

Municipality of Casselman

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

CONSULTATION SUMMARY #1

December 2023





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December 2023

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Casselman

Municipality



1.0 Project Overview



The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will guide Council and staff in managing parks and recreation programs, events, infrastructure, services, and investment in Casselman over the next 15 years. The Municipality has retained a multi-firm consulting team led by Toronto-based thinc design to lead the project. This Consultation Summary follows the Background Summary Report published in December 2023. The first draft of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is expected in Spring 2024.



2.0 Consultation Activities



To leverage the community's knowledge, ideas, and expertise on current and future delivery of Casselman's parks, recreation, and facility services, a multi-faceted engagement strategy was conducted in Fall 2023. Residents, municipal representatives (including staff and members of Council), local businesses, and parks and recreation user groups were all approached to share their input. Each type of consultation activity is described in the following pages.



Interviews

The project team conducted 45-minute one-on-one interviews in English with each member of Council between October 18 and November 13, 2023:

- Mayor Geneviève Lajoie
- Councillor Anik Charron
- Councillor Paul Groulx
- Councillor Francyn Leblanc
- Councillor Sylvain Cléroux

The project team also conducted 45-minute one-on-one interviews in English with the following municipal staff between October 24 and November 15, 2023:

- Pierre Thibault, Manager of Recreation and Leisure Services
- Sébastien Dion, Deputy Clerk
- Mireille Groleau, Economic Development and Communications
- Pascal Doucet, Director of Planning
- Yves Morrissette, Chief Administrative Officer



Open House

An in-person bilingual public Open House was held in the gymnasium at 750 Principale St. on November 2, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 PM. It was promoted on social media and the Municipality's Telmatik notification system. It was suggested that future in-person events pertaining to the Plan be held in the Community Hall at the J.R. Brisson Complex (once renovation is complete) and promoted through mail-outs to all local addresses.

The Open House convened 19 attendees, who were invited to respond to the following open-ended questions through interactive display boards and discussions with the project team:

- What is your vision for parks and recreation in Casselman? What words would you use to describe it?
- Currently, what do you like about recreation facilities, parks, and activities in Casselman?
- What do you think is most needed in Casselman's recreation facilities, parks, and activities? What do you want in the future?



Household Survey

A bilingual telephone survey was administered to 200 Casselman residents between November 1 and 15, 2023. The survey was completed by a mix of household types, including couples without dependent child(ren) (33%), couples with dependent child(ren) (31%), one adult (16%), one parent with dependent child(ren) and one or more adults (5%), extended families of 3+ generations (5%), and more than one adult sharing a residence (4%).

The same anonymous bilingual survey was also made available online for any member of the public to complete between November 8 and 21, 2023. The Municipality promoted the survey on social media and a total of 41 responses were received. The survey was completed by a mix of household types, with the greatest participation by couples with dependent child(ren) (46%) along with responses from couples without dependent child(ren) (19%), one adult (19%), one parent with dependent child(ren) and one or more adults (8%), extended families of 3+ generations (4%), and more than one adult sharing a residence (4%).

Results from the telephone survey are typically considered more representative than results from the online survey because telephone survey respondents were randomly selected to participate, while online survey respondents self-selected to participate. Online survey respondents may have prior or above-average interest or involvement in parks and recreation and may include non-residents.

Business Survey

An invitational online survey was sent via email to 152 businesses with a business license in the Municipality's record to explore ways in which the municipal provision of parks and recreation facilities can benefit businesses, as well as any partnership opportunities that might exist now or in the future. The survey was available to complete from October 30 to November 21, 2023, and a total of 14 responses were received from businesses in Casselman, including retail, family activities, photo services, welding, electrical services, tree farming, and personal services.

User Group Survey

An invitational online survey was sent via email to 55 community groups/non-profit organizations that facilitate programming and/or use municipal facilities or parks to provide their programs and activities. The survey was available to complete from October 30 to November 21, 2023, and a total of 13 responses were received, with representation from the following groups:

- Casselman Veterans
- Casselman Embrun Icedogs Minor Hockey Association
- Centre NOVAS-CALACS francophone de Prescott-Russell
- Casselman Vikings Junior B Hockey
- Club 60
- Russell Coyotes
- Sunday night hockey
- Tennis Casselman
- Pickleball Casselman
- Casselman Women's Ball League
- Men's Ball League
- Casselman Women's Ringette Team



3.0 Consultation Findings



Écrivez votre commentaire sur un Post-It et mettez-le ci-dessous.
Leave your comment on a Post-It note and paste it below.

