

**Community Forum  
To Provide Input into Vision 2035,  
The Parks and Recreation Plan**

**Township of Cavan Monaghan**

**May 10, 2023**

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**Selwyn, Ontario**



# Community Forum

## Introduction

On May 10, 2023, a Community Forum was held to learn more about demand for culture, recreation and parks in the Township of Cavan Monaghan. The event was widely marketed through an advertisement in the Millbrook Times, the Township website and social media outlets. 28 residents attended the event. The Forum was livestreamed to the community. Eight people joined virtually. Three residents emailed the project right after the Forum with their suggestions. All have been included in the report associated with each question.

The evening began with a welcome from the Mayor, followed by a presentation by the Project Director of the results of the research and analysis to date. Since much of the discussion at the Forum was to be on options for the future of the Millbrook Arena, more information was presented about it.

Participants were seated at five tables and were asked to provide input on two questions. Almost an hour was set aside for the group discussion. The questions are provided, and the result of the discussion is summarized below. Each group reported on the highlights of their discussion. Each participant was asked to fill in a short survey to register their opinion about the four options identified for the future of the Millbrook Arena. The evening ended with closing remarks from the facilitator and the Mayor.

The notes from each table have been integrated into a report on the discussion associated with each question.

## Discussion Question One: What are your top two or three priorities for improved and new facilities and parks?

Most of the suggestions for additional and improved facilities and parks were only mentioned once across all the groups. The most that anything was suggested was five times. The full list of suggestions is recorded below, including a few suggestions that came from residents who joined the Forum virtually and a few who emailed the project in the days following the Forum.

Requests	Suggested Facility and Park Improvements
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand the trail system/Accessible walking paths/ Increase walkability or wheel-ability within the Township – e.g., paved trails, more walkways throughout the Town/ Incorporate unused lands into outdoor barrier-free experiences for those who may have disabilities but would love to access the trail system.</li></ul>

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some sort of large field house that is large enough to accommodate a small artificial turf playing field (note that the typical size of an indoor soccer field is 100' x 200').</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parkland integrated into the downtown/ Downtown playground/Create a Town Square/community green space that allows outdoor activities, socializing, Town initiatives/events – and provides a safe, accessible place for seniors and those with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors.</li> <li>▪ Outdoor performance venue/band shell.</li> <li>▪ Improved and more accessible public library building, collection and community programming (combine the two branches, build a new main branch, modernize the existing main branch, create a dedicated 'kids' space).</li> <li>▪ Space for large meetings and community events/ More affordable meeting spaces for small and medium size meetings</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More rectangular fields.</li> <li>▪ Seek partnerships/partner with social services, Five Counties Children Centre, the Public Library, etc.</li> <li>▪ Partner with the Fair Board to better utilize their space/move the Millbrook Fair to Kawartha Downs and repurpose the current fairground into municipal parkland.</li> <li>▪ More neighbourhood parks/more parks for kids.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A one-stop accessible building for all ages.</li> <li>▪ A multipurpose park.</li> <li>▪ Baseball diamonds.</li> <li>▪ Drop-in centre for youth.</li> <li>▪ Drop-in centre for seniors.</li> <li>▪ Preschool/daycare facilities.</li> <li>▪ Youth programs.</li> <li>▪ Intergenerational programs.</li> <li>▪ Recreation programs in Millbrook.</li> <li>▪ Enhance programming for adults and children with disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Facilities that support structured and unstructured leisure activities.</li> <li>▪ Gymnasium.</li> <li>▪ Racquet sports (non-specific).</li> <li>▪ Indoor performance venue.</li> <li>▪ Swimming pool (not specific as to indoor or outdoor).</li> <li>▪ Outdoor swimming pool.</li> <li>▪ Repurpose Old Millbrook School Park.</li> <li>▪ More downtown parking.</li> <li>▪ Not-for-profit childcare programs/Early ON.</li> <li>▪ Second hockey pad that has multiple sport options for all ages.</li> <li>▪ Expand the CMCC into a recreational sports centre. Consider adding a dome instead of a second hockey pad (would support activities such as soccer, gymnastics, cheerleading, running club).</li> <li>▪ Provide bike lanes on roads.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more sidewalks.</li> <li>▪ Accessible parkland.</li> <li>▪ Create a business plan/business case for the recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Plan.</li> </ul>
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## Discussion Question Two: Options for the Future of the Millbrook Arena

