

Staff Report



To Council
Department Community and Customer Services Department
Meeting Date Council and Committee of the Whole Meetings - 10 Mar 2026
Subject Leisure and Activity Centre Feasibility Assessment
Report Number SR- 3131
Prepared by Matthew Cybulski

Recommendation

1. That the report from the Recreation, Parks and Facilities Division, dated March 10, 2026 re: Leisure and Activity Centre Feasibility Assessment, be received; and
2. That Council approve the closure of the Leisure & Activity Centre and the consolidation of applicable recreation programming into the W.J. Henderson Community Centre as the Township's primary recreation service hub, with an effective closure/cutover date of August 1, 2026.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the operational, financial, and service-delivery considerations related to the continued use of the Leisure & Activity Centre (LAC). It also recommends the formal closure of the facility as a direct programming space while outlining the plan to consolidate existing and applicable recreation programming into the W.J. Henderson Community Centre (WJHCC), thus ensuring service continuity while improving operational efficiency and optimizing the use of Township recreation assets.

Consolidating key recreation and leisure services within a single community centre transforms the WJHCC facility into a true community hub. By bringing leisure programming and fitness amenities under one roof alongside aquatics, the arena, Legacy Space, library services and select municipal payment services, it offers residents a more convenient, connected, and accessible experience. This strengthens the WJHCC's role as a multi-use community hub and the integrated approach enhances efficiency while creating a vibrant, welcoming destination for residents of all ages.

Report Highlights

- Consolidating programming into the WJHCC supports long-term recreation service planning, centralizes the recreation services programming team to one location and aligns with modernization and efficiency objectives.
- Financial and facility pressures at the LAC, including ongoing maintenance needs and future capital requirements, support closure and create an opportunity to explore alternative uses, partnerships, and necessary upgrades that could improve the facility's long-term viability.
- A comprehensive Spring & Summer Programming Pilot would be executed at WJHCC to test operational readiness, assess program viability, and gather data needed for a suggested final transition decision.
- An effective closure/cutover date of August 1, 2026 is recommended to allow for program transition, communication with stakeholders, and operational planning.
- Staff would implement a transition and communications plan to support users, partners, and community groups impacted by the change.
- No interruption to core recreation services is anticipated, as staff would relocate programming to available spaces within the WJHCC and other Township facilities.
- The Recreation Service Hub at the WJHCC advances the [Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#) recommendations PE9–PE24 by modernizing staffing, expanding programming, strengthening partnerships, and delivering low-cost improvements that build momentum toward future facility enhancements.
- Projected annual operating savings from the LAC closure and service consolidation at the WJHCC are expected to fall between the conservative and expected scenarios, resulting in an estimated \$55,900 - \$92,600 in recurring cashable savings.
- Service consolidation would generate 28 to 32 hours per week in staffing efficiencies.
- Public transit access at the WJHCC strongly supports the Township's move toward a consolidated community centre and Recreation Services model.

Report Details

Background and Analysis

The LAC has served as a secondary municipal programming space for many years; however, its condition, accessibility limitations, and operational inefficiencies have increasingly challenged its long-term viability. Recent reviews and facility condition assessments identify significant capital needs at the LAC (e.g., building envelope repairs, HVAC modernization, accessibility retrofits, and lifecycle renewal). This coupled with the potential for an alternative use of this space creates an opportunity to consider service consolidation, particularly given the availability of modern,

purpose-built spaces at the WJHCC. Accordingly, shifting the LAC away from a public-facing, Township-operated program model and repurposing the facility for alternative use, would allow the Township to prioritize compatible tenants or community partners whose operations could be accommodated through fit-up and phased capital improvements.

Program delivery trends also indicate a steady shift toward consolidated recreation hubs that provide improved service quality, streamlined operations, and reduced facility redundancy. Staff analysis confirms that all existing LAC recreation programs, rentals, and community uses could be accommodated within the WJHCC or other Township facilities without service interruption. Consolidation supports more efficient scheduling, improved cross-staffing opportunities, and alignment with Township recreation modernization priorities. Locating all staff within a single facility would further enhance communication, supervision, and collaboration. It would reduce operational inefficiencies associated with split work locations and improve service consistency and responsiveness for both staff and the public.

The recommendation to close the LAC also supports a more efficient use of municipal assets by enabling the facility to be repurposed for alternative use, thus reducing ongoing operational pressures on the Township. Transitioning recreation services away from the LAC would eliminate the need for continued staffing, utilities, and maintenance expenditures at an aging facility, and avoid significant future capital allocations required to meet accessibility, building-system, and lifecycle standards. By shifting programming to the WJHCC, where modernized spaces, transit access, and operational efficiencies already exist, the Township could redirect resources toward higher-value community priorities while positioning the LAC for alternative uses that may generate revenue, partnerships, or reduce long-term financial obligations.

