

*Don Halsey*

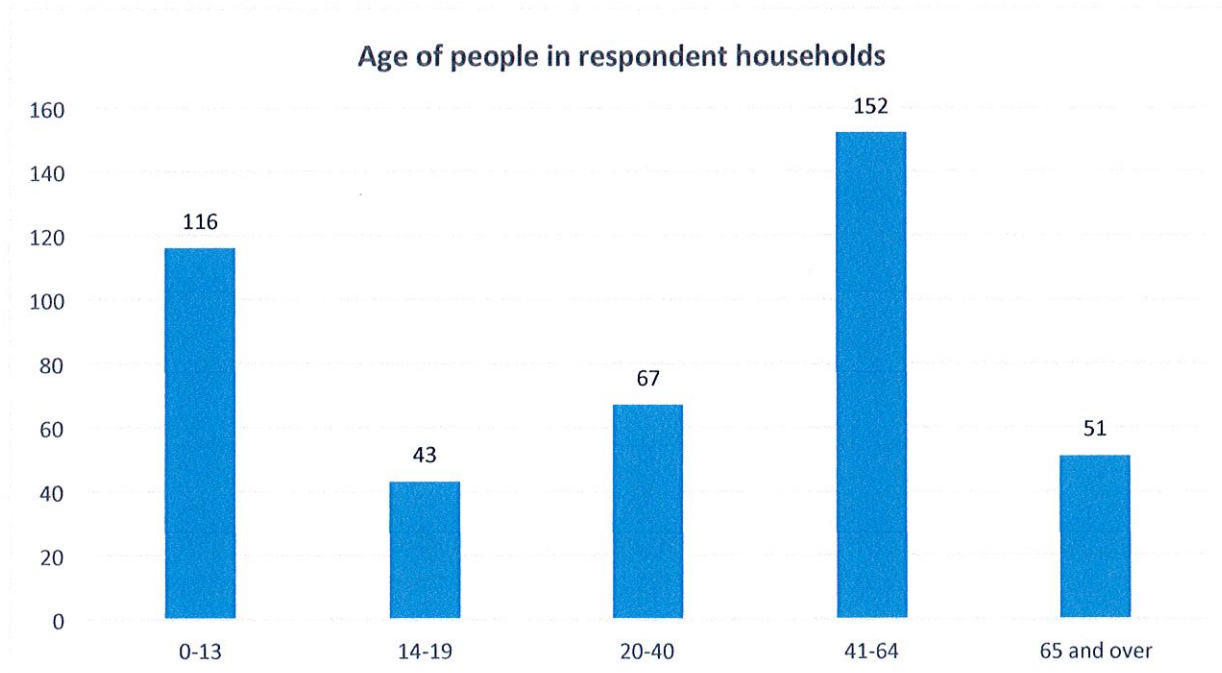
## Merrickville-Wolford Recreation Survey 2014 – Summary of Results

### Background

In the 2013-14 term the Recreation Advisory Committee was directed by Council to conduct a Recreation Needs Assessment for strategic planning purposes. A questionnaire designed to solicit the views of residents on existing facilities and future needs was subsequently developed using Survey Monkey (an online survey tool) and a link to the survey posted on the municipal website. Hard copies were also made available at Village Bean, Drummond’s Gas, Merrickville Library, Merrickville-Wolford Township Office and Allan’s Tool Shed. Mid-September 2014 was chosen as a deadline for responses.

