen Shores

Saugeen Shores is located in Bruce County along Lake Huron. The Town owns and directly operates two municipal campgrounds in its primary urban settlement areas, consisting of the Port Elgin Tourist Camp and the Southampton Tourist Camp. While both are located near the waterfront, they do not offer direct waterfront access. 523 campsites are available across both campgrounds, of which the vast majority (97%) are seasonal sites. The Town retains a small number of overnight sites as a value-added feature largely for guests of their seasonal renters (though anybody can book a transient site). The Town sees greater value in providing seasonal sites as these provide more certainty in operating revenue, they draw returning campers that allows Town Staff to form mutually respectful relationships, and they find most seasonal campers to be quieter and cleaner compared to overnight renters and the party-going crowd (thus enforcement and clean-up tends to be less onerous). The Town is observing a growing shift towards seasonal sites as a regional campground trend.

With strong demand for their campsites, the Town generates a healthy operating surplus (around \$650,000 per year) through its campgrounds. Saugeen Shores operates both campgrounds as enterprise facilities with the intent of generating profit. Rates are set and adjusted to be competitive with the surrounding market, with the prevailing philosophy that the campground benefits the camper who in turn contribute a greater share of costs through user fees. This allows the Town to contribute roughly \$35,000 annually to a capital reserve fund and finance improvements to their aging infrastructure. The Town briefly leased campground operations to a third party a number of years ago but found that it did not work well and thus they re-assumed operations. The Town once contemplated selling a portion of one of the campgrounds but deemed the ongoing profit generation potential to outweigh the one-time cash payment that they would have received.

Operational challenges include retaining long-term staff since the campground is a 6-month operation, and there are sometimes challenges with campers adhering to by-laws that govern aesthetics and safety of trailers. There have also been some legal challenges with campers staying longer than permitted but the lands are not designated or zoned for residential use; this was compounded during COVID-19 when seasonal residents were returning earlier than expected or are prolonging travel to their winter destinations. Town staff also conducted an informal survey among their seasonal campers about spending habits and found that most tend to come with the supplies they need, and thus impact on local business is thought to be nominal.

City of Kawartha Lakes

A Service Delivery Review (SDR) prepared for Kawartha Lakes' Parks & Recreation Department in 2016 raised the question about whether the City should continue its role in operating two municipal campgrounds. For the seasonal campground at Centennial Park, its removal could result in the land being transferred back to the federal government under terms of a historical agreement with the Crown and thus the campground was retained. Further, that 172 seasonal site campground is financially profitable generating between \$200,000 and \$225,000 per year on average under the direct management of the Parks & Recreation Department.

The City's other campground at Bobcaygeon Beach Park was much smaller and brought in between \$20,000 and \$25,000 annually. Bobcaygeon Beach Park is located along the Trent-Severn Waterway and locks, providing prime waterfront access to Sturgeon Lake in the heart of the urban area. The campground was historically oriented to transient/overnight campers but the City had moved to a seasonal lease model prior to the Service Delivery Review. By Staff accounts, the campground was a standard operation, did not pose major day-to-day challenges, and had nominal short to mid-term infrastructure renewal obligations. Like Hague Point, the Bobcaygeon Beach Park included a beach and playground that were distinct from the campground and available to anyone wishing to use them.

The City's SDR identified a number of options for the Bobcaygeon Beach Park campground including a status quo and third party managed operational model, as well as a cease operations scenario (with no future use identified). Unlike the case of Selwyn, the Kawartha Lakes SDR identified the opportunity for sale of the land given financial proceeds could be significant. City Staff presented opportunities and challenges associated with each option to Kawartha Lakes Council who decided that retaining the land in public ownership was most appropriate. However, it is understood that Council believed that Bobcaygeon Beach Park had greater potential as an active, destination-type Community Park for use by residents and tourists. With limited boat docking space available in the area, a redeveloped park was seen as an opportunity to substantially increase the number of docks/slips in Bobcaygeon to encourage greater boating.

A conceptual plan for Bobcaygeon Beach Park¹⁵ illustrates a number of built-up park amenities including an event space and gathering areas, playground, floating docks for docking and water sports, pavilion/shade structure, expanded parking, and more. It reflects a higher level of intensity which Council deemed to be a better use than the campground on the basis of urban revitalization, tourism, and contributions to public waterfront space. The project's development was tendered for around \$7.6 million and is under construction at time of writing.

¹⁵ City of Kawartha Lakes. Bobcaygeon Beach Park Conceptual Master Plan. December 2018.

Town of Perth

The Town of Perth is located in Lanark County. Up until the year 2020, the Town operated a campground at Last Duel Park which was located along a waterfront canal system and contained roughly 50 sites for seasonal and transient users. The Town permanently decommissioned the campground in 2020 due to concerns over liability and its ongoing costs, particularly as capital investment was required to upgrade aging infrastructure and there was a serious criminal incident that created concerns regarding safety and security. The campground was located in a relatively remote area of the Town and was also at times used by social service agencies as a temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

Public opinion was generally split between pro-camping advocates in favour of retaining the campground versus a group of community members advocating for the return of the property to parkland. The prevailing sentiment presented by Town Staff to members of Council was that the Town should either be “all in, or all out” with respect to the operation; while a study examining the “highest and best use” for the campground was commissioned in 2000, its recommendations were not fully implemented due to competing financial priorities.

Prior to decommissioning, the Town was responsible for operating the campground though it had previously explored a third party operating model before reassuming control. Surplus revenues were in the range of \$15,000 annually. The seasonal sites accounted for roughly 40% of the sites available although the Town was being pressed for improvements related to electrical power and lot size due to the size of modern campers and RVs. The Town issued an RFP a few years earlier to re-engage a third party operator but responses were deemed to not warrant entering into an agreement.

Since decommissioning, the Town indicates that residents have re-embraced the park and it is experiencing a higher level of use, particularly among walkers and dog walkers; staff acknowledged that surge in use may also be attributable to people looking to get outside as the campground’s closure coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I strongly support returning the Lakefield campground fully to park purposes, including environmental protection, low impact recreation and education.”

~ Written Submission

Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula

Located in Bruce County, Northern Bruce Peninsula is home to many campgrounds that are operated by all three levels of government (Parks Canada, Ontario Parks, and the Municipality) as well as those operated by the local Conservation Authority and a number of private campground operations. As such, the campground market is highly saturated and the Municipality has historically taken a “supplementary” role recognizing that the larger agencies and private operations are filling much of the nature-based camping that people are seeking in areas around Tobermory and Lions Head.

The Municipality’s campground in Lion’s Head is co-located with a beach and a municipally-operated harbour, providing access to Georgian Bay. It is a small operation with 42 campsites, of which 22 are dedicated to seasonal campers. The fairly even split between seasonal and transient campsites is intentional to balance the benefits and challenges with each type of use. Municipal staff indicated that the seasonal sites are relatively easy to administer as seasonal renters know the campground rules (and in fact self-police it). On the other hand, staff anecdotally believe that more revenues are generated through transient bookings, particularly with the current province-wide surge in demand for campsites. This said, the Lion’s Head campground generates only about \$20,000 per year after expenses which has led some people to question whether that amount is sufficient when the campground occupies high value real estate in financial terms but also in terms of its potential value as a public waterfront park.

The Municipality provides the campground largely as a service rather than an enterprise that competes with others in the area. The campground was historically a place where Northern Bruce Peninsula residents would set up a trailer in the summer, particularly older residents on fixed incomes, and thus rates are generally priced with affordability in mind; strong demand at the Lion’s Head campground can be attributed to seasonal rates being less than what a typical cottage might pay in taxes, making it an attractive option. During COVID-19, non-resident interest has increased since the larger campgrounds are full. The campground’s electrical system was replaced a few years back at a cost of approximately \$15,000 as more people are demanding better hydro service.

Campground staff interviewed believe that if Council were to direct them to generate more money, the most logical way would be to convert all sites to transient use and substantially increase the rental rate. Operationally, they acknowledge that transient sites require a lot of work and are hoping to automate their booking and payment process having recently done a review (an electronic management system would be combined with their harbour operations).

Town of South Bruce Peninsula

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is located in Bruce County and in proximity to a number of the federal, provincial and private campgrounds noted above for Northern Bruce Peninsula. The Town operates a 94 site campground in Wiarton at Bluewater Park, one of its premier waterfront parks that is located in proximity to its Main Street commercial district and situated along Colpoys Bay (which provides access to Georgian Bay). An interesting feature is the campground administration office is located in its former train station, having repurposed a heritage asset. Combined with the adjacent park which contains a ball diamond, splash pad, picnic areas and connections to a regional trail network, the campground visitors enjoy a broad number of natural and built amenities.

The Town updated the campground's electrical infrastructure approximately 15 years ago, increasing the amperage in response to larger trailers, and have also installed cable and phone lines as well as an onsite dumping station. All seasonal sites are separately metered for renters to pay the Town directly (as well as for cable and phone) which has allowed the Town to generate supplemental revenues which when combined with site rental fees help to attain the roughly \$75,000 per year in net profit. While not yet implemented, the Town has also contemplated other "value-added" fees such as coin-operated showers (which are currently free for anybody to use, whether campground visitors or the public).

Approximately 10 years ago, a number of prime seasonal sites situated along the waterfront were removed and relocated within the campground in order to reclaim the shoreline areas for public parkland; this allowed the Town to install a boardwalk and outdoor fitness equipment, while providing additional public space. The Town continues to be pressed with requests to reclaim more of the campground for broader public use as well as interest from others wishing to purchase the land for its development potential.

Of the total number of sites, approximately 60% are dedicated to transient sites and the remaining 40% are assigned to seasonal renters. Like others interviewed, the prevailing thought is that the transient sites contribute more revenue (this is confirmed through a review of their operating budget) but also require more effort on the part of staff in terms of clean up, grass cutting and enforcement. The Town has an enterprise mindset for its campground and sets fees to be competitive with prevailing market rates. It has been their experience that the campground has encouraged people to visit the Town and a number of former campers have now purchased property in the area and become permanent residents.

Township of Centre Wellington

The Township of Centre Wellington is located in Wellington County. It maintains a 200 site campground at its Community Sportsplex Park in Fergus to support its internationally renowned Scottish Festival & Highland Games during which campground operations are delegated to the event organizers. The Township does not make the campground available for general public bookings but does open it up for a handful of regular renters and few 'one-off' requests every year, usually those associated with a tournament or special event. Staff also noted that people would much rather camp at the nearby Elora Gorge as opposed to pitching a tent or trailer adjacent to an active soccer field.

The Township's operating philosophy is that the campground is a community service and part of the tourism/event infrastructure that continues to be provided in order to support the Scottish Festival. Therefore, it is not run with the intent of being a business-minded operation. With the infrastructure already in place and no higher or better use identified for the parkland, campground operations are likely to continue for the foreseeable future since ongoing expenditures are fairly nominal. Since the campground is maintained as a park for most of the year, the Township's maintenance efforts are less intensive though it faces some similar challenges such as having to invest capital in adherence to new CSA guidelines for campgrounds and will be faced with renewing certain servicing infrastructure.

Township of North Huron

The Township of North Huron, located in Huron County, operates the Blyth Campground as an "events grounds" that hosts several large camping events every year. Situated on 45 acres, the campground can accommodate up to 800 event campers at a time. Sites are serviced with water and electricity though much of the infrastructure has been in place for decades without major renewals, thus repairs are frequently undertaken. Showers and washrooms are also available, while there is an offsite dumping station located a short distance away.

No seasonal camping is permitted as a large event organizer with a long history in the Town requires much of the space for its annual festival. There are some overnight rentals throughout the summer, including those visiting the Blyth Theatre, but staff indicate that campsite bookings are far less than they were 10 to 15 years ago. This campground is run largely as a community service for the event organizers and the Town has historically incurred a net operating loss (between \$32,000 and \$50,000 in 2019 and 2020).

North Huron also operates a trailer park but Council passed a motion in 2020 to begin the process of closing it and designate it for residential development (largely for economic development reasons, but also the trailer park has a number of aging assets at the end of lifecycle).

Otonabee Region Conservation Authority

Beavermead Campground is owned by the City of Peterborough and operated by Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA). There are 18 unserviced campsites, and 77 serviced campsites with 30 amp and 50 amp hydro services, plus water hookup, and 2 group campsites. The Comfort Station offers showers and washrooms and there is a sanitary dump station for campers' use. Beavermead also has 4 fully accessible campsites that feature barrier-free picnic tables, a paved surface pad, and close proximity to accessible washroom and shower facilities. The City's adjacent 53 acre park contains nature areas, trails, playground with accessible features, a beach, soccer fields, beach volleyball courts, a pavilion and an outdoor gymnasium.

The City historically operated the campground but was struggling with its profitability, partly due to costs associated with its unionized staffing structure. In 2012, the City approached ORCA to explore operating the campground as the latter already operated a campground at Warsaw Caves and had lower labour costs than the municipality. The partnership was tested out with short-term agreements and in 2019 the term of the agreement was extended to 5-year periods with renewal options for the next 5 years. Under the agreement, the City retains ownership of the land and is responsible for capital infrastructure, grounds maintenance and tree hazard removals while ORCA is responsible for campground operations. A profit sharing agreement is in place and has resulted in a "win-win" situation whereby the campground continues to be available in Peterborough while ORCA is able to reinvest profits to subsidize other non-revenue generating assets and activities at its Conservation Areas.