Bike Path
Connecting all
Parks + path
to Embury's
Bike Path

City wide/Town
Bike Path

More
Swings &
playgrounds
for Kids

Daytime
Activities
for
Adults

mise en
œuvre

SENTIERS
PÉDESTRES

DÔME
SPORTIF

Piste
Cyclable

Dome
pour
activité
durant toute
l'année

PARC
à
Chiens

PLAN
MOYEN/
LONG
TERME
+
BUDGET AVEC

NOUVEAU
TERRAIN
PICKLEBALL
+
EXPANSION

REGROUPE-
MENT
ACTIVITÉS
RÉCRÉATIVES

PISCINE
EXTERIEU
RE

Connect
Maria Street
with new
Development

So people
can walk over
to town
easily

Open
Maria -
so people
can walk
or bike
to town!

Développer la
devanture du Complex
- Acheter les 2 MAISONS
pour permettre plus
d'espace

AMÉNAGER TENNIS
Ailleues pour
AGRANDIR ✓✓

Action

The following is a summary of findings of each topic area and grouped by consultation audience. Collectively, the full results of consultation will be considered and analyzed when conducting needs assessments in Phase 3 of the project.



Programs and Events

User Groups

- User groups estimated that between 5% and 90% of their regular season participants live in Casselman.
- They reported offering the following general types of programs/activities:
 - Arena ice programs
 - Court sports
 - Arena floor programs
 - Gym sports/recreation
 - Club/social programs
 - Outdoor nature-based programs
 - Seniors' programs
 - Fields sports
 - Artisan programs
 - Visual arts programs
 - Fitness/wellness
 - Learning programs
 - Social support
- No groups reported delivery of heritage programs or performing arts programs.
- More than half (56%) of user groups indicated they provide events. Reported examples include sleepovers, tournaments, meetings, holiday activities, awareness activities, and community meals.
- Estimated total participation in regular season programs/activities and/or events ranged from 18 to 2,500 people. No groups anticipate a decrease in their program participation/event attendance. Five groups anticipate an increase while seven groups expect to remain stable.
- No groups reported serving babies aged 0 to 4 years. All other age groups were served by at least three user groups.
- One user group suggested the Municipality promote additional ice sports (alternatives to hockey) such as ringette and broomball to attract youth and adults.



Municipal Representatives

- User groups are doing a great job running sports leagues.
- Weekend skating and stick & puck programs offered by the Municipality are working well.
- Casselman's proximity to neighbouring communities like Russell Township means municipal programs compete with offerings there.
- Casselman is seeing growth in tennis and pickleball.
- There is a large focus on sports (especially hockey), so social, arts, and culture offerings could be improved, especially as year-round indoor activities.
- There is currently a lot of emphasis for children in recreation, and more is needed for teenagers, adults, and seniors.
- Suggestions for classes include yoga, Zumba, kids/family programming, health programs (e.g., drug, pregnancy, and suicide prevention; mental health).
- Recruiting instructors is a challenge.
- The community is rich in culture (e.g., musicians, painters, photographers) but this topic area is missing from current parks and recreation program offerings.
- Casselman is one of the last communities in Ontario that has a predominantly French-speaking population. Growth is bringing more English speakers. The Francophone identity, history, and culture remains strong and should be presented in an open and welcoming way to newcomers.
- There are opportunities for more self-directed programming at existing facilities (e.g., beach volleyball courts).
- There is desire to hold more events such as the return of an annual environment clean-up day, partnering with South Nation Conservation for activities at waterfront spaces, etc.
- There is reported interest from at least one user group in holding indoor golf training, given Casselman's proximity to the Casselview Golf and Country Club.