Public Transit Access

Public transit access is a key advantage of the WJHCC compared to the LAC. The WJHCC functions as a transit connection point for both Kingston Transit and the Loyalist Link service, the latter providing direct connectivity from Amherst Island, Odessa, and Bath to the WJHCC. This establishes the WJHCC as a true mobility hub for the region, offering residents reliable access to recreation programs without reliance on personal vehicles. This enhanced transit access improves program accessibility for youth, seniors, and residents without personal vehicles and aligns with the Township's objectives of reducing transportation barriers and supporting equitable participation. For users travelling from rural and shoreline communities, the Loyalist Link creates a seamless link to broader regional transit, improving equity and reducing transportation barriers. This enhanced connectivity strongly supports the Township's move toward a consolidated community centre and Recreation Services model, as centralizing programming at a location already integrated with regional transit networks will increase accessibility, support higher participation levels, and improve long-term service sustainability.

Spring and Summer Programming Pilot

The Spring and Summer Programming Pilot at WJHCC is designed to test the feasibility, operational impacts, and community uptake of relocating select fitness and recreation programs to the WJHCC ahead of an anticipated August 1, 2026 cutover. The pilot provides an opportunity to evaluate program delivery under real conditions, including room suitability, storage and set-up efficiency, technology and acoustic needs, and impacts on existing WJHCC operations. Through structured measurement of registrations, participant satisfaction, workload impacts, conflicts, and operational considerations, the pilot will generate evidence to inform the final actions and implementation approach of the consolidation plan. This analysis will help identify both constraints and opportunities, ensuring the final transition plan supports service continuity, efficient operations, and an improved participant experience.

Transition to Consolidation

The transition to a consolidated Recreation Service Hub at the WJHCC directly advances a broad range of [Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#) recommendations (PE9–PE24) while also creating tangible, low-cost progress toward future phases of WJHCC development.

Centralizing programs at the WJHCC also strengthens the Township’s capacity to support instructor growth (PE12) and conduct consistent, high-quality program evaluations (PE13–PE14). Enhanced space availability and operational alignment at the WJHCC enable expansion of key program areas, including free unstructured youth recreation (PE15), increased capacity in high-demand youth programs (PE16), expanded wellness, and after-school options (PE17), all-ages family programming (PE18), and stronger partnerships with community groups (PE19).

The Hub also supports maintaining and expanding adult programming (PE20), transitioning fitness memberships into registered programs as recommended (PE21), increasing seniors programming and partnership capacity (PE22–PE23), and expanding outdoor recreation offerings (PE24).

Collectively, these operational improvements form immediately achievable concrete steps toward the long-term vision for the WJHCC. They would create visible momentum, demonstrate system readiness, and build the foundation for future amenities and service enhancements, without requiring the community to wait for long-term capital investments to begin seeing meaningful progress.

Staff recommend an effective closure/cutover date of **August 1, 2026**, to allow for a structured transition period that includes stakeholder communication, program relocation, facility decommissioning activities, and operational preparations at the WJHCC.

Financial and facility-related considerations, including ongoing maintenance pressures and future capital requirements at the LAC, support the recommendation to proceed with closure as a recreation program delivery location. This transition would allow the Township to explore alternative uses for compatible service-based opportunities and

potential business or community partnerships for the facility. Any alternative use would likely require renovations to meet program, licensing, or occupancy requirements but this may also present an opportunity to address outstanding capital repairs and building upgrades concurrently as part of a redevelopment or tenant-fit-up approach, improving the overall condition and long-term viability of the facility.

Financial Implications

Scenario Summary (Cashable Savings)

It should be noted that the anticipated recurring, cashable annual operating savings would be expected to fall between the Conservative and Expected scenarios, representing an estimated \$55,916 to \$92,643 in annual savings, with a partial-year net impact in 2026 ranging from \$23,298 to \$36,321.50 after one-time transition costs.

Scenario	Recurring Cashable Savings/Efficiencies (Full Year)	2026 Net Cashable Impact*	2027–2030 Net Cashable Impact	5-Year Net Cashable Savings (2026–2030)
Conservative	\$55,916	\$23,298	\$223,664	\$246,962
Expected	\$92,643	\$36,321.50	\$370,572	\$406,893.50
Optimistic	\$151,643	\$63,185	\$606,572	\$669,757

Analysis of service consolidation and operational workflows indicates that relocating programming from the LAC to the WJHCC would generate approximately 28 - 32 hours per week in staffing efficiencies. These efficiencies would align staffing levels with actual service demand and eliminate duplicated coverage previously required across two facilities. The Township can maintain service quality at the WJHCC while achieving measurable, sustainable operational savings.

