



September 6, 2018

# REPORT

**TO:** Community Hub/Recreation Project Steering Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Sean Dillon, Senior Manager Business Development

**RE:** Seniors Focus Group Sessions – Feedback and Analysis

## Background

As part of its contracted scope of work, for Community Development Services, the YMCA has committed to conducting Community Focus Group sessions. The first of these sessions, targeted at seniors, were held on Monday August 27, 2018 at the South Huron Recreation Centre, Exeter and on Thursday August 30, 2018 at the Clubhouse at Grand Cove Estates. A total of 71 people, not including Steering Committee members, took part in the Focus Groups; a sampling of 2.6% of the municipal seniors population.

## Demographic Profile – Seniors 65 plus years of age

Seniors within South Huron represent a larger share of the municipal population than surrounding counties and the Ontario average at 26.3% (2,660 individuals 65+ years of age).

	South Huron	Huron County	Lambton County	Middlesex County	Perth County	Bruce County	Ontario
% 65+ years within total population	26.3%	22.7%	21.6%	16.8%	18.6%	23.6%	16.7%

Seniors within South Huron experience a significantly lower rate of occurrence of low income status at 0.8% as compared to the Ontario average rate of occurrence of 5.1%.

Statistics Canada 2017 self-reported physical activity rates, of 150 minutes/week for adults, finds that 39.4% of respondent Ontario seniors 65+ years of age reported regular completion of physical activity to the threshold standard. Extrapolated against the seniors population of South Huron this indicates that 1048 local seniors are actively and regularly engaged in health, fitness, and recreation activities. The 1048 seniors identified will not all be considered part of the local health, fitness, and recreation market as many will participate through self-directed activity that is not reliant on the provision of community facilities (although many require community infrastructure; such as roads and trails to perform their self-directed activity).

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### Focus Group Feedback

The Focus Group sessions collected input on 14 points of data relevant to determining community need for health, fitness, and recreation programs along with collecting input on likely participation in programming and facilities, willingness to support a capital fundraising campaign for enhanced recreation facilities, and familiarity with the YMCA.

Feedback was collected in written form through table groups that discussed each question posed and recorded their own input. Attached at the end of this Report is the summary of responses provided, verbatim written comments and questions and copy of the presentation provided at each Focus Group.

### Analysis of Feedback

#### Profile of Participants:

- the majority of participants identified themselves as residing in Exeter(26%), Grand Bend(21%), and Grand Cove(21%).
- 93% of participants identified themselves as year-round residents of the community.
- 66% of participants identified their level of personal physical activity as above average. This is significantly variant to the average rate of 39.4% participation in threshold levels of physical activity identified as the Ontario average. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the participants attracted to the Focus Groups were not representative of the average senior within the community but are a representative sampling of the most active seniors within the community.

#### Program Participation & Needs:

- Walking was identified as the top current form of physical activity performed by participants (26%). This correlates to the 13% of participants who identified a desire for a Walking Track to be included as a program/amenity of any enhanced recreational facility. Additionally, the lack of the availability of a Walking Track, winter walking hazards, and concerns about the winter ploughing of sidewalks were all cited as barriers/challenges to physical activity.
- Health and Fitness programming was identified by 14% of participants as desired to be included as a program/amenity of any enhanced recreational facility. Pickle Ball (9%) and Fitness Classes (7%) were identified as current physical activities engaged in by participants. The identification of Seniors Programs (18%) and Cardiac Fitness (11%) as current unmet community need further illustrate a desire and demand for the increased provision of Health and Fitness programming.
- In addition to physical activity; participants identified both unmet needs and a desire for social, educational, and seniors programming. 18% of participants identified the provision of seniors programming as an unmet need and 14% of participants identified both Support Groups and Nutrition/Healthy Cooking programs as an unmet need. In translating demand for these types of programs and services participants identified the inclusion of Social/Gathering Programs/Space (13%) and a Gathering Space with a Kitchen (8%) as important programs/amenities to include in any enhanced recreational facilities.
- Usage of aquatic facilities was identified as a current physical activity performed by 9% of respondents with 10 persons from the Exeter Focus Group and 8 from the Grand Cove Focus Group reporting participating. Additionally, 1 individual in the Exeter group identified participation in aquafit. The provision of aquatic facilities/programs was only identified by 2% of respondents as an unmet need while 8% cited the need to include an indoor aquatic facility in any enhanced recreational facility.