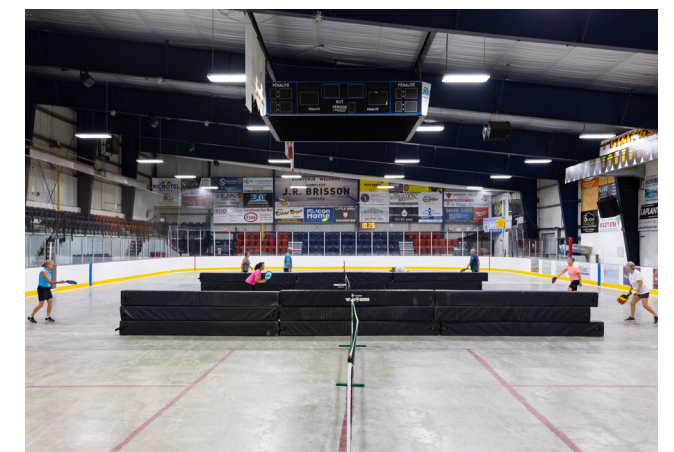
Residents

- There were requests at the Open House for more activities for youth, daytime programs for adults/younger retirees, and community building events held in local facilities such as the arena at J.R. Brisson Complex.
- 41% of telephone survey respondents and 68% of online survey respondents indicated they or other members of their household use parks and recreations services in Casselman.
- Residents were asked if they or members of their household travel to the Nation Municipality of Russell Township to use recreation services: 71% of telephone survey respondents and 41% of online survey respondents indicated they travel to neither.
- Of those who do travel elsewhere, the most common reasons are because these communities have newer/better quality facilities (telephone: 62%, online: 18%) and the facilities are not available in Casselman (telephone: 33%, online: 65%). One of the online survey respondents indicated their household travels elsewhere due to more English-speaking activity options for children.
- Table 1 shows the results when residents indicated the factor(s) that prevent or limit members of their household from participating in recreation programs/activities in Casselman. Among telephone survey respondents, the most common response was that nothing prevents or limits them. Among online survey respondents, the most common response was that nothing of interest is offered. A proportion

- of both groups (telephone: 15%, online: 26%) indicated they do not know what is available.
- Participants were asked specifically about programs/activities of interest to their household, and the two surveys were divided: 87% of telephone survey respondents indicated that there are no programs of interest they wish were offered in Casselman while 67% of online survey respondents indicated there are.
- Of those who are looking for more activities, the greatest interest among telephone respondents is activities for teenagers aged 13 to 19 years followed by school-aged children 5-12 years and adults aged 20-30 years. There was particular interest in after school programs. Online respondents are interested in additional program options for all age groups.

Table 1: Reported Factors That Limit Participation in Recreation

Factor	Telephone Survey Respondents	Online Survey Respondents
Nothing prevents/limits participation	49%	22%
Nothing of interest offered	1%	48%
Don't know what's available	15%	26%
Too expensive	14%	4%
Lack of time	14%	19%
Health reasons	3%	0%
Programs are full	2%	11%
Transportation difficulties	1%	19%
Inconvenient hours	1%	11%





Facilities

User Groups

- Community groups' reported use of indoor facilities included the arena ice, gymnasium at 750 Principale St., halls, classroom at 750 Principale St., and school gymnasium.
 - 82% indicated these indoor facilities are well suited to their program/activity or event requirements.
 - Of the two groups whose facility needs are not being met, challenges include the space being too small/not regulation size, lack of support facilities/amenities, inadequate parking, heating/air conditioning problems, and aging/out of date infrastructure.
 - One user group suggested permitting use of the community hall at J.R. Brisson Complex for activities such as pickleball.
- Community groups' reported use of outdoor facilities/amenities included the ball diamonds, park playgrounds, ice rink, tennis courts, school playgrounds, and open greenspaces.
 - Only one group indicated that outdoor spaces are not well suited to their needs due to the size of the space, lack of support facilities/amenities, and aging/out of date infrastructure.
 - Two user groups reported using facilities in neighbouring communities to hold their activities. These include gymnasiums, arenas, and halls in the Nation Municipality, Russell Township, and Champlain Township.
 - These facilities are reportedly used because they are closer to participants, offer better value for money, and/or because Casselman facilities are not available when the group needs them.
 - Three groups anticipate requiring additional access to facilities in the next 5-10 years including pickleball courts, arena ice, and meeting space.