ORCA attributes the success of the Beavermead agreement and operating model to having scope, responsibilities and financial obligations clearly defined. If they were to contemplate partnering with a municipality in the future, they can envision a similar agreement being put in place subject to any unique circumstances or market factors.

Table 4: Selected Statistics from Comparator Campgrounds

	Total Campsites	Seasonal Sites	Transient Sites	Serviced Sites	Rates (excl. HST)
Saugeen Shores (2 campgrounds)	523	506	17	523	Seasonal: \$2,817 Transient / Overnight: \$48.41 per day in peak season
Kawartha Lakes	172	172	0	172	Seasonal: \$2,483 to \$2,894
Northern Bruce Peninsula	42	22	20	22	Seasonal: \$1,700 to \$2,150 Transient / Overnight: \$37 to \$47 per day
South Bruce Peninsula	94	40	54	54	Seasonal: \$2,566.37 Transient / Overnight: \$35.40 to \$48.67 per day
Centre Wellington	251	0	251	80	Transient / Overnight: \$30.76 per day
North Huron	100 regular (up to 800 for events)	0	800	800	Transient / Overnight: \$30 per day
ORCA / Peterborough (Beavermead)	97	10	87	77	Seasonal: \$3,300 to \$3,400 Transient / Overnight: \$47 to \$58 per day
Selwyn (Lakefield Campground)	128	117	11	53	Seasonal: \$2,700 to \$3,100 Transient / Overnight: \$45 to \$60 per day

Note: Information current as of March 2021

7.0 Community Engagement

The Lakefield Campground Utilization Study encouraged individuals and project stakeholders to contribute input throughout the planning process. Feedback received was reviewed in conjunction with other planning inputs such as past studies, trends and best practice research, and campground operating information to inform the needs assessments and Study recommendations.

Community feedback was coordinated through the following efforts:

1. Community Awareness campaign and creation of a project website;
2. Community Survey (online and print formats);
3. Advisory Committee Workshops;
4. Targeted Stakeholder Interviews;
5. Review of Written Submissions; and
6. Council Engagement.

Highlights and notable points from community consultations are presented in the pages that follow.

Community Awareness

The Township notified the public of the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study by issuing a Press Release on April 19, 2021 as well as contacting local stakeholder groups that have an interest in the campground and Hague Point as a whole. Local media were also contacted, some of whom published news articles on the Study and opportunities for the community to participate in the planning process. The Township actively promoted the Study and consultation opportunities through its social media and through the networks of Township Staff, elected Officials and the Advisory Committees.

In addition, the Township created a project-specific webpage for the Study (www.selwyntownship.ca/lakefieldcampground) containing information about the planning process and FAQs. It is anticipated that the Draft Study will be posted on the project webpage to allow for public review and comment.

"Like many other campers, whenever we get in our vehicle and begin the two hour trek to this near north haven, we are filled with a sense of excitement and joy. This campground truly is something of a generational institution for many families! The traditions start the moment we arrive...Arriving at our little slice of heaven, we are always greeted by more smiles and waves of surrounding neighbours, reinforcing the wonderful sense of community we have created that seems harder and harder to find in urban neighborhoods these days."

~ Written Submission

"Please add our voices to the many who say that we need more public park space, especially in this time with COVID and climate change moving forward. We all need somewhere safe to enjoy and to retreat to."

~ Written Submission

Community Survey

A community survey was open between April 9 and 30, 2021 to collect input on topics related to the Lakefield Campground. Available in both online and hard copy formats, the survey explored participation and preferences for camping along with opinions regarding the Township's role at the Lakefield Campground, including the degree of support to repurpose the lands to parkland.

As a self-administered questionnaire, it should not be considered to be statistically representative of the entire population; however it does provide meaningful insight related to the topic at hand and managed to engage a large number of community members with a wide range of perspectives. For certain questions, survey respondents were asked to report their participation levels from 2019 or earlier (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) since many campgrounds were closed in 2020 and 2021.

This section summarizes key findings from the survey. A complete summary of the survey with greater detail can be found in Appendix A.

Summary of Survey Respondents

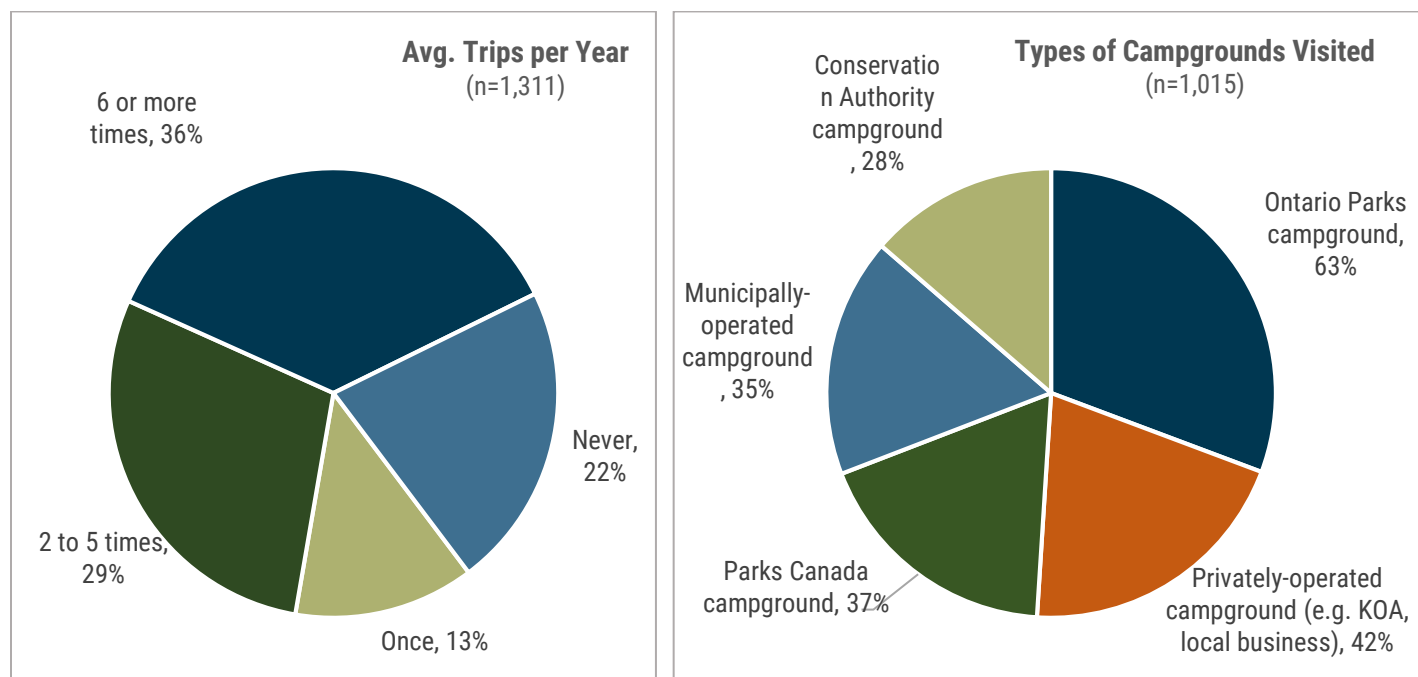
The following is a high-level summary of the demographic profile of responding households:

- A total of 1,311 surveys were completed and analyzed. While a slightly higher number of surveys were received, the sample was adjusted to account for duplicate and substantially incomplete submissions.
- 831 respondents reported being permanent or seasonal residents of the Township of Selwyn, of whom nearly 3 out of 4 (72%) were submitted by people living in Lakefield and surrounding area.
- 60% of the roughly 300 non-resident submissions were received from people living in Peterborough or Douro-Dummer.
- The median age of respondents was 58 which is 7 years above Selwyn's 2016 Census median age, suggesting an older demographic was more likely to complete this survey. The age structure of individuals living within responding households was similar to the Township's age structure documented through the 2016 Census.
- The average household size was 2.8 persons, which is higher compared to Selwyn's 2016 Census recorded 2.5 persons per household.

Participation in Camping

Given that camping is an existing service provided by the Township, the survey explored the degree to which people camp. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 78% of respondents reported that they camped at least one or more times in a typical year, with 2 out of 3 surveyed camping more than 5 times annually on average (Figure 3). Nearly 2 out of 3 camping households surveyed (63%) reported that they typically visit an Ontario Parks campground while approximately 1 out of 3 surveyed campers (35%) typically use a municipally-operated campground. Private campgrounds were used by 42% of those reporting that they camp.

Figure 3: Average Number of Camping Trips in a Typical Year & Campgrounds Visited by Camping Households



To better understand future plans, the survey found that 69% plan to camp the same or more after the pandemic is over while 31% plan to camp less or not camp at all. The desire to camp more frequently is consistent with national trends but may also reflect the short-term increase in demand for campsites caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as camping is seen to be a “safe” option that can be carried out without cross-border travel.

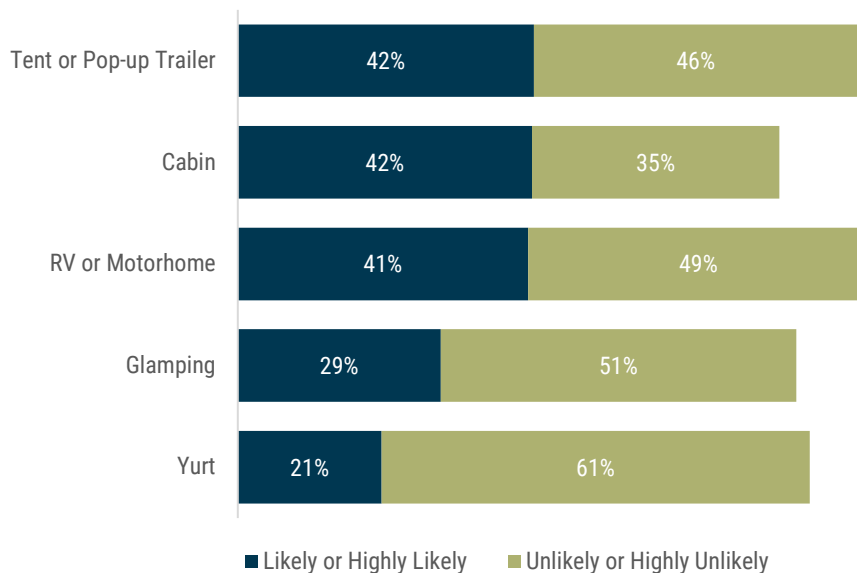
Factors in Campground Selection

The decision of where to camp is often dictated by three main factors:

- 1) the type of camping accommodation/experience;
- 2) distance to travel; and
- 3) the types of amenities that the campground offers.

Respondents were equally likely to camp in a tent or pop-up trailer, cabin, and an RV or motor home, and least likely to pursue glamping-style experiences and yurts (Figure 4). Of the respondents that were interested in camping, 71% were willing to travel more than 50 kilometres to camp. Just 1% wish to travel less than 10 kilometers.