### Respondent Profile

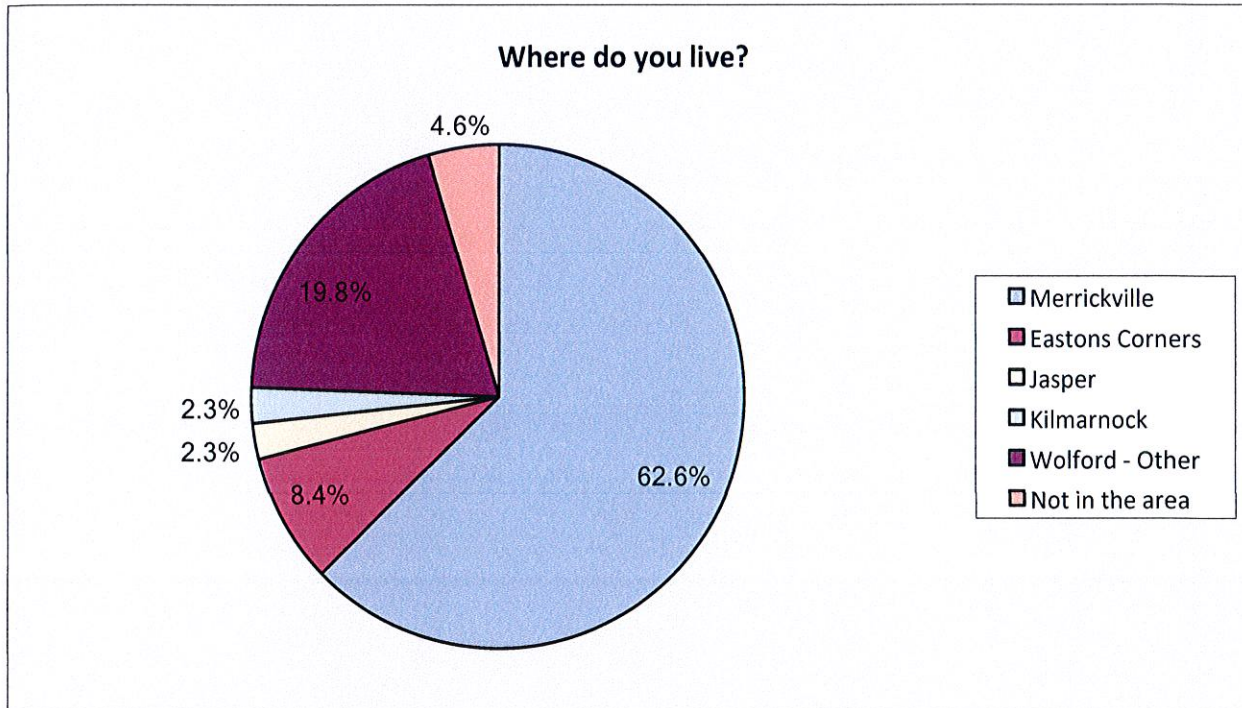
A total of 132 individuals responded to the survey representing 430 people. The following chart



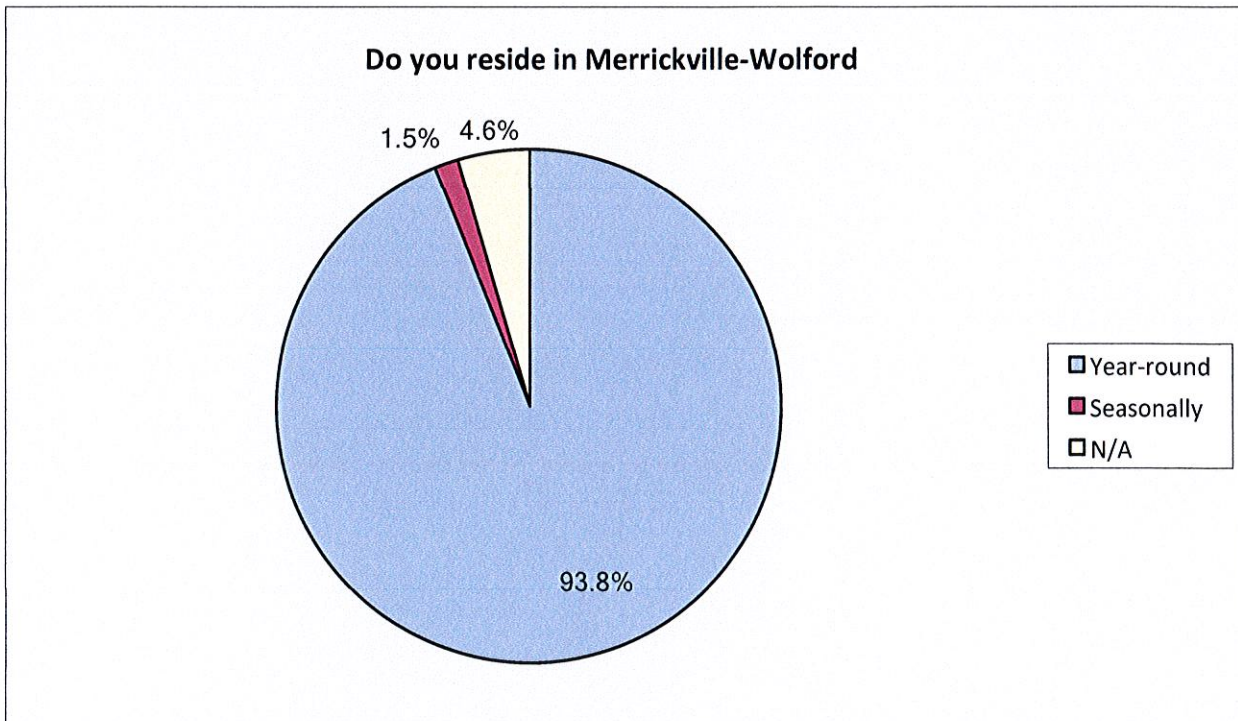
illustrates the ages of people in respondent households:

**Highlight:** Looking at the age of people in the respondent households, the number of people aged 0 to 40 is only slightly larger (226) than the number of people over the age of 40 (203). Among the adult population represented, adults over the age of 40 outnumber those in the 20 to 40 age group by a ratio of more than 3 to 1.

The chart on the following page illustrates where respondents live:



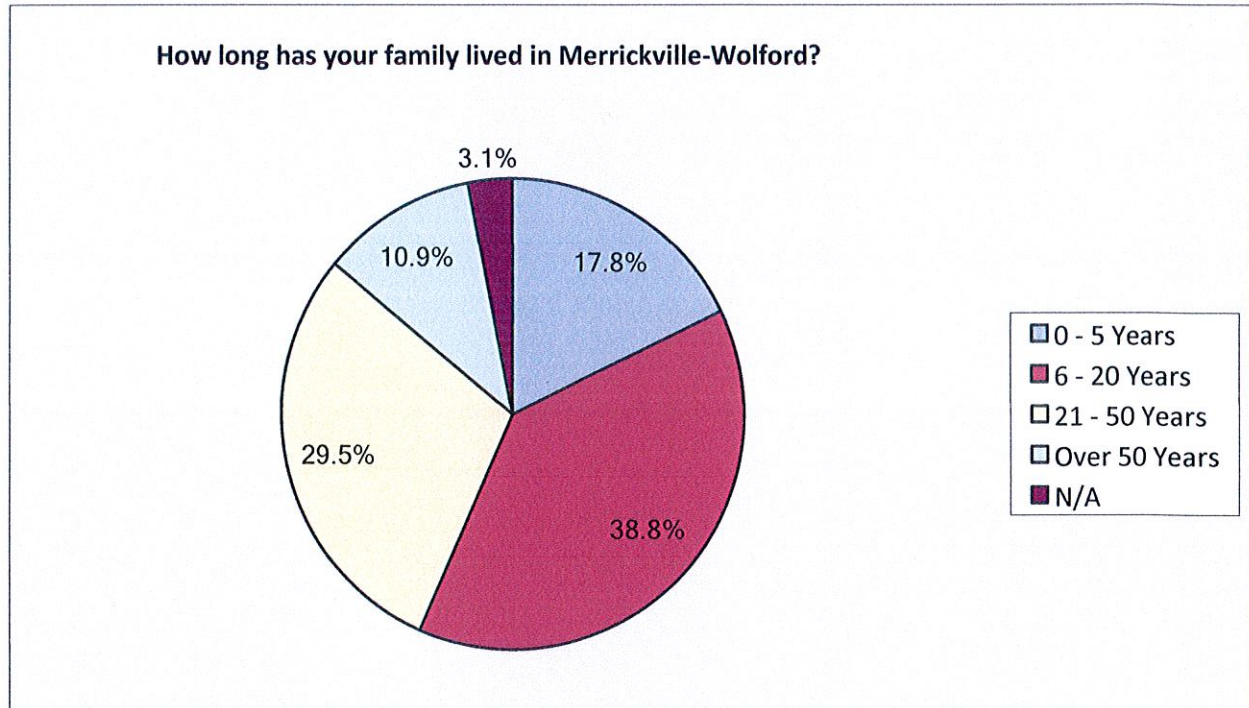
**Highlight:** The majority of respondents (63%) live in Merrickville, while the next largest group