This feasibility model intentionally excludes any potential revenue from third-party leases or rental arrangements at the LAC or WJHCC. As a result, all financial scenarios presented reflect savings only, without incorporating revenue gains that could further strengthen the Township's net financial position. Should the Township secure new or expanded third-party agreements—such as long-term leases or space-use arrangements—these revenues would be entirely net-positive additions to the savings scenarios outlined in this report.

Risks or Stakeholder Implications

Closing the LAC and consolidating programming instead at the WJHCC presents several risks that require mitigation:

- **Service Disruption & Schedule Impacts:** Consolidation may result in schedule changes, reduced peak-time availability, and room-fit challenges, affecting fitness, arts, and youth programs. Mitigation: phased transition, pilot programs, protected time blocks, room suitability adjustments.

- **Participant Impacts (Especially Seniors):** Seniors and mobility-limited users may be sensitive to schedule changes, room access, and increased walking distances at WJHCC. Mitigation: senior-friendly time bands, enhanced wayfinding, accessibility walk-throughs, temporary on-site support.
- **Community Perception/Reputational Risk:** Closure of a long-standing neighbourhood facility may be perceived as a service loss. Mitigation: clear messaging emphasizing service continuity, “programs moving nearby,” and improved hub experience.
- **Operational Capacity Risks:** Storage constraints, staff workload, and potential program conflicts at WJHCC may impact service quality. Mitigation: implement short- and long-term storage plans, revise staffing coverage, complete pilot readiness checks.
- **Financial Realization Risk:** Actual savings may vary if LAC expenses are not fully removed or if WJHCC requires incremental support in Year 1. Mitigation: Track realized savings quarterly and adjust forecasts.

Communication and Consultation Plan

If approved, a focused communication and consultation approach would support participants, staff, instructors, Council, and community partners through the transition.

Internal Consultation

- Recreation & Facilities staff (programming, customer service, operations) consulted to assess program impacts, storage needs, scheduling, and staffing coverage
- Corporate leadership, Finance, Communications, Clerk’s Office consulted to validate financial modelling, risk controls, and messaging

External Consultation

- Program instructors/contractors: engaged to validate room suitability, equipment requirements, and scheduling
- Community partners and user groups (e.g., EarlyON, community groups using the Meeting Room) would be engaged to review impacts on rental times and program continuity

Planned Communication

- Participants & Residents: targeted messaging outlining what is changing, program mapping to new locations, and timelines. A transition-phase “welcome support” at WJHCC is planned.
- Staff & Instructors: internal updates, training/transition guides, and operational briefings prior to full consolidation.
- Council & Leadership: pilot results, readiness updates, and transition plans provided at key decision points.

Engagement Framework

Engagement aligns with the Township’s principles of clarity, accessibility, and service continuity, with messaging focused on continuity rather than loss, and supported by pilot feedback and participant input.

Alternatives

The Township could continue with the status quo by continuing to operate the LAC as a Segmented Direct-Programming Facility.

Under this alternative, the Township would continue to operate both the LAC and the WJHCC as separate programming sites, maintaining the current dual-facility delivery model. This alternative is not recommended for the following reasons:

- **Ongoing Operational Inefficiencies:** Operating two programmed facilities in the same service area requires duplicated staffing coverage, on-site customer service, equipment handling, and facility supervision, which proves structurally inefficient.
- **Higher Operating Costs:** Maintaining LAC operations continues annual fixed building costs (utilities, janitorial, waste, maintenance, insurance) that are fully avoidable under the consolidation model.
- **No Realization of Estimated Savings:** Continuing LAC operations would forgo recurring cashable savings of approximately **\$92,643 annually** (expected scenario) and five-year savings of **\$406,893.50** identified in the feasibility analysis.
- **Fragmented Customer Experience:** Residents would continue navigating two separate locations, increasing confusion around program locations and limiting the ability to deliver a streamlined recreation “hub” model.
- **Storage and Space Constraints Persist:** The LAC’s limited storage and fitness studio capacity would continue to restrict growth and program optimization.

While retaining the status quo is certainly feasible, maintaining the LAC as a stand-alone programming site does not align with operational efficiency, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan recommendations, nor the Township’s direction to establish a consolidated recreation service hub at WJHCC.

Approved by

Approved by	Status:
Matthew Cybulski, Manager Recreation, Parks & Facilities	Approved - 03 Mar 2026
Lorie McFarland, Director of Community and Customer Services	Approved - 03 Mar 2026
David Clazie, Director of Finance/Treasurer	Approved - 03 Mar 2026
Rebecca Murphy, Chief Administrative Officer	Approved - 03 Mar 2026