Figure 4: Types of Camping Experiences Households Would Participate In

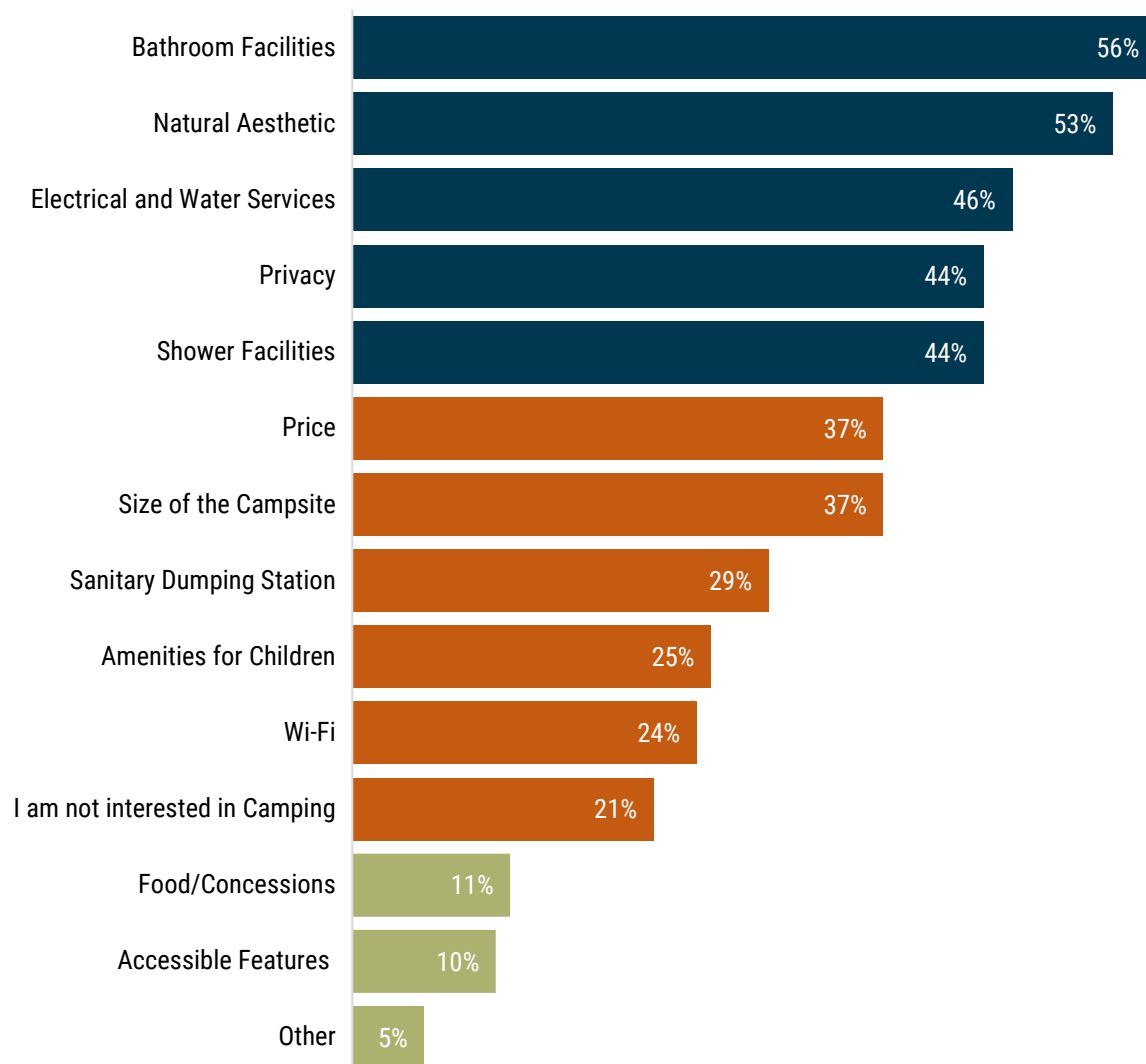


Note: neutral responses are excluded

Of the respondents that are campers, 50% visited an Ontario Parks campground while privately operated, municipally operated, conservation and Parks Canada campgrounds were less frequented.

Respondents identified that when choosing a campground, bathroom facilities and natural aesthetic are the most important amenities. Other popular features were access to water/beach, cleanliness, pet friendly and recreation activities. This is consistent with the 2020 North American Camping Report that states campground atmosphere is the largest contributor in campground selection. Figure 5 contains a list of amenities that are considered when selecting a site.

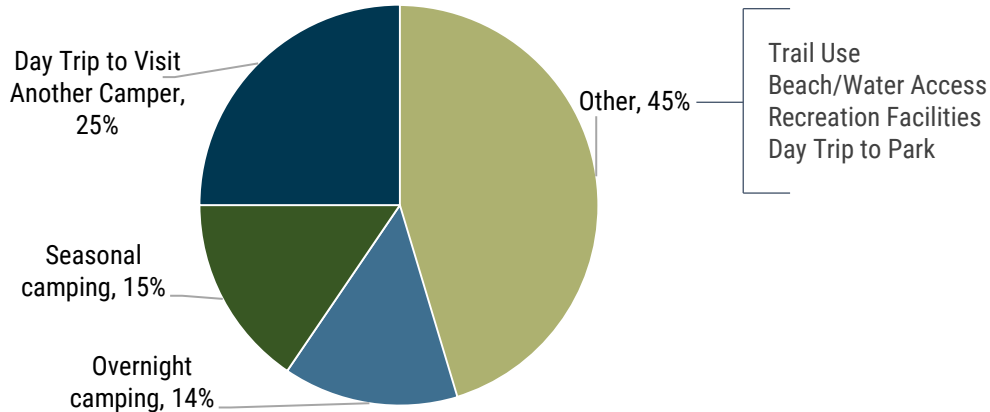
Figure 5: Important Amenities in Campground Selection (n=1,251)



Visiting Lakefield Campground

The majority of survey respondents (71%) had visited Lakefield Campground in the last two years. 29% of visitors were either seasonal or overnight campers and 25% reported visiting another camper. Those that reported 'other' non-camping purposes primarily used the broader area of Hague Point for walking, use of the beach and to enjoy the outdoors. The results suggest Hague Point is being used fairly equally for park and camping purposes among those surveyed.

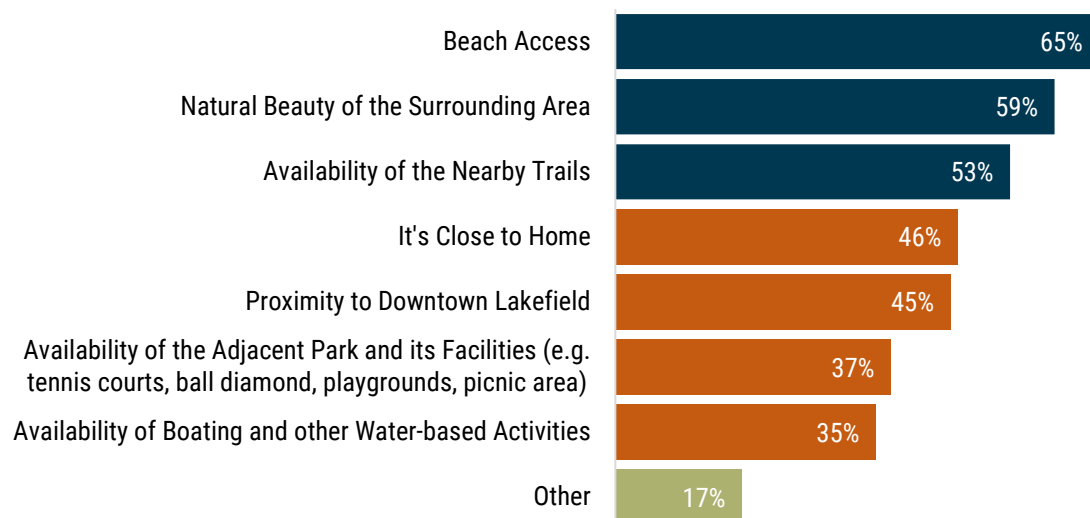
Figure 6: Lakefield Campground Usage (n=884)



Appeal of the Lakefield Campground

Figure 7 illustrates the types of amenities that makes the Lakefield Campground an attractive camping destination for those surveyed. The most highly rated amenities pertain to the land itself with the beach access, natural beauty of the surroundings, and the nearby trails. Of the 'other' responses, some respondents commented that the campground offers a sense of community while certain others stated that the campground is not attractive to them.

Figure 7: What Makes Lakefield Campground an Attractive Destination (n=1,193)

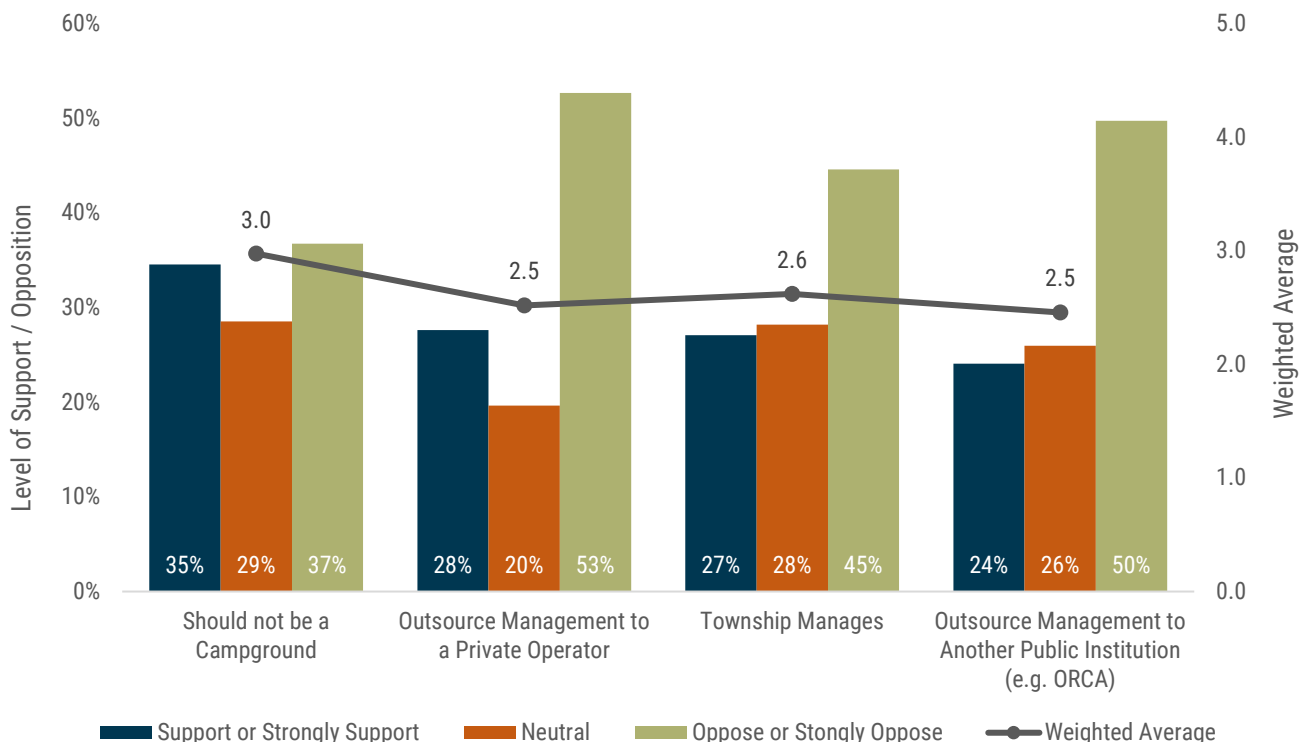


Opinion on Operational Models being Investigated

The survey tested levels of support and opposition for Study Options being investigated (Figure 8); as the survey was ongoing before the May 5, 2021 Special Meeting of Township Council, it continued to test the Township-operated Option. Notable results from this question include:

- 35% would support a decision for the Township to no longer offer a campground as a municipal service at Hague Point.
- Between 24% and 28% supported retaining a campground and appear to favour private sector or Township-managed operations.
- Although there was greater support reported for decommissioning the campground than choices focused on retaining operations, it is possible that the multiple options for retaining the campground may have “split” results. As possible evidence of this, there were similar levels of support and opposition recorded for the ‘should not be a campground’ model at 35% and 37%, respectively, which stands in contrast to the greater deviation shown for the campground-operating models.

Figure 8: Level of Support for Each Operational Management Model



Notes: Weighted Average and degree of support/opposition is based on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Strongly Oppose”, 3 means “Neither Support or Oppose” and 5 means “Strongly Support”. Survey was initiated before the May 5, 2021 Special Meeting of Council and thus the Township-Operated Option was tested.

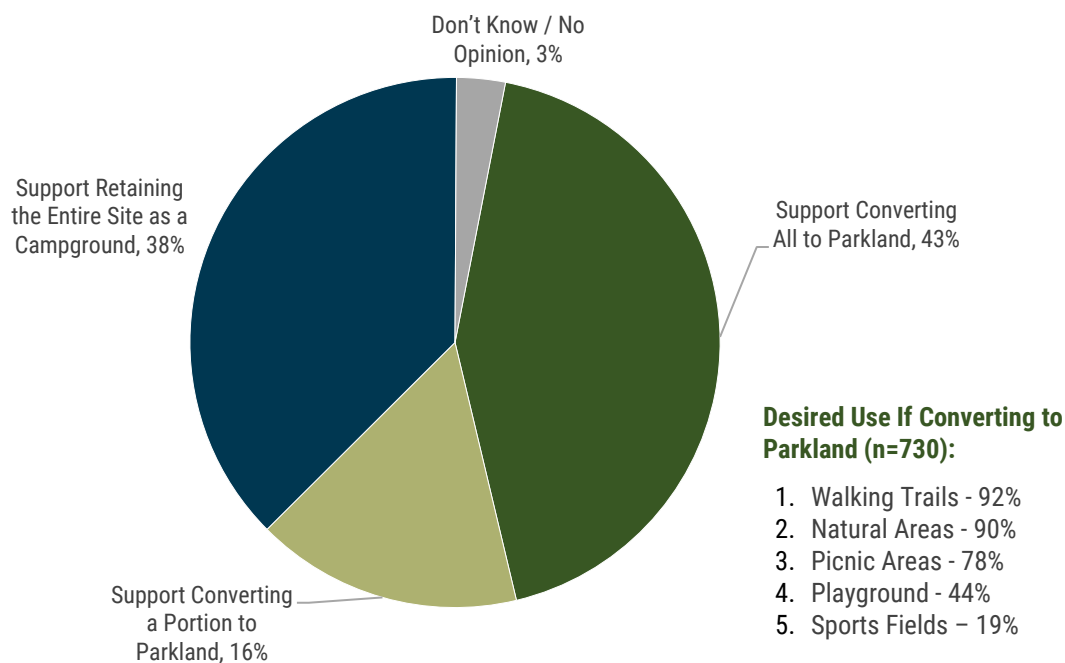
Support for Conversion to Parkland

Perhaps providing further clarity with respect to the findings of the previously noted question, the survey followed up by specifically asking respondents whether they would support retaining the entire campground or converting all or a portion of it to parkland (Figure 9). 54% of the sample supports retaining campground operations in some form while 43% would like the entire campground to be converted to parkland. The vast majority of those that supported converting all or portion of the area to parkland indicated that their vision would be for passive uses with trails and natural areas.