**(20%) live in Eastons Corners.**

**Highlight: Almost all respondents (94%) indicated that they live in Merrickville-Wolford all year round.**

The following chart illustrates responses to the question, “How long has your family lived in



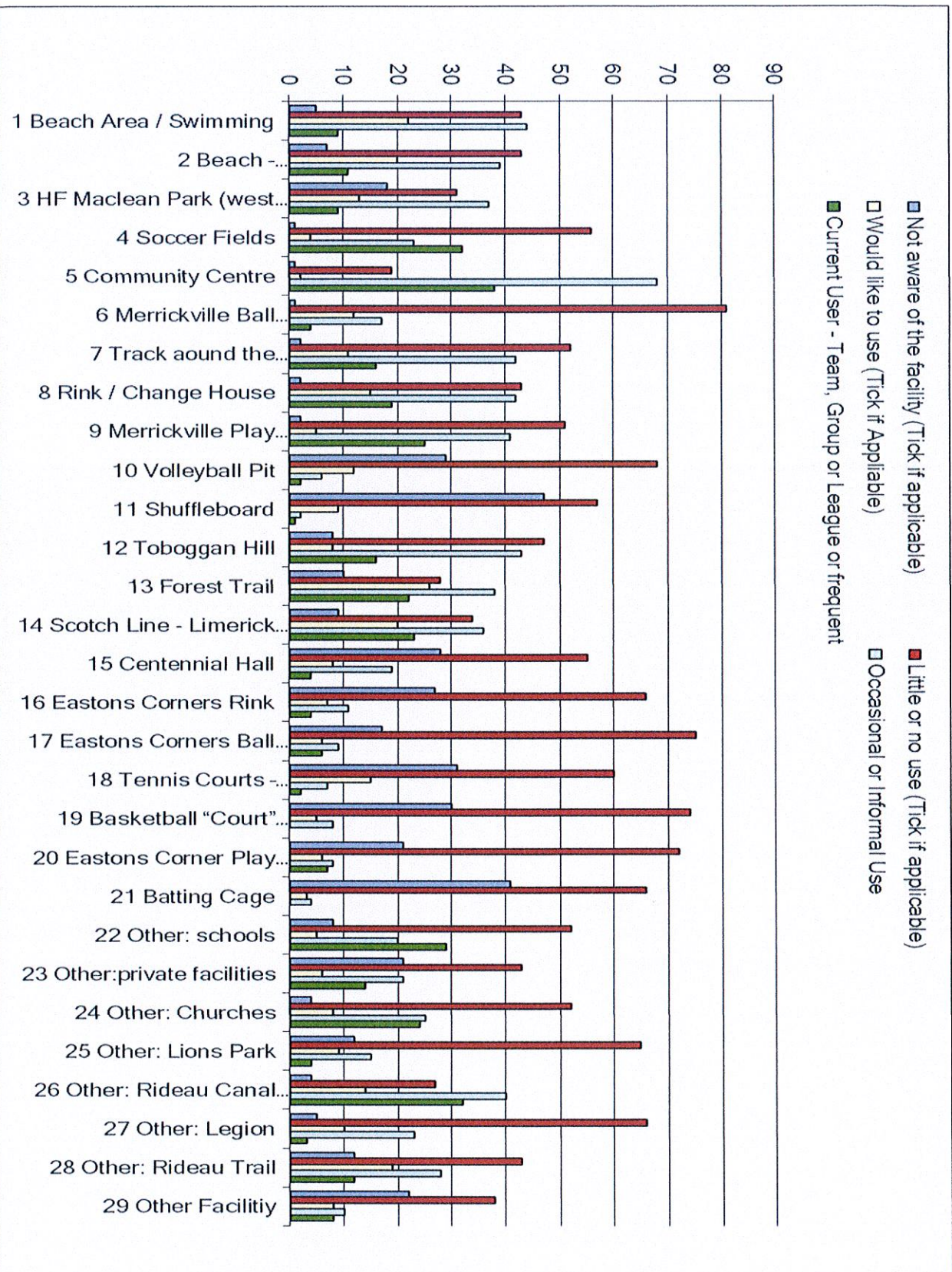
Merrickville-Wolford?”