Municipal Representatives

- There is opportunity to repurpose 750 Principale St. for other uses (e.g., library branch, small indoor pool, indoor squash/tennis court, fitness gym, affordable housing, permanent/outdoor market, relocated Casselman Museum, non-profit offices/social services, parkland). Reportedly, the gymnasium does not get a lot of use.
- The floor of the Paul-Émile Lévesque Centre requires an upgrade, and the arena in the J.R. Brisson Complex needs two additional changerooms.
- There is interest in more opportunities to use the arena (and take advantage of the floor, sound system, seating) for revenue generation through more arts and entertainment uses, events, etc., especially during the summer.
- A youth hub/YMCA with supported programming would be welcomed.
- The renovation of the Community Hall at the J.R. Brisson Complex throughout 2023 resulted in a significant loss of revenue, and the sports hall above the rink is underused.
- The Municipality could purchase the residential homes in front of the J.R. Brisson Complex to support an expansion/rebuild of the building with more changerooms, a possible second ice pad, additional parking, a state-of-the-art hall that can accommodate large functions (e.g., weddings, banquets, performances), etc.
- When exploring the possibility of installing a covered sports dome, the Municipality should gain insights from nearby communities with a similar facility (e.g., Limoges in the Nation Municipality, Embrun in Russell Township).
- More seating is needed at the baseball diamonds.
- Increasingly, residents are requesting a pool to support swimming lessons. There could be opportunity to explore the feasibility of an outdoor pool open seasonally.





Residents

- At the Open House, there were several suggestions for a multifunctional indoor (covered) sports complex/dome that can accommodate year-round activity such as tennis, pickleball, and walking.
- More pickleball facilities are needed to address scheduling issues. There is currently only one indoor facility that accommodates pickleball. The Richelieu Park outdoor rink accommodates three pickleball courts, but Open House attendees indicated the surfacing is poor. There was a suggestion to add a dugout and shed near the outdoor pickleball courts to store chairs and equipment.
- It was suggested the existing tennis courts at the J.R. Brisson Complex be moved to the Casselman Catholic High School grounds, adjacent to the pickleball courts that will open in spring 2024, freeing up more space at the Complex.
- Several Open House attendees would like to see a pool in the community. There were also suggestions at the Open House for an additional ice pad.
- 55% of telephone survey respondents and 50% of online survey respondents indicated they use indoor sport and recreation facilities in Casselman.
- The most common used indoor facilities are the public library (telephone: 55%, online: 75%), arena ice (telephone: 46%, online: 75%), halls (telephone: 34%, online: 17%), and gymnasium at 750 Principale St. (telephone: 9%, online: 42%).
- 38% of telephone survey respondents and 85% of online survey respondents indicated they use outdoor sports and recreation facilities.
 - The most common used outdoor facilities/amenities were the splash pad (telephone: 58%, online: 68%), playgrounds (telephone: 54%, online: 84%), and ball diamonds (telephone: 46%, online: 32%).
- A majority of telephone survey respondents (82%) think indoor or outdoor recreation facilities are not needed in Casselman.
 - Of those who do think they are needed, the top 3 suggestions were upgraded playgrounds (39%), an indoor pool (33%), and pickleball courts (31%).
- In contrast, a majority of online survey respondents (94%) think new facilities are needed. The top suggestions were a pool (27%), indoor soccer turf/track (14%), and gym (11%).



Parks and Open Spaces

User Groups

- No user groups reported using the boat launch/waterfront area in Casselman to run programs/activities or events, and no improvements were suggested.

Municipal Representatives

- Parks are well located throughout the community and easily walkable/bikeable from homes. However, maintenance is a challenge.
- A parkland dedication by-law is needed to permit an alternative rate (cash-in-lieu) under the authority of section 42 of the Planning Act.
- Better planning is needed when approving draft subdivisions to ensure that parkland of an adequate size and type is secured, and there is a balanced supply of amenities distributed throughout the municipality's neighbourhoods. Outreach at both the neighbourhood level and municipal-wide is valued.
- Vandalism is a recurring issue in municipal parks and facilities, particularly Richelieu Park. There is a need for inclusive recreation spaces that appeal to teenagers. Suggestions include more basketball courts, a graffiti panel, a skate park, and trivia/facts about the actual maintenance costs of municipal facilities.
- There is interest in dedicating a municipal green space for arts and culture activities/infrastructure. Parks should be designed to accommodate organized events with amenities such as shade structures (e.g., gazebo), stage/amphitheatre, open greenspace, etc.
- Increasing the tree canopy across the Municipality will encourage people to use active transportation options (e.g., walking).
- Residents want more trails, cycle paths, sidewalks, and connections. Railway regulations pose a challenge. Clearer signage and expanded cycling routes on Principale St. could connect Casselman to the broader regional cycling system.
- The Sentier Brisson is an exciting future project that will complement Casselman's existing parks and open space system and be a tourist draw for families.
- The Official Plan includes a proposed recreational trail system whose layout is consistent with the Sentier Brisson and proposed/developed subdivisions.
- Park/facility signage and wayfinding needs to be improved/more visible (e.g., directing people to volleyball and pickleball courts). Signage could be updated to include QR codes directing to a webpage for submitting suggestions, requests for maintenance/repair, booking a facility (e.g., court), etc.