54%

Survey respondents that support retaining the campground in some form compared to 43% that support to converting it entirely to parkland.

Figure 9: Support of Conversion to Public Parkland (n=1,180)



Other Survey Responses

Respondents had an opportunity to provide additional input to be considered for the future of Lakefield Campground. The majority of comments were either in favour of keeping the campground as is or to convert it to parkland. Many respondents that want it to remain as a campground feel it is a “home away from home” for campers and helps the local economy. Respondents that would like it to be converted to parkland generally felt that public land should not be used for private purposes and that a campground does not fit with the natural beauty of the site.

Advisory Committee Workshops

Meetings were convened with the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC), Trails Committee and Economic Development & Business Committee (EDBC) to discuss the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study. The purpose of the workshops was to provide an overview of the planning process, highlight opportunities available for the public and stakeholders to participate, and receive preliminary feedback with respect to the merits and challenges of each Study Option being evaluated.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee / Trails Committee

A joint meeting of PRAC and the Trails Committee was held on April 22, 2021 via video conference. The following notable points were raised during the discussion:

- There was a feeling that retaining a third-party operator may not appropriately address the environmental stewardship requirements of the property or provide sufficient municipal oversight.
- A comment was made that perhaps a compromise can be found between campers and those that want the campground repurposed to parkland, potentially through strategic investments such as creating viewing sites and environmental enhancements. The hope was that the land can give people the ability to access a piece of waterfront property that they normally would not otherwise be able to.
- The general consensus among Advisory Committee members was that the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority would provide the most benefit to all stakeholders based on the preliminary information provided. Members stated that ORCA's mandate and ownership of Imagine the Marsh provides strong incentive to operate a campground in alignment with environmental objectives.

A deputation from PRAC was also received at the June 15th, 2021 Special Meeting of Township Council and was considered as part of the Study.

Economic Development & Business Committee

As part of the regularly scheduled EDBC meeting of April 26, 2021, the following comments were offered with respect to the Study:

- It was noted that the operating revenues provided to the Township are fairly nominal in relation to the total municipal budget. However, the fact that campgrounds generate a net operating profit was recognized as being more favourable than other municipal services that are run at a net operating loss or subsidy.
- With the campground situated on a prime waterfront property that is close to the Lakefield business area, some Committee members were concerned that loss of the campground would result in an underutilization of the site and may not be used to its full potential. There was also a concern among some that loss of campground revenue could lead to a tax increase borne by ratepayers.
- There was some concern that a commercial campground operator may not be inclined to always act in the public interest by virtue of the fact that most businesses are profit-oriented.
- One Committee member indicated that as a business owner, they have firsthand experience in seeing how the ORCA agreement has worked with the City of Peterborough. The individual stated that the Beavermead Campground is a well-run operation with the Conservation Authority willing to work with local businesses.
- Another Committee member indicated that there is significant demand for docking in the area and that the Township may wish to consider ways to increase the amount of slips/docks to capitalize on boat traffic to support economic development, tourism, and area residents living in areas with only boat access.
- If campground operations were to continue, EDBC generally agreed that there should be improvements to the entire site and greater efforts to promote it to residents and visitors. The thought was that there is a potential to generate additional tourism benefits through restaurant, retail and rental opportunities along the water.
- EDBC members generally felt that the ORCA operating model would be a viable Option to pursue given the Conservation Authority has demonstrated that they can operate a campground and are perceived to work well with others.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews with the following project stakeholders, as identified by the Township prior to commencing this Study, were carried out in April 2021:

1. Lakefield Trail Stewardship Committee
2. Kawartha Chamber of Commerce
3. Friends of Lakefield Park
- 4 Real Friends of Lakefield Park
5. Imagine Marsh (written submission)

Interviews ranged between 40 and 60 minutes in length through which stakeholders expressed their views and vision for the Lakefield Campground and Hague Point.

Lakefield Trails Stewardship Committee

A video conference with eight representatives of the Lakefield Trails Stewardship Committee (LTSC) was held on April 27, 2021. The LTSC helped to fund and build the Lakefield Trail, continues to help maintain it through their volunteer base, and is now a sub-committee of the Parks & Recreation Department. With part of the Trail passing through Hague Point and connecting to Imagine the Marsh Conservation Area, the LTSC has an interest in maximizing public access and enjoyment of the trail. Notable points from discussion are as follows:

- LTSC believes that the campground should be repurposed to public parkland, which they see as providing a naturalized space that can be enjoyed by a broad range of residents, including people that will be living in newly developing areas of the community.
- LTSC indicated that they view the current campground as being unsightly and not in keeping with the natural beauty of the surrounding area. The strong use of the trail and heavy traffic of the beach was also noted to sometimes result in user-conflicts with adjacent campsites.
- By reclaiming the campground as a public park, there would be a potential to activate Hague Point to a greater degree than present by allowing entertainment, events, canoe rentals, programs and activities to occur which would continue to provide economic benefits through use of the land. It was envisioned that repurposing the campground has the potential to create a “signature piece” in the Township’s parks system while allowing people to access natural and ‘urban’ park experiences.

Hague Point is one of the most unique points in the natural heritage network, many people use it and visitors are impressed with it...There is a strong sentiment that this is public land and it should remain open to as many people as possible by returning the camp to natural parkland with most environment friendly use.

~ Comment from
Stakeholder Interview

Kawartha Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

A discussion with the Kawartha Chamber of Commerce's General Manager and its Board of Directors' Second Vice-President was held on April 27, 2021. The conversation was prefaced by the fact the Township of Selwyn, Otonabee Region Conservation Authority and the current campground operator are members of the Chamber of Commerce and thus the feedback provided by the two representatives do not necessarily reflect the specific views of these individual entities. The following points were raised for this Study:

- The Lakefield Campground generates significant non-local spending in Lakefield and surrounding area which helps to increase the local tourism market and helps local retailers to access new customers. Given the seasonal focus of the campground, the customers tend to be the same over the course of the year and support local grocery and hardware stores, as well as the LCBO; however, these individuals may not be engaging in area attractions or visitor-oriented businesses to the same degree that overnight/transient campers would.
- The representatives would support an Option that engages a local entrepreneur to operate the campground and suggested that a new agreement presents an opportunity to address any areas where the previous agreement resulted in shortcomings or unmet expectations.
- The ORCA-managed agreement would also make sense given its demonstrated experience in operating campgrounds and the co-location with Imagine the Marsh. ORCA's own environmental programming potential could be integrated with campground operations and position Hague Point to be "more than just a camping experience."
- The representatives thought it could be advantageous to bring in an operator with recent experience and knowledge in running campgrounds.
- The representatives were concerned that ceasing campground operations would reduce tourism to the detriment of local businesses. They felt that Isabel Morris Park already serves as a 'downtown' park.
- They see benefit in increasing the number of transient campsites as well as providing introductory camping experiences, yurts, winter camping, canoe rentals, create a "food box" of groceries and meals for campers supplied by local restaurants or grocery stores, etc. as a means to diversify year-round economic benefits.

Friends of Lakefield Park

A video conference with representatives from the Friends of Lakefield Park was conducted on April 29, 2021. The following points were discussed:

- The Friends are of the opinion that there is little to no benefit for the Township to provide a working campground at Hague Point. The group expects that the long-term capital and operational expenses required for the campground would exceed revenues due to infrastructure, servicing and maintenance costs over time. Potential risk and liability associated with tree hazards and occupational health and safety were also mentioned.
- They state that degradation of Hague Point is occurring as a result of the campground and point to examples of tree cutting, soil compaction, spreading of gravel, and dock construction.
- Inspections and approvals from the Ministry of the Environment and other regulatory bodies should be in place for campground operations and any changes to the site or its infrastructure.
- The Friends envision that Hague Point should be converted to a natural park that could promote sustainability and nature to residents through amenities such as a learning centre, observation tower, an outdoor theatre, and interpretive signage. The ability to leverage the Marshland Centre was also raised as a possibility for onsite programs and services.
- Prior to the interview, the Friends of Lakefield Park circulated their own report for the future use of Hague Point and discussed a number of points identified in that document for discussion with the Consultants.

Real Friends of Lakefield Park

The Real Friends of Lakefield Park indicated that they are a recent group formed directly in response to this Study. The Real Friends indicate that their membership consists of campground users and residents living in the areas surrounding Hague Point. A video conference held on April 29, 2021 resulted in the following notable discussion points:

- The Real Friends emphasized that the campground is a community within itself but also part of the broader Lakefield community as well. Certain campers have been coming to Lakefield for years and have formed meaningful connections with fellow campers, campground and municipal staff, and business owners. The campground provides its users with respite from the built-up urban environment, experience nature in a way that would otherwise be relegated to only people that can afford to live by the water, and has become a second home to many.
- Continuity in operations is important, not only in terms of having a campground but also the operator. Campground users have formed a relationship with the current operator and value the ability to have a single point of contact to address questions and concerns at all hours. They would anticipate potential customer service challenges with the ORCA-operated Option if the Conservation Authority were to employ temporary staff, have high rates of staff turnover, or assign staff that do not have experience or time to engage campground users (e.g. summer students).
- They note that the popularity of camping has grown in recent years and demand for campgrounds is very high, thereby leading one to question rationale to discontinue this level of service. The group indicates that conversion to a naturalized park could lead to underutilization and in turn lead to illegal activity and neglect.
- Campground users are willing to work with the Township and/or operator to address concerns and be compliant with guidelines, standards and rules. They are also willing to consider how they can help fund improvements such as increasing electrical amperage given that trailers are becoming larger compared to the past.
- The Real Friends expressed hope that a compromise can be found and that the current adversarial climate will come to an end.

I live in a condo for 6 months of the year and spend the other 6 months at the Lakefield Campground. As a widower, the campground has become my connection to others and losing it would be like losing a home. Prior to my husband's passing, he asked his doctors if he could leave the hospital to come back home and he chose the park.

~ Comment from
Stakeholder Interview

Imagine the Marsh

Written correspondence from Imagine the Marsh¹⁶ was received in lieu of an interview based on the stakeholder's preference. The submission emphasizes that the Lakefield Wetland is an important habitat and part of broader environmental functions and resiliency. They encourage the Parks & Recreation Department to "recognize Post-2020 targets for natural protection and in Lakefield, advance Hague Point as a Natural Park with appropriate buffers for the Significant Wetland."

Imagine the Marsh states that human activity occurring at Hague Point and the Wetland, including campground use, is impacting wetland functions and wildlife. They encourage the Township to adopt a framework for remediation that includes use of buffers to reduce human activity in sensitive areas. They also suggest that "the Marshland Centre and extraordinary natural features...provide an important opportunity for educational workshops, and field trip meet-ups."

Other Project Stakeholders

In addition to the stakeholders identified in the preceding pages, Township Staff and the Consultant have separately contacted Curve Lake First Nation to inquire about whether the First Nation would like to contribute to the Study by way of an interview. Curve Lake First Nation has indicated that they may provide a deputation to Township Council with respect to the Study.

¹⁶ Imagine the Marsh. Letter signed and dated June 7, 2021 by Debbie Jenkins.

Written Submissions

A total of 138 written submissions from 125 individuals wishing to provide input into the Study were received as of July 5, 2021. These comments generally fall under those in support of continuing campground operations, and those that do not support continued campground operations and would like to see the lands converted to parkland. Certain other comments were also raised regarding:

- Concerns about lack of adherence to standards and practices that promote respect and environmental health of adjacent natural areas, with a view of ensuring appropriate environmental practices, setbacks from sensitive areas, etc.
- The existing campground users having formed personal connections with each other and to Lakefield as a whole.
- Benefits and challenges associated with semi-permanent structures (e.g. decks) along with off-season storage onsite and ensuring campsites are kept in an aesthetically pleasing manner.
- There is an opportunity to create a new vision for Hague Point.
- A desire for a campground to be managed by consistent, experienced staff to ensure customer service matters can be addressed.
- Opportunities to reconsider the current share of transient and seasonal campsites.
- Reduced appetite for campground infrastructure renewal costs to be borne by taxpayers but rather be funded through campsite fees and other revenues received through campground operations.
- Revisiting the types of boating amenities that could be provided, whether through permitting certain types of docking (or removing docks altogether), and potentially diversifying boat uses through rentals.

Due to the open-ended nature of the comments and personally identifiable nature of submissions, specific input has been reviewed by Township Staff and the Consultant and is considered through the analysis of Study Options where appropriate. These submissions have been provided to Council and form an Appendix to the report (under separate cover).

Council Engagement

Township Council has been engaged three times in total over the course of the project, in addition to Councillors that have been apprised of the Study through their involvement on their respective Advisory Committees that were engaged in the Study consultations.