**Highlight: A significant majority of respondents have lived in Merrickville-Wolford for 6 years or longer. Almost 30% indicated that they have lived here for over 20 years.**

## Findings

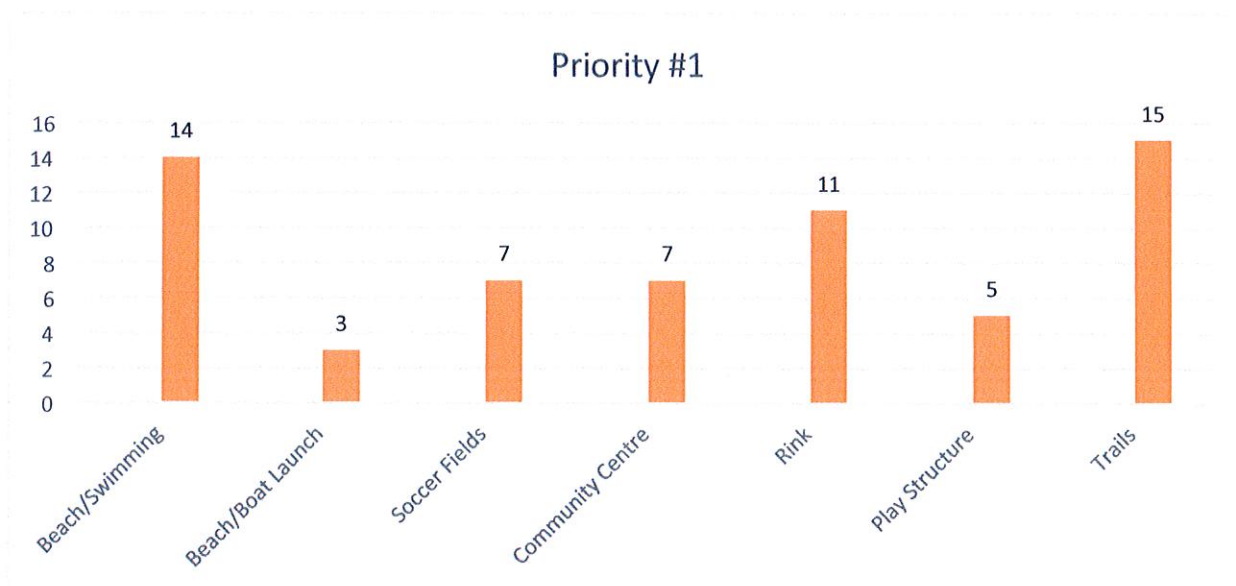
Respondents were asked about their use of existing recreational facilities, their priorities regarding these existing facilities and their priorities regarding new recreational facilities /capabilities/programs. The charts on the following pages illustrate the responses to these questions.

Please describe your household's use of the following facilities.