Residents

- A dog park is needed in Casselman but securing an optimal location has proven a challenge. Consideration also needs to be given to its maintenance regime and costs.
- Parc Des Aînés is focused for seniors but it is on a slope and not accessible.
- The splash pad is popular and can get overcrowded. The waterfront is currently undeveloped with no swimming opportunities or boardwalk.
- There is interest among Council in exploring opportunities to develop the stormwater management pond at the end of Des Chênes St. as a passive greenspace for walking, water features, and seating. The land is owned by the Municipality of Casselman but located in the Nation Township. The Municipality has the property easements to access, maintain, and repair the turning radius and pond but it is yet to be determined whether development of adjacent green spaces may compromise the stormwater management system.
- The greenspace allocated between the homes at 225 and 281 Nature St in a recent subdivision could be used for passive parkland with amenities such as seating and a gazebo.
- There is interest in introducing a composting program, community garden, and healing garden.

- At the Open House, attendees suggested that additional trees and shading in municipal parks would encourage more use, as well as benches and waste receptacles. One participant requested snow clearing in parks for winter access.
- Open space allocated for parkland in new development is often limited/lacking.
- Participants emphasized there is a lack of park amenities for tweens/teens, especially near the new subdivisions in the northwest part of the municipality. Since the nearby Tchou-Tchou Park is only for little kids, youth frequently travel across the railway tracks at the end of Argile St. to reach the basketball court at Optimist Park. A skate park, ping pong area, or other active amenity could keep youth occupied.
- There was a request for swings and park benches in the green space at the end of Nature St.
- Residents would like better connectivity throughout the Municipality such as cycle paths, walking trails, and street linkages (e.g., Maria St).
- 10% of telephone survey respondents and 79% of online survey respondents indicated there are additional park amenities that they think should be provided in Casselman.

- The most common request by telephone survey respondents was dog off-leash areas, while the most common request by online survey respondents was more walking paths within parks (Table 2). Among both surveys there was interest in more shade, seating, lighting, etc. (telephone: 30%, online: 45%).



Table 2: Interest in Additional Park Amenities

Factor	Telephone Survey Respondents	Online Survey Respondents
Dog off-leash areas	40%	36%
Ball diamonds	35%	5%
More shade, seating, lighting, etc.	30%	45%
Washrooms and water fountains	30%	23%
Multi-purpose play courts	25%	23%
Increased maintenance	25%	14%
More walking paths within parks	20%	63%
Soccer fields	20%	27%
New play equipment	20%	23%
Beautification	15%	14%
Event space	10%	14%
Naturalized areas	5%	27%
Outdoor gyms	-	32%
Wheel sports pads	-	23%
AODA improvements	-	9%



Service Delivery

User Groups

- 58% of user groups indicated the Municipality could better assist them in developing and providing their programs, activities, or events.
 - The top three areas were assistance with funding applications (57%) and communicating with the Municipality (57%), as well as insurance (securing, cost, etc.) (43%).
- 83% of user groups pay fees for the facilities used. While 50% would be willing to help with fundraising activities for facility development, 75% of groups would not contribute to the capital costs to develop new facilities and 58% would not start paying higher user fees to improve facility quality.
- One user group suggested offering sports teams the opportunity to pay fees to the Municipality via electronic transfer.