The first formal Council engagement was held on May 5, 2021. At that meeting, Council received an update on the Study's progress including results from community engagement activities and a preliminary SWOT analysis. Township Council resolved to remove the Parks & Recreation Department operated model from the study thereby leaving 3 Study Options to evaluate through this report (Competitive Bid, ORCA-operated, and Cease Operations).

Township Council was subsequently presented with initial findings from the Draft Lakefield Campground Utilization Study on June 15, 2021. Deputations were received from PRAC, Friends of Lakefield Park, the Real Friends of Lakefield Park, and the Lakefield Trail Stewardship Committee along with a written submission provided by EDBC. In addition, six delegations from members of the general public were received for consideration.

The final Lakefield Campground Utilization Study was presented for Council consideration on July 19, 2021.

8.0 Analysis of Study Options

The Service Delivery Review for the Parks & Recreation Department carried out in 2020 identified 5 Options that the Township is considering for its future role through this Lakefield Campground Utilization Study. The Township has already explored the “Status Quo” option identified in the Service Delivery Review and issued notice to terminate the operating agreement with the current operator upon its date of expiry. The current operator, however, would be permitted to submit a bid as part of an open Expression of Interest or similar procurement process.

At a Special Meeting of Township Council held on May 5, 2021, Council resolved that the Township-operated campground option would not be supported and is no longer to be considered as part of this Study. Therefore, the following 3 Options for the Lakefield Campground will be explored in greater detail:

- Option 1:** Seek a Competitive Market Bid for third party management;
- Option 2:** Outsource operations to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority; or
- Option 3:** Cease Campground Operations and convert the lands to public parkland.

“There is a wanting in the community for the preservation of environmental keystones like The Marsh, the wetlands area that some community members have long since stepped up to preserve in myriad ways, making the public at large aware of the intrinsic environmental value of healthy wetlands, no matter where they happen to be. Green space, accessible for all—that reveres nature is the wise choice for future use of this space, and the positive mental health impact of such preserved areas is well-documented.”

~ Written Submission

“We are homeowners in the area...These campers were invited to come to our campground. They pay their fees and add to the economic engine of Lakefield. Some have been coming here for many years and invested a significant amount to have their second homes. Some have told us they consider this their little piece of heaven and have been residing here for well over twenty years.”

~ Written Submission

Study Option Evaluation Methodology

Each of the three Options has been assessed using an “impact-based” analysis through which each identified strength, weakness, opportunity and threat is evaluated based on the degree to which it is envisioned to positively or negatively affect the Township.

In an attempt to compare Options with each other, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were organized under six Categories:

1. Fiscal & Economic
2. Environment & Sustainability
3. Public Transparency & Accountability
4. Business Operations
5. Township Staffing Implications
6. Integration with Public Services

Figure 10 articulates the various criteria that are considered as a net benefit or a net impact in relation to each Study Option being the considered. These considerations have been integrated into the analysis specific to each Option as found throughout the rest of this Study section.

Based on the evaluation of criteria, the Township will have a general sense of the overall implication of each Option that is being evaluated. It must be noted that assessments are subjective and will thus not be the sole means of comparing Options with each other; further analysis will be undertaken once Township Council determine their “preferred” Option(s) and explore implications resulting from implementation (e.g. negotiated campground operating agreement provisions, changes to campground layout and number of sites, new objectives for Hague Point as a whole, etc.).

Figure 10: Study Option Evaluation Criteria

Fiscal & Economic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Net Operating Profit potentially contributed to the Township budget 2. Economic Spin-offs Provided to Local Businesses 3. Allows meaningful Profits to be reinvested back into Publically-held Assets 4. Financial impact of Ongoing Investments in response to Market Trends for amenities and services 5. Financial Impact of Short-Term and Long-Term Asset Management / Infrastructure Obligations
Environmental & Sustainability
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interest/Incentive/Ability of the Operator to Meet or Exceed the Township's environmental protection / conservation goals 2. Potential to Increase the degree of Public Access to Parkland and Trails
Public Transparency & Accountability
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degree of Public Accountability 2. Risk to Township if a Partner fails to Meet Expectations or prematurely withdraws from an Operating Agreement
Business Operations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alignment with Township of Selwyn Strategic Plan and Recreation Services Plan goals of fiscal Responsibility, Partnerships, and Community Development 2. Provide Continuity of Campground Operations 3. The Township's ability to Influence ongoing Campground Operating Decisions 4. Likelihood of finding a Partner with Demonstrated Experience and longevity in campground operations 5. Opportunity to test an Option before moving on to an alternative if deemed unsuccessful 6. Encourages innovation in service delivery
Township Staffing Implications
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Level of Staffing Effort / Time Commitment required by Township 2. Cost of Staffing
Integration with Public Services
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to use Existing Municipal Resources for campground operations (e.g. grass cutting, tree management, water/sewer services) 2. Ability to create a Synergistic Relationship with Township Marina operations 3. Cross-programming and Integration Potential with Local Services (e.g. docking, marina, beach, sports fields) 4. Ability to integrate programs for the public such as recreation, environmental education, etc.

Option 1: Competitive Market Bid

With the Township having issued its intent to withdraw from the current campground agreement in 2022, the possibility now exists to establish new operating goals, objectives and expectations. The Township would use these and other considerations to create a Terms of Reference for prospective bidders to review and bid upon through a Request For Proposal (RFP) or Expressions of Interest (EOI); municipal procurement processes and policies would guide how competitive market bids would be evaluated and awarded.

Assuming that a suitable vendor(s) is identified out of an RFP or EOI process, the Township would enter into negotiations to confirm an operating agreement. This would likely involve a similar model as employed over the past 25 years whereby the Township retains ownership of the campground lands while a third party is responsible for day-to-day operations and maintenance of the campground.

Analysis - Competitive Bid

Fiscal & Economic

By continuing the Township's practice over the past 25 years of outsourcing campground operations to a privately owned operator, the Township would continue to receive a prescribed amount of revenue while avoiding day-to-day costs of administering and managing the campground.

Furthermore, revenues received from a private operator should exceed any expenditures incurred by Township (as is the case at present) and thus would be considered to generate a net operating surplus. This surplus creates the potential for the Township to reinvest proceeds back into the campground or other Parks & Recreation Department assets and services. Doing so would reduce the tax-funded portion of improvements and operations and avoid having to replace funding for Parks & Recreation Department or other general budget accounts.

In terms of asset management, a private operator may have a greater propensity to invest in campground amenities and services in response to market competition. With an aim of maximizing its profits, a private operator may see benefit in cost-sharing agreements with the Township to improve the campground experience through electrical and water servicing, as well as other camper amenities and services (e.g. Wi-Fi, comfort facilities, landscaping, etc.).

Retaining campground operations will maintain a similar degree of economic and tourist spending potential from campers, regardless of whether a private business or public institution is responsible for management.

Continuing campground operations will require reinvestment in existing infrastructure as described in Section 4.0. Capital replacement costs will be the same regardless of the outsourcing model chosen (i.e. private sector or ORCA) though the prospect of having multiple private bids may yield a greater potential to reach a cost-sharing agreement. That being said, third party contributions to long-term/fixed capital infrastructure will likely demand either a reduction in annual operating revenues provided to the Township or a longer guaranteed term of agreement to provide the third party with rationale to meaningfully recover their portion of fixed-infrastructure costs.

Accordingly, the Competitive Bid Option is likely to have the greatest potential to enhance the Township's existing financial performance and to address current and future capital infrastructure needs. It bears noting that the yet-to-be-determined details of an operating agreement will confirm whether fiscal performance is more advantageous through a private sector operator or ORCA.

Environment & Sustainability

Private sector campground operations are considered to have the greatest likelihood of non-compliance with the Township's environmental expectations of the three Options being investigated. The Township would need to be assured that a private campground operator has an interest, ability or incentive to manage the campground in an environmentally-conscious manner; this could be addressed through specific provisions of an operating agreement, working with the operator over the term of the agreement, and potentially through enforcement of municipal environmental standards.

In evaluating the ability of the general public to access the campground for non-camping uses, a private operator may be less flexible in allowing the general public to walk through if it deems it detrimental to marketing the camper's experience; ultimately, this will depend on the values and willingness of the private operator selected to encourage or discourage use by non-campers. As publicly-owned land, it is understood that any member of the public that wishes to enter the campground is permitted to do so but this does not necessarily apply to occupied/rented campsites.

"I hope that I will be able to continue leaving (sic) the dream at Lakefield campground for many years. This morning I was sitting outside when 4 beautiful swans flew by and the other day a pair of geese with their family was there. With our bird feeders out we have seen hummingbirds, finches, etc. come to feed. It is so nice to see so many residence (sic) and friends we have made over the years walking and welcoming us back for another year."

~ Written Submission

Public Transparency & Accountability

The Township has a procurement process and supporting policies in place to ensure that bids are evaluated fairly, consistently and in the public interest. The ability of the public to demand transparency beyond the municipal procurement process would be limited with a privately managed campground since a private operator is obligated to respond to the Township in accordance with the provisions of the operating agreement, and any contraventions thereof; however, a private operator is not necessarily required to address public inquiries or concerns.

While the details of an operating agreement can expect to form part of the public record, a private operator's specific business and operating practices, financial statements, etc. may not necessarily be shared. Customer service requests and concerns would also be directed to the private operator and the Township would not have a role in addressing/enforcing these unless the operator is found in contravention of the operating agreement.

The private sector bid Option also poses a risk to the Township in the event that an operator fails to adhere to the terms of the agreement or unexpectedly withdraws from it prematurely (the latter of which could result in the Township having to temporarily assume operations until a replacement is found).

Business Operations

The Parks & Recreation Department's indirect service delivery model of providing space (e.g. arenas, halls, sports fields, etc.) and relying on the community to deliver services applies to the existing campground model, and would continue to be embodied by outsourcing to a private operator. Therefore, the model is consistent with the Council-approved Recreation Services Plan as well as the Township of Selwyn Strategic Plan that encourages innovative, sustainable (in the economic and environmental sense), and collaborative approaches.

As noted earlier, the Township's ability to influence day-to-day management decisions would occur through drafting of the operating agreement and/or negotiations with the chosen operator. As an example, the Township may not have an ability to have an operator adjust the mix of seasonal versus transient campsites or their pricing after the final agreement is negotiated. Any provisions or caveats specified by the Township for inclusion in an operating agreement could affect the potential pool of bidders since a private operators business model will be predicated upon many factors but there may be room to negotiate. In addition, a private operator may not share the same values and goals as would the Township and thus any operating agreement crafted with a private operator will need to balance municipal and third party expectations.

A private operator may be more willing and able to be innovative in its approach to operating the campground given its need to be financially viable in a competitive market environment. A private business may be more nimble to respond to changing market demands and expectations since it can use its operating capital at any time to invest in new amenities or services;

On the basis that continuity of campground operations is seen as a benefit being a longstanding and established use, a privately-managed campground is considered more advantageous in the absence of a validated higher and better use for the lands (whether as a park or another alternative land use). The Competitive Bid Option is such that the Township could evaluate the successes and challenges of the first operating term, and could readily transfer management to a different operator as part of a subsequent Competitive Bid tender should expectations not be met the first time around.

Township Staffing Implications

The Township could expect similar staffing implications as historically incurred in the event it continues to outsource to the private sector; one of the reasons for outsourcing operations is to limit the Township's involvement in regular operations and thus the operator would be responsible for day-to-day management of the campground and bear the associated costs. A private operator may pose a risk if it is a new or smaller operation that does not have required staff capacity or knowledge to manage things such as hazard trees; in such instances, responsibility would fall on the Township or a contractor hired by the campground operator.

The Township will need to assign staff time to manage the contract to ensure compliance, mitigate liability risks, and monitor successes and challenges. This should not present a significant change from the current situation.

Integration with Public Services

There would be limited integration potential with other municipal services. The private operator and Township would need to mutually explore alignment of their respective services for use of the adjacent Douglas Sports Centre and Marshland Centre. As the Township does not deliver any recreational or environmental programming, a private operator would need to arrange this if it sees a competitive advantage in doing so.

Summary – Option 1

There could be a slight operating impact (or disadvantage) to the Township if proceeding with the Competitive Bid Option. While the Township could continue to save costs by transferring day-to-day operational responsibilities to the third party, benefits are partially offset by long-term infrastructure renewal costs (particularly if borne by the Township) as well as limited ability to influence business decisions/operations that could result in decreased accountability to the public, different environmental stewardship philosophies, and little to no control over the split between seasonal/transient sites (unless dictated through an agreement).

It bears noting, however, that the Township could require any third party to align with any municipal goals or priorities deemed of critical importance as part of an operating agreement. **If an agreement is reached whereby criteria most favourable to the Township are met, a greater degree of benefit may arise but it is unknown if the open market will accept any conditions** imposed by the Township until the RFP or EOI period closes.

Option 2: Outsource Operations to Otonabee Region Conservation Authority

Initial discussions have been held with the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA) to determine their prospective interest in operating the Lakefield Campground on behalf of the Township. ORCA believes that their existing operational infrastructure attributable to established campgrounds (staffing, online booking and payment system, etc. as discussed in Section 6.0) would allow them to readily assume additional campgrounds so long as this is approved by the ORCA Board of Directors. ORCA's mandate is tied to conservation and environmental stewardship which they believe results in a greater level of public trust for campgrounds that may be located in or near sensitive environmental lands but they indicate that they would have to evaluate the degree of public support or opposition to having a campground located in environmental lands prior to committing to any agreement.