The group was reminded that in the summer of 2022, a household survey was administered to Township residents in support of the Parks and Recreation Plan. The 319 responses from households represented approximately 900 residents. Among many questions, the survey asked for respondent’s opinion about four options for the future of the Millbrook Arena.

Each group at the Community Forum was asked to discuss the options, record the comments and decide which option their group most supported. Each group was also provided a one-page information sheet on the Millbrook Arena, including the seven studies that have been recently completed about this facility.

Although not everyone agreed in each group, four of five groups/tables selected **Option Three: Replace the building with a high-quality downtown community park** as the consensus option. One group created a fifth option for which three of the four participants selected. That option was “to do nothing until the existing user groups are accommodated”. That sounds a lot like Option Three with the caveat noted below.

Most indicated that the Millbrook Arena should not be demolished until a suitable facility is available that can accommodate current users, especially indoor soccer. One group emphasized that a partnership is a possibility that should be considered. Another group noted the parking challenges at the Millbrook Arena as a serious drawback to its use.

## Results of the Individual Surveys about the Future of the Millbrook Arena

Including the two residents who joined the Forum virtually and voted on the four options, there were 28 completed surveys. The results are recorded below.

Rank	The Options
10.7% (3 votes)	<b>Option One</b> Invest in the order of \$5.25 million into the building and site to maintain the facility as status quo for another 25 years and to renovate it to meet accessibility requirements. This investment would only support winter season uses that are similar to current uses e.g., soccer and lacrosse. Accessibility deficiencies must be corrected by 2025. No interior or exterior improvements (other than accessibility upgrades) are included in this option.
0% (0 votes)	<b>Option Two</b> Invest considerably more than \$5.25 million into the building and site (interior and exterior) to extend its life for another 25 years <u>and</u> increase its functionality and appeal to support a few more uses. Possible uses will depend on how the interior might be able to be transformed. The intent would be to have a facility that could be utilized year-round. Even if well utilized year-round, there will likely be an annual operating deficit. Limited parking will continue to be a major shortcoming.
75% (21 votes)  See caveat below.	<b>Option Three</b> Replace the building with a high-quality downtown community park that may accommodate some combination of facilities such as a farmer's market, an outdoor stage or gazebo, pathways, gardens, trees, an area for quiet reflection, a picnic area, an outdoor exercise gym, an unstructured grass area, etc. With the proposed closure of Needler's Lane, the park could be integrated into the surrounding parkland and facilities. Via walkways, the park would be linked to the commercial component of the downtown.
0.04% (1 vote)	<b>Option Four</b> Sell the property and allow for a developer or business opportunity to invest in the downtown. This would support urban redevelopment plans and help to satisfy the need for commercial and residential development in the downtown.
0.07% (2 votes)	<b>Option Five</b> Two people voted for an Option 5, although it was not defined. One person asked that more consultation be undertaken to ensure that "the ENTIRE Township community is consulted".

One person did not vote for any of the options, nor did they define a fifth option. They did however, state that the Township should "not tear down the arena until there is a Cavan-based facility that meets the needs of user groups".

Seven of the 21 people (one third) who voted for the option to replace the Millbrook Arena with a downtown park, also included the caveat that the arena remain open until

there is a new facility built that can accommodate current users and programs (indoor soccer and box lacrosse).

For Option One to invest in the order of \$5.25 million in the Millbrook Arena to keep it open in a status quo state for another 25 years, two people questioned the capital cost estimate. They believe it is too high.

**Note:** The results of this survey are very similar to the results of the household survey conducted in the summer of 2022. In the household survey, 82.5% of respondents chose Option Three. 75% of Community Forum attendees chose Option Three.