Municipal Representatives

- User groups are heavily involved in parks and recreation, but previous conflict between groups and the Municipality led to a loss of trust. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, groups are observed to be less active, and membership is low.
- As Casselman's population doubles and continues to expand, staffing must keep up with the required maintenance to support growth/additional services. The existing staff complement cannot meet residents' expectations.
- There is a reliance on government grants to support part-time staff/students. A dedicated program facilitator may be needed to plan a suite of activities throughout the year.
- Volunteer recruitment and retention is key, particularly when it is too costly for the Municipality to hire additional staff. A recognition program and physical gathering space could attract more volunteers, especially as volunteers age out of service clubs or choose to limit their involvement to specific memberships/activities.

- The Municipality should catalogue the active groups and support them by managing a community-wide volunteer register, streamlining coordination, and marketing opportunities to get involved in public initiatives.
- There may be opportunity to work with the public library for delivery of events and workshops, rental of indoor space, etc.
- Since the Municipality owns limited land parcels, the existing historic partnership with the Catholic school board has been key in providing recreation facilities and programs. Consideration should be given to how a similar partnership could be made with the public school board (e.g., user fees, hours/availability) and building new facilities on its lands.
- There is openness to working with other municipalities for service sharing/shared amenities rather than providing duplicates within Casselman's municipal boundaries.
- Municipal policies have increasingly been formalized, tracked, and improved. There is still room for improvement, particularly in terms of asset management metrics, building conditions assessments, etc.
- Most promotion and communication of parks and recreation offerings/process is through word of mouth as well as individual groups' updates and posters in the arena.
- The Parks and Recreation Master Plan should be aligned with the Strategic Plan that is currently in progress.

Residents

- Open House attendees suggested the Municipality enter a formal partnership with the public high school (Académie de la Seigneurie)/CEPEO school board. Currently the gymnasium is used for programs, but there is opportunity for use of existing outdoor facilities and potential future facilities on site (e.g., dome, outdoor fitness equipment).
- It was also suggested that a shuttle bus could help transport community members to facilities throughout the region (e.g., indoor sports dome) in partnership with surrounding municipalities such as the Nation.
- Figures 1 and 2 show how well sports and recreation facilities in Casselman are meeting residents' expectations. Respondents reported the greatest satisfaction with accessibility/inclusive features (telephone: 84%, online: 32%) and cleanliness and maintenance (telephone: 60%, online: 36%). They see room for improvement in bringing facilities up to date and increasing the number and variety.
- Respondents were asked the extent to which they think the Municipality should focus on developing and providing future parks and recreation services. Telephone survey respondents (Figure 3) would like to see more focus on waterfront spaces/access (72%), indoor facilities/programs (53%), and active parks (40%). Online survey respondents (Figure 4) would like to see more focus on indoor facilities/programs (77%), passive/natural parks (63%), and outdoor facilities/programs (58%).



How well are sports and recreation facilities in Casselman meeting your household's expectations?

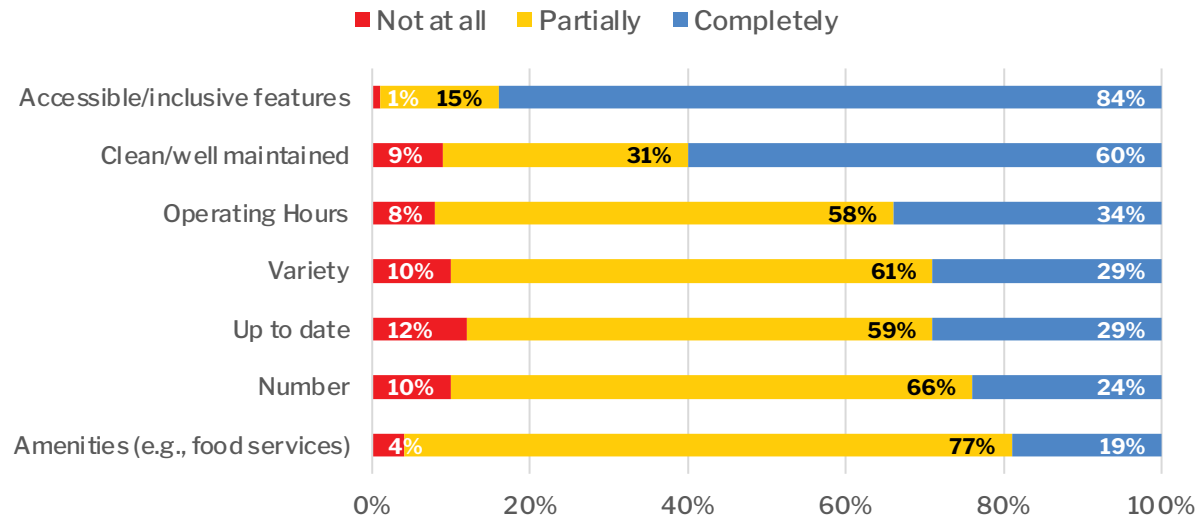


Figure 1: Telephone Survey Respondents

How well are sports and recreation facilities in Casselman meeting your household's expectations?