At an exploratory stage, ORCA indicates a willingness to have further discussions with the Township of Selwyn as to whether there is a role for the Conservation Authority to play at the Lakefield Campground. They indicate that preliminary discussions would need to focus upon scope of responsibilities, capital and maintenance obligations, anticipated volume of visitors, and having a general sense of the operating framework as a whole (e.g. operating season, number of sites, amount of land to be maintained versus naturalized, etc.). ORCA is not overly interested in operating "trailer parks" based on their current campground operating model and thus the seasonal versus transient campsite mix would need to form part of initial discussions.

Analysis – Outsource to ORCA

Fiscal & Economic

Revenues received from ORCA should exceed any expenditures incurred by Township (as is the case at present) and thus would be considered to generate a net operating surplus. ORCA's operating costs could be dictated by its broader organizational structure (e.g. staff that are directly and indirectly involved through different front-line and management positions) and provincial funding model, which would ultimately influence the amount of revenue ultimately contributed to the Township.

As with the current agreement, annual revenues provided to the Township results in the potential to reinvest proceeds back into the campground or to subsidize other municipal assets and services to reduce the tax-funded portion of improvements and operations; this will also negate the need to replace funding for Parks & Recreation Department or other general budget accounts. As a public agency, ORCA might reinvest a portion of its operating revenues back into its publically-owned infrastructure thereby resulting in a net benefit to ratepayers.

However, it is recognized that all or a portion of ORCA's operating profits generated through the Lakefield Campground may be reinvested outside of Lakefield (and Selwyn) since ORCA operates at a regional level, or could subsidize other aspects of ORCA's overall operation including non-capital items.

Infrastructure replacement costs identified in Section 4.0 of this Study will be required for campground operations to continue. If ORCA operates the campground with an intent to maximize profits by pricing sites at or above market rates, it may see benefit in cost-sharing agreements with the Township to improve the campground experience through electrical and water servicing, as well as other camper amenities and services.

Retaining campground operations will maintain a similar degree of economic and tourist spending potential from campers. Should ORCA move towards a more transient campground operation, consistent with its existing model, it is possible that certain retail sectors that rely more on seasonal campers may be negatively affected; discussions with the Kawartha Chamber of Commerce & Tourism suggest that other sectors of the economy, such as those reliant on tourists, may receive greater economic benefits from transient campers (e.g. day trip destination operators, clothing retailers, certain food vendors, etc.). ORCA may also see an opportunity to work with local suppliers to provide boat rentals or other complementary services.

Continuing campground operations will require reinvestment in existing infrastructure as described in Section 4.0. These costs will be the same regardless of the outsourcing model chosen though any contributions from ORCA towards long-term/fixed capital infrastructure will likely require certain concessions as discussed under the Competitive Bid Option.

Environment & Sustainability

ORCA operates in adherence with the provincial Conservation Authorities Act. Conservation Authorities are tasked with a number of matters to promote conservation, sustainable development, climate change resiliency, and typically take a watershed planning approach to decision-making. ORCA's mandate is such that it would likely share or exceed the Township of Selwyn's environmental protection goals.

There is every reason to believe that ORCA would operate the Lakefield Campground in an environmentally responsible manner and that its sustainability will be of prime consideration. ORCA has experience in managing terrestrial, shoreline and water resources and properties. ORCA also owns the adjacent Imagine the Marsh Conservation Area which creates strong incentive to manage a campground in a manner that is not detrimental to ecological functions of its property.

Accordingly, the ORCA-managed Option is deemed to have the greatest potential to align with environmental and sustainable campgrounds should campground operations continue to be offered.

Public Transparency & Accountability

Conservation Authorities are publicly funded entities under the responsibility of the provincial Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. They are governed by a Board of Directors that are typically appointed by the municipalities within the Conservation Authority's jurisdiction and commonly consist of elected officials representing those municipalities. While public accountability may not be as strong as would be at a municipality, Conservation Authority Board of Directors and Staff are entrusted with making decisions in the public interest.

Accordingly, an ORCA-operated campground would have mechanisms in place to ensure transparency and accountability compared to a private business operator. For example, Conservation Authorities would have processes to guide certain operational decisions such as procurement of equipment and services while remaining accountable through elected officials serving on their Boards.

Should the Township continue to provide the Lakefield Campground, ORCA could be reasonably expected to operate it in the most publicly transparent and accountable manner. As a tax-funded agency, the likelihood of ORCA withdrawing prematurely due to financial failure is substantially lower than a private business and provides the Township with reasonable assurance that the campground will be operated to the end of the term of agreement; it does bear noting that the current provincial government is contemplating further changes to the funding model of Conservation Authorities which may have an implication in the long-term should such changes persist.

Business Operations

Alignment with and ability to influence business decisions is similar to those presented in the Competitive Bid Option. A partnership with an institutional partner is supported through the Strategic Plan and Recreation Services Plan, and the Township would remain a provider of space rather than having to deliver a service. As a public agency, ORCA's business operating practices bear certain similarities to a municipal structure in terms of organizational structure and systems, policies and procedures, human resources and staffing, and customer service practices.

Furthermore, ORCA has demonstrated experience in operating campgrounds for a number of years and has organizational infrastructure and systems already in place to support campground operations (e.g. staffing, equipment, booking and payment systems, etc.). Although ORCA may strive to deliver innovation and service excellence in campground operations, its ability to do so may take time;

governments and their agencies typically must identify major capital projects or request additional operating funds through their annual budgeting processes, some of which are subject to debate and approval by elected officials and/or boards which in turn can hinder how quickly they can adapt to changing market conditions.

Once an operating agreement is finalized, the Township's ability to influence day-to-day management and operating decisions is likely to be limited unless ORCA is amenable with the desired approach and deems it acceptable within its campground business model. Given the historical nature of the relationship between the Township and ORCA along with both being public entities, there is little reason to suggest that ORCA would operate in a manner that contravenes the spirit of an operating agreement.

It should be noted that ORCA's existing campgrounds are largely comprised of transient/overnight campsites, and do not permit year-round storage of trailers. ORCA also indicates that there would need to be strong rationale to operate a campground as a "trailer park" all of which may have an impact on seasonal renters. ORCA's centralized staffing structure is also such that customer service and maintenance activities may be carried out by different staff or impacted by staff turnover rates which could result in campers not having a consistent, single point of contact to address pressing questions or concerns.

The ORCA-managed Option is such that the Township could evaluate the successes and challenges of the first operating term, and could readily transfer management to a different operator as part of a subsequent Competitive Bid tender should expectations with ORCA not be met.

Township Staffing Implications

The Township could expect similar staffing implications if outsourcing to ORCA as it would be responsible for day-to-day management of the campground and bear the associated costs. The Township would bear little to no responsibility with campground administration, though further discussions will be required for day-to-day maintenance of the campground.

ORCA may be able to generate internal efficiencies through its in-house staffing and expertise when it comes to tree management and environmental hazard mitigation which may improve the campground's bottom line through cost containment. That said, it should not be presumed that ORCA would assume these and other responsibilities but rather such discussions would form part of a negotiated operating agreement with the Township, the latter of whom could end up taking a role in certain maintenance activities.

The Township will need to assign staff time to manage the contract to ensure compliance, mitigate liability risks, and monitor successes and challenges. As noted earlier, the Township's longstanding relationship with ORCA may provide greater assurance that terms of an operating agreement will be adhered to in comparison to a partner that it has never worked with before (and thereby could require less intensive administration of the contract). The longstanding relationships with ORCA staff may also require less intensive scrutiny from the Township in terms of contract management.

Integration with Public Services

ORCA's educational programming complement could align with the natural feature already found at Hague Point, as well as being synergistic with the Township's trail and beach management practices. By introducing programming to campground visitors and the general public, as well as possibly bolstering day-use visitors to Hague Point as a whole, the potential exists to market the Lakefield Campground as a differentiated experience as well as attract a broader range of uses that provide financial and other benefits (such as increased environmental awareness and stewardship).

ORCA also has experience in boating operations creating a potential to find logical opportunities to tie in with nearby operations of the Lakefield Marina. It is likely that ORCA's experience and mandate would be well suited to small watercraft such as canoes and kayaks and thus ORCA may be able to accommodate some of the latent demand for launching/docking small watercraft in an environmentally responsible manner; doing so may also diversify the revenue stream from the campground operations for the benefit of ORCA and the Township.

Summary – Option 2

The Township could expect to receive a net benefit depending upon the ultimate operating agreement with ORCA. The strongest advantages of this Option are that ORCA is an established campground operator, embodies a goal of environmentally sustainable operations by virtue of its mandate, and offers continuity in campground services. The greatest risk to the Township remains the infrastructure renewal cost and the associated payback period on any reinvestment based on revenues received through outsourced operations.

ORCA's interest in expanding its campground portfolio and a subsequent operating agreement with the Township is contingent upon approval by its Board of Directors. ORCA indicates that upon receiving such direction from its Board, as well as once the Township of Selwyn confirms that it in fact wishes to remain in the campground business, ORCA would then be in a position to make a determination upon whether there is a role for them and if so, begin to craft an agreement with the Township.

Option 3: Cease Campground Operations

Option 3 assumes that the Township ceases operation of a municipal campground at Hague Point. While the lands would be envisioned to remain under public ownership, the land use would be different than what it is today. The Township would essentially deem that new land use to be a higher and better use for Hague Point than it would be as a campground.

Analysis – Cease Campground Operations

Fiscal & Economic

The Township would not bear the cost of replacing or continually maintaining campground-specific infrastructure discussed in Section 4.0 of this Study if permanently ceasing campground operations. However, the Township will still incur costs required to decommission and redevelop the site; the degree of such costs will depend upon the end use for the repurposed campground lands and/or Hague Point as a whole.

There could also be a tax-impact on local residents as the campground currently provides net operating revenue to the Township and loss of this revenue would thus need to be offset through another non-taxation funding source(s) as discussed in Section 4.0. Loss of annualized campground revenue could be offset by the Township not having to reinvest in campground-related infrastructure although the Township will likely incur greater staffing and maintenance costs of repurposed public lands since those costs were previously the responsibility of the current campground operator. The Township could explore opportunities for new forms of revenue generation (such as food, bike or paddleboat rentals, dockage agreements, etc.) to replace campground revenues that would no longer be received.

Looking more broadly outside of the Township's capital and operating budgets, this Option would eliminate the economic spin-offs to local businesses that are directly attributable to campground users. The potential exists to generate new spin-offs depending upon the new use that is determined for the land, particularly if that end use generates spending from both residents and tourists. Replacing or increasing economic benefit would require establishing an alternative use that generates greater foot traffic at Hague Point compared to the number of visits historically received at the Lakefield Campground.

"As someone who's (sic) family has resided in Lakefield for 50 years, I have seen a lot of changes in that time. My family has used both the park and beach for all that time as well...This is one of the FEW parks and beaches that it is relatively easy for handicapped people to access and I hope it will continue to be so. My mother uses a walker and finds the easy, open access means she has an enjoyable location to swim and be outdoors."

~ Written Submission

Environment & Sustainability

Repurposing the lands to a naturalized or passive park would be a strong Option to ensure long-term environmental protection of Hague Point and the surrounding natural heritage system. Conversely, this Option may in fact lead to greater environmental impacts on the natural area than would a campground should a more intensive park be developed with built facilities, parking lots and amenities intended to attract substantial visitor traffic; the same could apply if a non-park use (e.g. residential or mixed-use land development) is considered for the lands.

The type of park will also dictate how much the community will benefit from added parkland. The campground currently does not have much public use occurring within its boundaries (most public use takes place around the shoreline and on the trail) and thus the potential exists to provide parkland to more people if redeveloping as a park space that provides an incentive to use by a broad range of residents.

Investments in walking paths, picnic areas, comfort features (seating areas, shade structures, washrooms, etc.), and convenience amenities (e.g. parking lots, food and beverage concessions, etc.) could draw strong use from the public. However, a more naturalized park could result in a similar level of use as present if internal circulation areas are not available or accessible to all populations (e.g. persons with disabilities), or naturalization does not result in a park experience or park amenities sought by a majority of visitors.

Public Transparency & Accountability

Reverting to a municipally-operated public open space provides a high degree of accountability (provided that the Township of Selwyn retains ownership of the land) as residents can contact Township Staff or elected officials with any inquiries pertaining to the repurposed lands. Any re-imagination and redevelopment of the campground lands would be guided by Township Council and Staff, who would be open to hearing from residents through usual channels of communication. A Township-led planning process could also be put in place to solicit additional public feedback to define the future vision for Hague Point.

Business Operations

Ceasing operations would be a negative impact on campground users, particularly if viewed from the perspective that the campground has been embedded in the community for more than 70 years. In order to derive a net benefit through a change in use, the substantial impact to long-term seasonal campers of losing their sense of community and ability to access a seasonal residence would need to be offset by the new land use providing opportunities for more people to enjoy the space and/or a demonstrable net environmental benefit. Since some of these benefits and impacts are inherently intrinsic (i.e. they cannot be measured in dollars and cents), it could be difficult to measure whether a net benefit or net impact is ultimately associated with removal of the campground.