**Highlights:** Two observations from the previous chart stand out and they are -

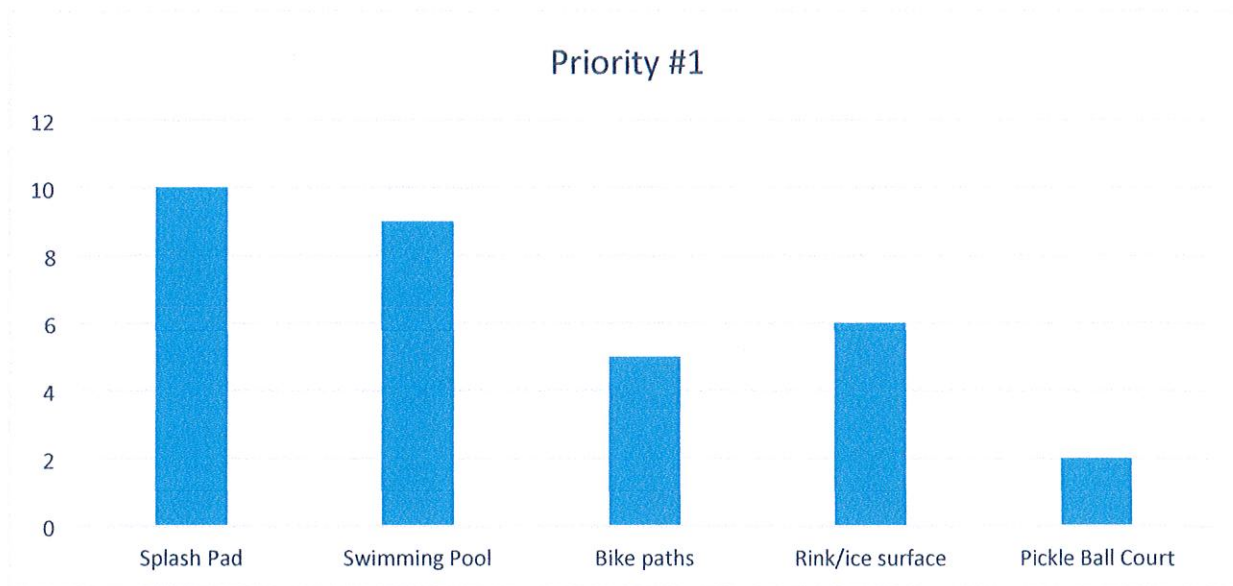
1. Most of the identified facilities appear to be underused (occasional or little use); and,
2. Many of the facilities are not known (respondents unaware that they exist).



As to the question of priorities regarding existing facilities it is a challenge to clearly pin point the top priorities from the responses provided. The above chart illustrates the particular facilities that respondents identified most frequently both in direct response to the question and in general comments provided in the open-ended question at the conclusion of the questionnaire.

**Highlights:** The facilities that respondents referred to most frequently included Trails, Beach/Swimming and the Rink. The Community Centre and the Soccer Fields also received significant comment.

It was also difficult to identify clear priorities regarding new recreational facilities/capabilities/programs. As with the responses to the question regarding existing facilities there was no real consensus around what is needed. Respondents referred to an assortment of very different options including: a multi-use recreation facility, a kids' drop-in centre and organized senior's programs to name a few. The following page illustrates the more frequently identified new or improved facilities or programs.



A final question asking “How many members of your family use recreational facilities provided by other municipalities e.g. North Grenville, Smiths Falls, Athens etc.?” resulted in a total of 250 family members or an average of 2.07 individuals in each household.

## Recommendations

Based on the survey responses it is recommended that:

- 1. Detailed information about currently existing facilities and programs be posted on the Municipal Website (Under Recreation tab). This information should include the location of the facility/program, photographs, a brief description and all relevant information regarding it's use such as availability, hours of operation, any rules governing it's use and contact information. It is further recommended that this information include a directory of organizations responsible for local recreation/social programs with contact information as well as links to websites where applicable;**
- 2. In the short term Council should focus attention on improvements to the outdoor rink, the beach area and the community centre. Although many respondents referred to the trails these have seen many improvements since the survey was posted;**
- 3. Further consultation in the form of focus groups be organized to more clearly identify priorities for future recreational facility/program development. This consultation should take the form of focus groups where there is an opportunity for interaction.**