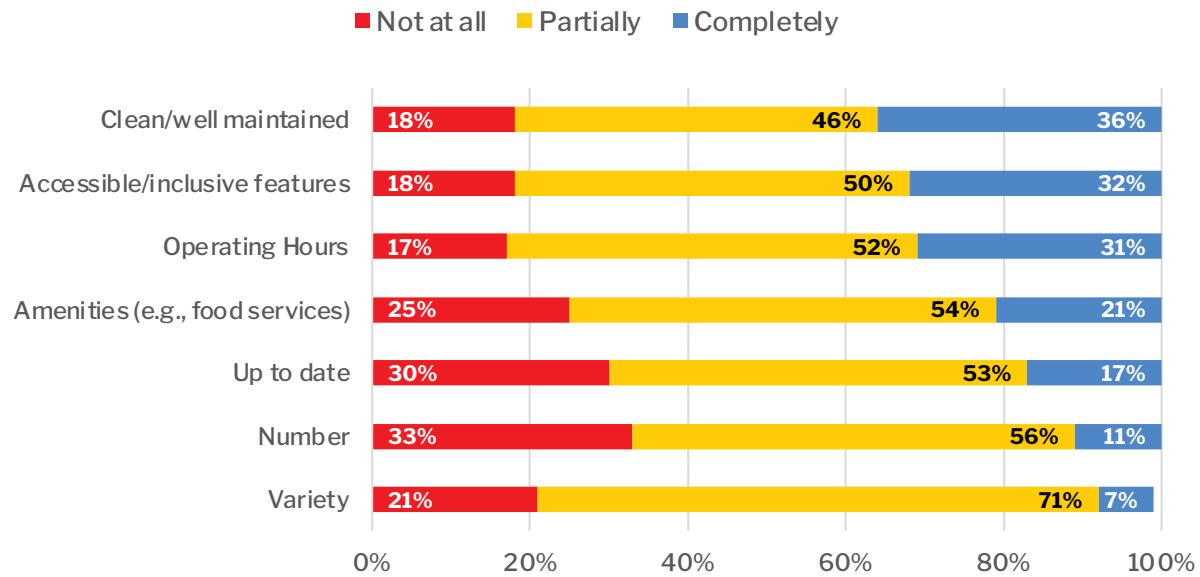


Figure 2: Online Survey Respondents



In developing and providing parks and recreation services, to what extent do you think the Municipality should focus on the following areas?