Ceasing campground operations and subsequently decommissioning and/or demolishing campground infrastructure is a permanent action. As such, once these actions are undertaken it would be difficult (and potentially cost-prohibitive) to revert back to campground operations should the Study Option to cease operations not meet the Township's expectations.

Township Staffing Implications

Ceasing campground operations will result in the Township having to assume day-to-day maintenance duties of the land. As a result, there will be financial and time cost of having Township staff maintaining and supervising the grounds. The actual staffing requirement will be dictated by the end use determined for the lands but it can reasonably be expected that the Township's annual operating expenditures would be greater than at present (assuming all else remains equal).

Integration with Public Services

There may be potential to align any repurposed lands with municipal services offered through the Marshland Centre, Lakefield Beach, Douglas Sports Centre and/or the Lakefield Marina. While the Township does not offer recreational programs, it does not preclude its ability to work with other agency or community partners to program the space. The fact that Township staff are also responsible for these other spaces is such that some of their time could be re-assigned to support a vision that may be established for Hague Point if removing the Lakefield Campground.

Summary – Option 3

Ultimately, **the Township would need to determine that there is a higher and better use for the campground lands than is currently provided to rationalize this Study Option.** This determination would need to factor (at a minimum):

- the replacement costs of campground infrastructure versus the costs of redeveloping the campground lands (or Hague Point as a whole);
- that the end use provides greater community benefit than a campground;
- that community benefit derived from the end use outweighs costs of redeveloping and maintaining the lands;
- whether more Selwyn residents can experience the waterfront and trails in a new way; and
- the ability to offset the loss of a historical municipal revenue stream and economic impacts to local businesses.

It bears reiterating that the scope of work for the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study does not include defining a vision or conceptual plan for an alternative land use; this would have to be carried out through a planning process for Hague Point as a whole (and not solely for the campground which is what this Study is intended to review).

Based on input that has been provided through various stakeholders and members of the public along with the experiences of other municipalities that have contemplated the future of their campgrounds, the following spectrum represents some – but not all – of the potential redevelopment opportunities for the land if not for a campground:

- **Naturalized Area / Woodlot:** At one end of the spectrum is a re-naturalized where no built infrastructure is provided and thus would require the least amount of capital to be expended. Under this scenario there may be costs for remediation, plantings, certain security features and potentially other activities.
- **Ecological Park:** The Friends of Lakefield Park and certain members of the community have indicated a desire for the lands to promote understanding and stewardship of the natural area (see Section 7.0 of this Study). Such a concept could require additional trail development and certain built infrastructure such as viewing areas and observation decks. Capital costs would be scaled to the types of amenities and infrastructure ultimately provided.

- **Passive Recreational Park:** This type of park would consist of passive but manicured areas suitable for picnicking, social gatherings, and passive enjoyment of the open space. Capital costs could be similar to, or slightly greater than an Ecological Park though ongoing maintenance and staffing costs could be greater.
- **Active Recreational Park / Destination Park:** Some input received from the community used the Bobcaygeon Beach Park redevelopment – located in the City of Kawartha Lakes – as an example to consider in Lakefield. This type of park is fairly intensive in its development and usage potential, designed as a community and tourist destination with a strong aesthetic design (see Section 6.0 of this Study). This would be at the other end of the spectrum for a park use and is a multi-million dollar endeavour, while also requiring a substantial ongoing staffing commitment to maintain the active park. It should be noted that the Township has historically viewed Isabel Morris Park as its downtown “destination” park and would want to ensure that investments directed to that park are not negated by a shift in focus to a new destination park located a short distance away.
- **Residential/Commercial/Mixed-Use Development:** some suggestions have been heard through consultations for a non-park use. Developing the land for residential or a mix of uses would mark a departure from the historical use and could also carry a substantial capital cost to ready and develop the land if any such development proposal is approved. However, there may be private sector partners that may be willing to share in the development and servicing costs (or provide other community benefits allowed under the Ontario Planning Act) to attain development approvals.

The Township will need to be cognisant that notwithstanding the benefits that may be derived, changing a long established use can also produce unintended consequences. For example, naturalization may create the potential for issues and resulting costs with respect to wildlife management, unauthorized camping, safety and crime prevention, unauthorized motorized recreational vehicle use (e.g. ATVs and snowmobiles) while increased intensity of day use can also have an impact. Accordingly, appropriate planning, design and operational measures would need to be implemented (e.g. CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, visitor management, police and municipal by-law enforcement, etc.).

9.0 Proposed Implementation Strategy

Preferred Option

Based on the Evaluation Criteria developed for the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study, it is the opinion of the Consultants that the Preferred Option would be to Outsource Campground Operations to the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (Option 2). Comparing Study Options using the impact-based analysis criteria described in Section 8.0, the Preferred Option has been identified on the basis of:

- **Ability to Mitigate Environmental Concerns:** ORCA's environmentally-focused mandate and ownership of the adjacent Imagine the Marsh Conservation Area provide reasonable basis to presume that ORCA would address environmental concerns of operating a campground that have been identified through consultations.
- **Proven Experience:** ORCA already has the requisite organizational infrastructure/systems in place along with demonstrated experience in managing campgrounds that increases the likelihood of a seamless transition to a new campground operator and positions ongoing campground operations for success.
- **Continuity of Service:** Continuity of service would be maintained to campground visitors and the businesses that rely upon them.
- **Retention of Economic Benefits:** It is plausible that the campground would generate greater economic benefits, particularly for the local food and retail sector, than would a park-based use. While this will depend on the type of park, a passive-use, environmentally-focused park – or a park serving a highly localized catchment area – would be unlikely to create the same tourist market or resident spending.
- **Positive Revenue Generation Potential:** Continuity of, and potential to increase revenues received by the Township can be expected under a new agreement. This would retain the ability to use net operating profits to subsidize other municipal services. Ceasing operations could reduce all or a portion of operating profits and could have a tax-impact.
- **Reinvesting in Community Assets:** A degree of public accountability, an ability to reinvest proceeds from operations back into its local and regional assets.

"As a family we have been seasonal campers there for 20 years. Now our grandchildren enjoy all these amenities and call it their most favourite place on earth."

~ Written
Submission

- **Cost Avoidance:** Outsourcing operations could avoid additional staffing expenditures being incurred by the Township for administering, maintaining, and supervising the land. Changing this long-established use could increase potential for unforeseen new costs associated with enforcing laws and by-laws, wildlife management, etc.
- **Low Operating Risk:** There is a relatively low risk of ORCA withdrawing from an operating agreement with the Township due to financial or staffing constraints compared to a private operator. As a tax-funded agency, certain mechanisms to ensure public accountability and transparency are already in place.

Alternative Option

In the event that the Township is unable to reach an agreement with ORCA to manage the Lakefield Campground, it is recommended that a Request For Proposal or Expression of Interest be released to solicit private sector interest through a competitive bidding process (Option 1). The rationale for doing so is predicated upon the following:

- The Township can craft a Terms of Reference that articulates its values, objectives and expectations for a new campground operator. It is reasonable to expect that a bidder that is able to meet the Township's expectations will deliver the campground service in a manner that results in a net community benefit.
- Continuing to provide the campground offers greater flexibility for the Township to adjust to future circumstances than would otherwise be afforded if the campground were to be permanently decommissioned. For example, the Township could engage other prospective campground operators should the initially selected provider not meet expectations, or the Township may have enough information at that time to rationalize ceasing operations repurposing the land to a higher and better use.
- By issuing an RFP or EOI, the Township would be drawing from a larger pool of proponents through which greater market competition may result in the Township being able to negotiate a higher annual revenue contribution
- Retention of the campground would presumably generate substantially greater revenues than if converted to passive parkland.

It is recognized that Option 1 also has the potential to become a challenge for the Township should little or no private sector interest be received based on the Terms of Reference. A smaller applicant pool may result in the Township having to compromise on certain operational elements and limit its influence in business decisions.

Note about Option 3

If the Township were to consider Option 3 (Cease Operations), the fact remains that the Township would need to determine that a higher and better use exists for Hague Point. The Township would need to be assured that economic benefits, potential tax-impacts of removing a historical revenue stream, and costs of site decommissioning/redevelopment would be sufficiently offset by a demonstrable community benefit associated with the end use. At a minimum, this would include an analysis that demonstrates the end use results in more people using the park than at present and that the Township can eliminate all or most of the campground infrastructure replacement costs without having to expend a similar amount of money to redevelop the lands.

With this Study tasked with examining the Township's role in operating the campground as an existing municipal level of service, a separate planning and consultation process specific to Hague Point would need to be undertaken to establish and validate a new vision for the lands.

If the Township were to consider Option 3, it would need to be assured that economic benefits, potential tax-impacts of removing a historical revenue stream, and costs of site decommissioning / redevelopment would be sufficiently offset by a demonstrable community benefit associated with the end use.

Implementation & Next Steps

The first step for the Township is to confirm its preferred Option. On the basis that Option 2 (Outsource to ORCA) is selected, the Township will need to undertake the steps outlined in Table 5 at a minimum.

Table 5: Suggested Next Steps & Timing, Preferred Option

Task	Suggested Timing
8. Engage ORCA through its Board of Directors and Chief Administrative Officer to confirm interest in exploratory talks for assuming campground management and operations.	2021 Q3
9. Assuming approval is received from Step 1, engage ORCA Staff to discuss areas of common interest and alignment (e.g. values, strategic priorities) along with anticipated roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes. The desired mix of transient and seasonal sites, as well as off-season storage, should also be discussed.	2021 Q3
10. Refine roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes for each party in a draft Operating Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). At a minimum this draft should articulate how each party will address maintenance and hazard removals, revenue sharing / compensation structure, capital infrastructure and renewal, insurance requirements, term of agreement and renewal clauses.	2021 Q3 to Q4
11. Present the draft Operating Agreement/MOU to Township Council and ORCA Board of Directors and carry out mutually accepted revisions as necessary.	2021 Q4
12. a) Present the final Operating Agreement/MOU to Township Council and the ORCA Board of Directors for approval.	2022 Q1
b) <i>If agreement is NOT reached/approved with ORCA, initiate RFP/EOI for the Competitive Bid Option and proceed through municipal procurement process.</i>	2022 Q1
13. Assuming approval to proceed is received from both parties, initiate necessary site works and improvements to the campground (majority of works assumed upon expiry of current campground agreement in October 2022).	2022 Q2 to 2023 Q1
14. ORCA assumes management of Lakefield Campground.	2023 Q2

Note: tasks and suggested timing should be used as a guide through which the Township and its prospective operating partners should build a more comprehensive work plan.

Operating Agreement Considerations

In crafting an operating agreement with ORCA, both parties will need to explore provisions such as, but not limited to, the following.

Ownership, Maintenance & Compensation

- Expectation that ownership of land and buildings are to remain in public ownership.
- Maintenance responsibilities assigned to each party, notably seasonal or less-frequent activities such as start-up and winterization, hazard tree / tree branch removal, etc.
- Defining municipal expectations regarding property aesthetics and cleanliness.
- Determining the annual compensation structure through operating management fees, land leases, ancillary services, etc. along with the amount of compensation provided to the Township.
- Length of term for the agreement, renewal provisions, sunset clauses.

Campground Design & Layout

- The total number of campsites to be operated, including the portion of which will be fully serviced, partially serviced and/or unserviced.
- The mix of seasonal and/or transient campsites.

Environmental Stewardship

- Values and expectations with respect to the campground's role in maintaining environmental health/integrity of Hague Point.
- Recognition of adjacent environmentally sensitive areas and how to manage operations in proximity to these zones.

Contributions to Infrastructure Renewal

- Upfront and/or ongoing contributions to repair or replace capital infrastructure such as water and electrical servicing, internal roads and pathways, built structures, etc.
- A preferred intent that campground operations and non-taxation revenues will be the primary sources of funding campground infrastructure renewals, along with a defined and acceptable payback period.

Customer Service

- Provisions to ensure equitably in the availability and booking of campsites to the public, and if applicable how seasonal renters will be selected if demand is greater than supply.
- Whether there will be a “phase-in” period for campers to allow a period of time to adapt to new operating policies, changes to site regulations/rules, fee structure, etc.