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- Only 1% of participants reported Hockey/Ice Sports as a current physical activity performed while 9% of participants identified Hockey/Skating/Ice as desired programming/amenities to be included in any enhanced recreational facilities.
- 18% of participants reported no unmet needs for programs or facilities.

#### Location and Travel Intention:

- Facilities and communities most accessed for current participation in physical activity were focused predominately on Exeter and Grand Cove. While a great number of individual facilities and communities were mentioned none are significant beyond the two leading locations. Further, market leakage to other communities appears to be low with Lambton Shores being the area of greatest leakage with 10 citations (Grand Bend 7, Forest 3).
- When asked the distance participants regularly travelled for physical activity the leading response was “less than a 10 minute drive” (36.9%) however, the median distance of acceptable travel appears to be 20 minutes as exactly half of respondents current travel for physical activity falls under the 20 minute mark and half fall over the 20 minute mark. The caveat to travel is the citation, as a barrier to participation, of winter road and driving conditions as an oft remarked concern from both groups. It is worth noting that the time required to travel the 24.8 km between Grand Cove Estates and the South Huron Recreation Centre, Exeter is 20 minutes exactly. Mt. Carmel is 17 minutes, and Kirkton is 15 minutes (Google Maps data). With the exception of the most southwestern area of the Municipality; all community nodes of South Huron are within a 20 minute commute to the current South Huron Recreation Centre, Exeter.

#### Awareness of the YMCA:

- 20% of participants identified having a previous experience with YMCA programming/membership.
- Goderich and London were the most cited locations of participants YMCA experience.

#### Financial Model/Participation Intentions:

- When asked about their preferred model of access for any new Health and Recreation programs/facilities and provided the options of; won't participate, membership participation, or pay per use participation 72% of participants identified an intention to access any new or enhanced programs/facilities. 22.9% preferred a membership access model while 49.1% preferred a pay as you go access model.
- When asked in a separate question about their likeliness of purchasing access, either through a membership or pay as you go model, 54% of participants indicated a likeliness to purchase access to enhanced Health and Recreation programs/facilities.
- Fee sensitivity appears to be high amongst Focus Group participants with cost of participation identified as a potential barrier to participation, the need for income support programs/subsidy identified by 4% of participants as a program/service to include in enhanced programs/facilities, and multiple verbatim comments/questions referencing concern over cost of services.

#### Capital Campaign Support

- When asked the likelihood of supporting a community capital fundraising campaign for new or enhanced Health and Recreation facilities 52% of participants identified they were Likely to support such a campaign. Of concern is the fact that no participants expressed they would be Very Likely to participate in a capital campaign; pointing

to soft and qualified support for new/enhanced Health and Recreation facilities. This soft support of new/enhanced facilities is further evidenced in the verbatim comments/questions where references are made to donating depending upon what is built and where it is built.

### Conclusions

1. The Focus Group participation level of 2.6% of the Municipal seniors population is not statistically sufficient to draw final conclusions however, the feedback received does point to trends of participation, need, and opinion that may be validated by other studies and future opportunities for feedback.
2. An indoor Walking Track is the most desired facility amenity and walking the most popular form of physical activity.
3. While expressed through multiple programmatic citations there is a desire and need for programming that goes beyond the base provision of Health and Fitness programming to satisfy a need for social connection. This was evidenced in the call for seniors programs, gathering spaces, and nutrition/cooking programs. The programmatic model proposed should take this into account and the design of facilities should focus on the provision of space to support these types of programs and provide for the promotion of social inclusion.
4. Cost of programs and services is a moderate to high concern of this age group. While a significantly lower than provincial and national average of low income occurrence is evident within South Huron, fee sensitivity remains a concern. Some of this concern was expressed in comparison to current rates for participation in Municipal programming. The Municipality may want to examine its current fee model and consider changes to achieve a cost recovery model, or confirm commitment to a highly subsidized fee model, prior to the launch of any new programs or facilities.
5. While 20% of participants are familiar with the YMCA, having reported a previous participation experience at a YMCA, there remains a need to educate residents about the YMCA should an operational collaboration be considered. As an example, questions received in one Focus Group illustrated a lack of knowledge of the YMCA's status as a charitable organization.
6. There appears to be adequate support for a sustainable financial/operating model for new programs/facilities based on participants identifying likely participation, through a membership or pay per use model, within new programs/facilities.
7. Support for a capital fundraising campaign is evident but soft. This is not surprising given details on what type of facility would be constructed are not currently available. As details emerge as to the programs, services, amenities, and operating model of a proposed facility this support should become more firm.
8. In both verbatim comments/questions and in the questions posed verbally at the Grand Cove Focus Group there is a sense that a new facility in Exeter would not serve Grand Cove residents and therefore dissatisfaction that one is being proposed and concern about such a facilities impact on municipal tax rates. At the same time Grand Cove participants did identify unmet program and facility needs. It is recommended that the Municipality consider the expansion of programming, in an outreach model to Grand Cove, in addition to any consideration of a centralized new Community Hub/Recreation Centre. An opportunity for partnership to satisfy these needs may exist with the Municipality of Lambton Shores who, in its recently released Draft Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, called for the creation of a Community Hub within Grand Bend.