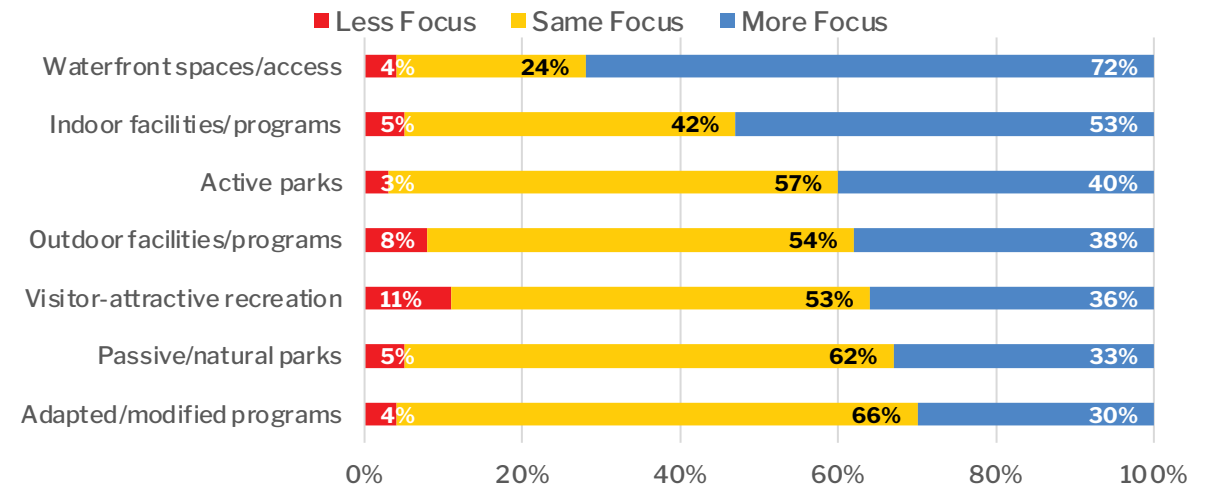


Figure 3: Telephone Survey Respondents

In developing and providing parks and recreation services, to what extent do you think the Municipality should focus on the following areas?

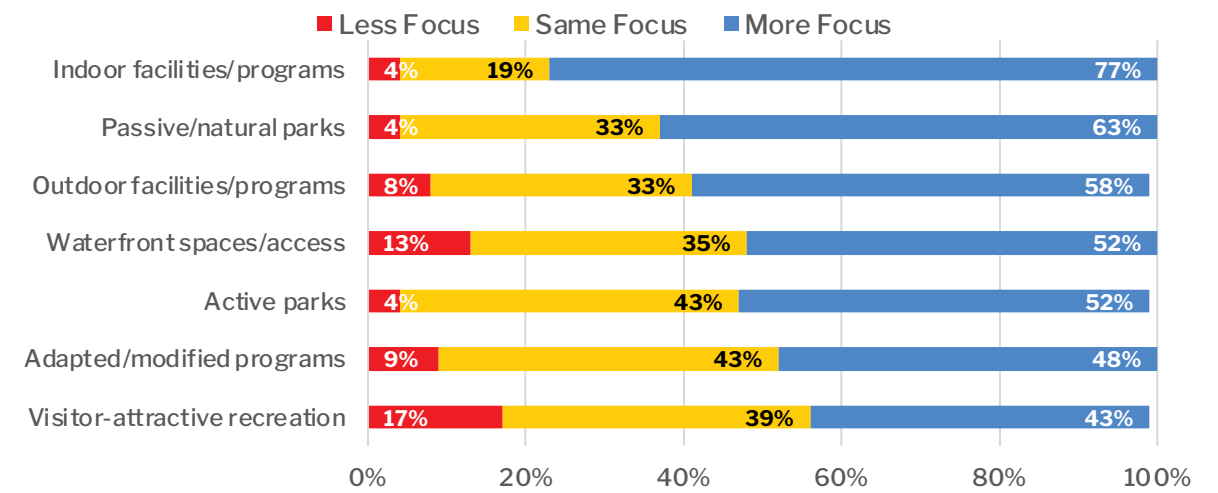


Figure 4: Online Survey Respondents



- When asked if their household would contribute to the development/improvement of recreation facilities, parks, and programs (Table 3), the greatest interest among telephone survey respondents was in paying higher fees to use these spaces (37%) and donating to fundraising (25%) while the greatest interest among online survey respondents was donating to fundraising (41%) and volunteering to help run programs/events (37%).

Table 3: Residents' Willingness to Contribute to Parks and Recreation

Contribution Type	Telephone Survey Respondents	Online Survey Respondents
Paying higher fees	37%	19%
Donating to fundraising	25%	41%
Volunteering to help run programs/events	20%	37%
Donating an amenity to a park (e.g., bench, tree)	20%	15%
Increased property taxes	8%	11%
None of the above	21%	37%

Businesses

- Businesses were asked their experience and/or future interest in sponsoring or partnering with a recreation or cultural organization in the community (e.g., service club, sports group, municipality) to deliver recreation-related services in Casselman (e.g., programming, foodservices, in-kind donations). Respondents reported involvement in the Christmas festival and an art exhibition, as well as through in-kind donations. Reasons for this involvement include “giving back” to the community, providing positive exposure for the business to local residents, supporting employees who are (or may be) involved in the activity, and helping to bring in visitors/tourists who might become customers.
- One business expressed interest in getting involved but suggested that opportunities are offered to returning companies and not new ones, and there is need for better communication of events and opportunities for participation.
- Only one business reported using/renting municipal recreation facilities (community event room) in the community.