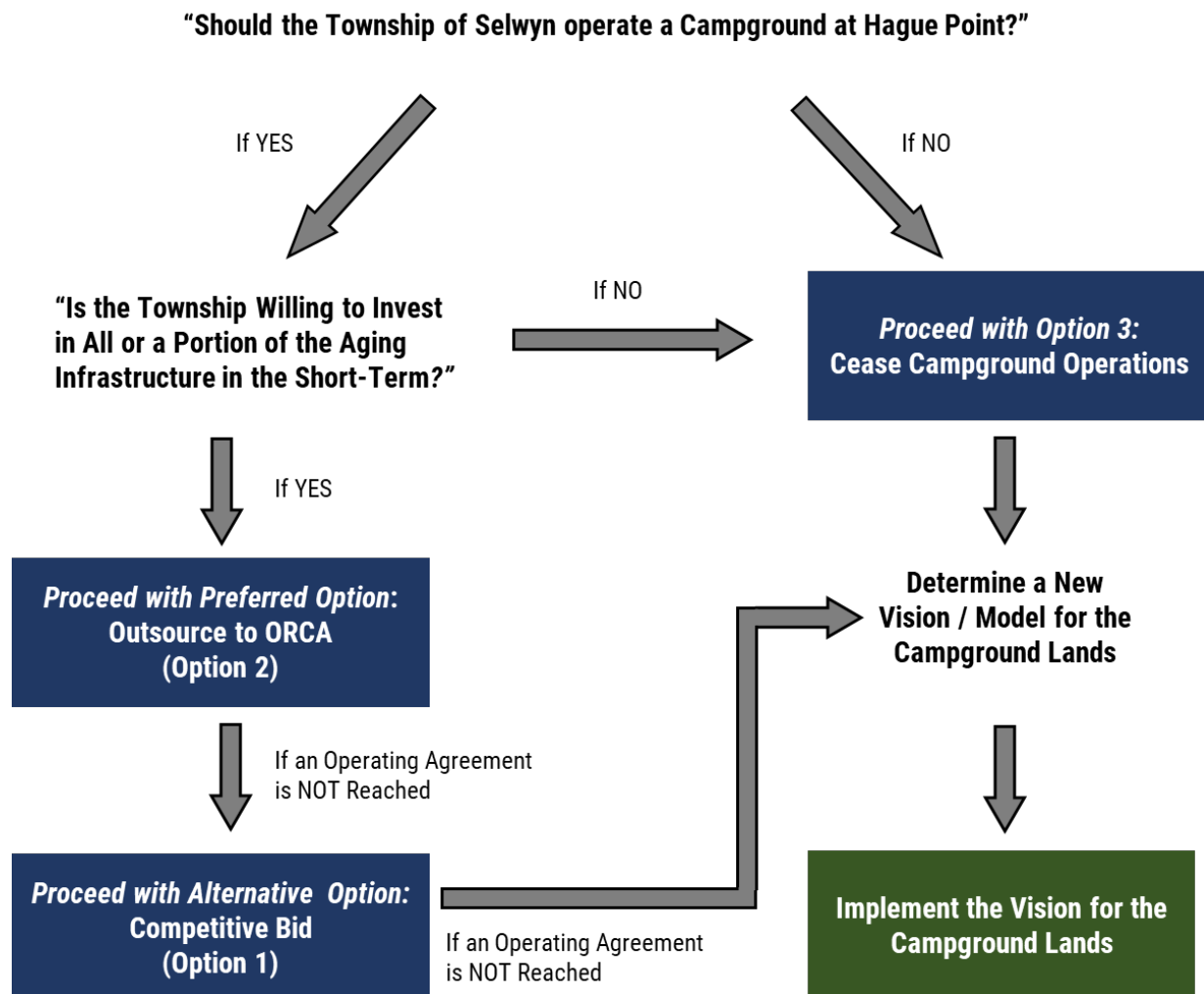
Amenities & Services

- How to address campers’ property along with if/how to treat their storage in the off-season;
- Determining the types of boating amenities that could be provided including docking/launch areas, boat rentals, etc.

Steps to Implement a Future Direction for the Lakefield Campground

Figure 11 provides a guide to implementing the Study's Preferred Option using a decision-tree centred upon the Township's fundamental choice whether to continue providing a campground at Hague Point, in line with its historical core service mandate, and its willingness to reinvest in campground infrastructure to ensure continuity of operations.

Figure 11: Decision-Tree for the Implementation of Study Options



Appendix A:

Community Survey Tabulated Results

1

How many times a year, on average, did you or members of your household visit a campground prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

	#	%
Once	176	13%
2 - 5 times	382	29%
6 or more times	468	36%
Never	285	22%
answered question	1,311	
skipped question	0	

2

What type of campground do you typically visit? (Select all that apply)

	#	% of subsample	% of sample
Ontario Parks campground	640	63%	49%
Privately-operated campground (e.g. KOA, local business)	423	42%	32%
Parks Canada campground	378	37%	29%
Municipally-operated campground (e.g. city or town-run)	359	35%	27%
Conservation Authority campground	284	28%	22%
answered question	1,015		
skipped question	296		

3

Once COVID-19 restrictions are fully lifted, please let us know if you or members of your household have plans to camp more or less than you did prior to the pandemic.

	#	%
Plan to camp about the same as we have always done	551	43%
Do not plan on camping at all	340	26%
Plan to camp more than we do at present	329	26%
Plan to camp less than before	67	5%
answered question	1,286	
skipped question	25	

4

Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “Highly Unlikely” and 5 means “Highly Likely”, please indicate what type of camping experience that you or your household would participate in?

	1 Highly Unlikely		2 Unlikely		3 Neutral		4 Likely		5 Highly Likely		Answered Question		Skipped Question	Average	Likely	Unlikely
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%				
Tent or pop-up trailer	472	41%	56	5%	132	12%	131	11%	352	31%	1,143	100%	168	2.86	42%	46%
Cabin	329	30%	61	6%	251	23%	251	23%	213	19%	1,105	100%	206	2.96	42%	35%
RV or motorhome	495	43%	66	6%	115	10%	109	9%	369	32%	1,154	100%	157	2.82	41%	49%
Glamping	476	43%	81	7%	223	20%	140	13%	178	16%	1,098	100%	213	2.51	29%	51%
Yurt	574	54%	81	8%	197	18%	116	11%	104	10%	1,072	100%	239	2.16	21%	61%

5 What features are most important to you when considering a campground? (Select all that apply)

	#	%
Bathroom facilities	706	56%
Natural Aesthetic	660	53%
Electrical and water services	579	46%
Privacy	551	44%
Shower facilities	548	44%
Price	464	37%
Size of the campsite	459	37%
Sanitary dumping station	361	29%
Amenities for children	317	25%
Wi-Fi	300	24%
I am not interested in camping	268	21%
Food/Concessions	140	11%
Accessible features for persons with disabilities or limited mobility	126	10%
Other (please specify)	66	5%
answered question	1,251	
skipped question	60	

Other	#
Access to Water/Beach	18
Cleanly	3
Pet Friendly	3
Recreation Activities	3
Pool	2
Trails	2
High End Accommodation	1
Location	1
No Amenities	1
Total	55

6 Typically, how far are you willing to travel for a single camping trip?

	#	%
Less than 10 km	18	1%
10 km to 50 km	266	21%
More than 50 km	699	56%
I am not interested in camping	264	21%
answered question	1,246	
skipped question	65	

7 Have you or members your household visited the Lakefield Campground in the past two years?

	#	%
Yes	893	71%
No	372	29%
answered question	1,265	
skipped question	46	

8 How did your household use the Lakefield Campground?

	#	% of subsample	% of sample	<i>Other (Top 5)</i>	#
Day trip to visit another camper	221	25%	17%	<i>Trail Use</i>	313
Seasonal camping	137	15%	11%	<i>Beach/Water Access</i>	119
Overnight camping	125	14%	10%	<i>Recreation Facilities</i>	17
Other (please specify)	401	45%	32%	<i>Day Trip to Park</i>	9
answered question	884			<i>Purchase Goods</i>	6
skipped question	427			<i>Total</i>	475

9

What makes the Lakefield Campground an attractive destination for camping? (Select all that apply)

	#	%	Other	#
Beach access	777	65%	Not Attractive	72
Natural beauty of the surrounding area	709	59%	Shouldn't be a Campground	38
Availability of the nearby trails	631	53%	Non Camper/User	27
It is close to home	546	46%	Sense of Community	17
Proximity to downtown Lakefield	532	45%	Convenient Location	12
Availability of the adjacent park and its facilities (e.g. tennis courts, ball diamond, playgrounds, picnic area, etc.)	445	37%	Natural Environment	9
Availability of boating and other water-based activities	416	35%	On Site Activities	4
Other (please specify):	207	17%	All of the Above	3
answered question	1,193		Total	195
skipped question	118			

10

Lakefield Campground currently offers 128 campsites of which there are 117 seasonal sites (rented by individuals for the entire season) and 11 transient sites (available for anyone to rent per night or per week). If the same number of campsites continue to be offered, what is your preference with respect to the number of seasonal versus transient sites?

	#	%
More overnight/transient camping sites are required	357	31%
The current split between seasonal and overnight sites is acceptable	310	27%
More seasonal campsites are required	73	6%
Don't Know / No Opinion	422	36%
answered question	1,162	
skipped question	149	

11 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “Strongly Oppose” and 5 means “Strongly Support”, please indicate your level of support for each operational model for the future of Lakefield Campground.

	1		2		3		4		5					
	Strongly Oppose		Oppose		Neutral		Support		Strongly Support		Answered Question		Skipped Question	Weighted Average
The Township should not be in the business of providing a campground.	343	29%	91	8%	337	29%	64	5%	344	29%	1,179	100%	132	2.98
The Township should continue to outsource the day-to-day bookings and management of the campground to a private sector operator	519	44%	103	9%	232	20%	75	6%	251	21%	1,180	100%	131	2.52
The Township should take over responsibilities for the day-to-day bookings and management of the campground	437	37%	90	8%	333	28%	119	10%	201	17%	1,180	100%	131	2.62
The Township should outsource the day-to-day bookings and management of the campground to another public institution, such as a government agency or conservation authority	485	41%	102	9%	308	26%	133	11%	151	13%	1,179	100%	132	2.46

12

Would you support the conversion of all or a portion of the Lakefield Campground into public parkland?

	#	%
Yes – support converting all of the campground to parkland	510	43%
Yes – support converting a portion of the campground to public parkland	192	16%
No – support retaining the site as a campground	443	38%
Don't know / No Opinion	35	3%
answered question	1,180	
skipped question	131	

13

If Lakefield campground were to be converted into public parkland, what would you like to see provided on these lands? (Select all that apply)

	#	% of subsample	% of sample	<i>Other</i>	#
Walking trails	673	92%	57%	<i>Learning Centre</i>	22
Natural areas	654	90%	55%	<i>Pool/Splash Pad</i>	16
Picnic areas	573	78%	49%	<i>Event Space/Gathering Area</i>	11
Playground	323	44%	27%	<i>Beach</i>	9
Sports fields	139	19%	12%	<i>Dog Park</i>	9
Other (please specify)	145	20%	12%	<i>Recreation Courts (Tennis, Pickleball, Bocce, Disc Golf)</i>	9
answered question	730			<i>Public Facilities (Bathroom, Change Room)</i>	8
skipped question	581			<i>Total</i>	128

14

Please provide any additional comments that you would like us to consider through the Lakefield Campground Utilization Study

	#
answered question	588
skipped question	723

15 How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	# of Persons in Sample	%
1 person	96	96	8%
2 persons	537	1,074	47%
3 persons	209	627	18%
4 persons	177	708	16%
5 persons	72	360	6%
6 persons	34	204	3%
7 persons	10	70	1%
8 persons	1	8	0%
9 persons	0	0	0%
10 persons	1	10	0%
11 persons	0	0	0%
12 persons	1	12	0%
13 persons	0	0	0%
14 persons	0	0	0%
15 persons	0	0	0%
answered question	1,138		
skipped question	173		
total persons in sample		3,169	
persons per household		2.78	
2015 Census Selwyn - Average household size		2.5	

16 Please tell us your year of birth:

Age	#	%
25 years or younger	13	1%
26-35 years	80	7%
36-45 years	170	15%
46-55 years	191	17%
56-65 years	295	27%
66-75 years	253	23%
76 years or older	95	9%
answered question	1,097	
skipped question	214	
Median Age	58	
2016 Census - Median Age	51.4	

17 Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age

	#	# of persons	%	2016 Census %	% Difference
Under 10 years	212	324	10%	9%	16%
10 - 19 years	237	360	12%	10%	14%
20 - 34 years	277	421	14%	13%	1%
35 - 54 years	439	723	23%	23%	0%
55 years and over	721	1271	41%	44%	7%
total persons		3099			
answered question	1110				
skipped question	201				

18 Are you a resident of the Township of Selwyn?

	#	%
Permanent Resident	735	64%
Seasonal Resident	96	8%
Non-resident (Please specify where you live)	309	27%
Don't know	10	1%
answered question	1150	
skipped question	161	

19 Please indicate where you live.

	#	%
Lakefield	512	62%
Rural Area closest to Lakefield	126	15%
Rural Area closest to Ennismore	9	1%
Ennismore	33	4%
Young's Point	26	3%
Rural Area closest to Bridgenorth	23	3%
Bridgenorth	17	2%
Other	85	10%
answered question	831	
skipped question	480	

20 Do you or anyone in your household own a business in the Township of Selwyn?

	#	%
Yes	156	14%
No	944	83%
Don't know / Prefer Not to Say	39	3%
answered question	1139	
skipped question	172	

Appendix B:

Additional Public Feedback

Provided under Separate Cover

Appendix C:

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were posted on project webpage and have been updated as the study has progressed. The online FAQ page can be accessed via www.selwyntownship.ca/LakefieldCampgroundFAQ.