Questions		27-Aug		30-Aug		TOTALS	ANALYSIS
		Exeter	Grand Cove	Exeter	Grand Cove		
What community do you live in?	Grand Bend		2		12	14	21%
	Grand Cove		0		14	14	21%
	Kingsmere		0		1	1	1%
	Crediton		1		2	3	4%
	Hensall		2		0	2	3%
	Exeter		18		0	18	26%
	Kirkton		2		0	2	3%
	Mt. Carmel		2		0	2	3%
	Shipka		2		0	2	3%
	South Huron		9		0	9	13%
Centralia		1		0	1	1%	
Residency Status	Year-round		40		24	64	93%
	Seasonal		0		5	5	7%
Personal Level of Physical Activity	Lower than recommended		7		7	14	23%
	At the recommended level		4		3	7	11%
	Above the recommended level		29		12	41	66%
Physical Activities Engaged In	Pool/Swimming		10		8	18	9%
	AquaFit		1		0	1	0%
	Golf		5		9	14	7%
	Bike Riding/Cycling		18		5	23	11%
	Bocce Ball		0		3	3	1%
	Dog Walking		0		3	3	1%
	Carpet/Lawn Bowling		0		8	8	4%
	Yoga		3		6	9	4%
	Walking Group/Individual		38		16	54	26%
	Pickle Ball		11		7	18	9%
	Paddling		0		1	1	0%
	Gym/Fitness Centre/Weights		4		4	8	4%
	Hockey		1		1	2	1%
	Fitness Class		10		5	15	7%
	Gardening		0		7	7	3%
	Tai Chi		1		0	1	0%
	5 Pin Bowling		0		2	2	1%
	Darts		0		6	6	3%
	Shuffle Board		1		2	3	1%
	Dance		2		6	8	4%
	Slo-Pitch		1		0	1	0%
	NIA		1		0	1	0%
Horseback Riding		1		0	1	0%	
Other/undisclosed		3		0	3	1%	
Location / Facilities used	Grand Cove		0		20	20	
	Tai Chi Facility		0		1	1	
	Zurich Arena/Community Centre		1		3	4	
	Oakwood Resort		0		1	1	
	Indian Hills		0		1	1	
	Forest		0		3	3	
	Church		2		2	4	
	Grand Bend		1		6	7	
	Sand Hills		0		2	2	
	Exeter		12		0	12	
	South Huron Community Centre		11		0	11	
	Pyramid Centre St. Mary's		1		0	1	
	Popular Hill		1		0	1	
	One Care Program (Christian Reformed Church)		8		0	8	
	Pinedale pool		1		0	1	
	Birchbark Trailer Park Gym		1		0	1	
	Exeter Legion		1		0	1	
	Hensall Yoga		1		0	1	
	Bayfield		1		0	1	
	Strathroy		1		0	1	
McFit		1		0	1		
Morrison Trail		4		0	4		
Challenges / Obstacles to Activity		No walking track nearby		Health/physical condition			
		No indoor pool		Transportation			
		Cost		Cost			

		Health/physical condition Winter driving/lack of transit Winter walking hazards Lack of community issued equipment Sidewalk ploughing Lack of winter aquatics Facilities inappropriate for Pickle Ball	Proximity to Lambton Shores Winter driving/lack of transit Lack of Facilities Availability of Programming Non-barrier free buildings Lack of volunteer facilitators		
Unmet health & programing needs	Physiotherapy	0	2	2	4%
	Massage Therapy	0	2	2	4%
	All needs are met	0	10	10	18%
	Lane Swimming/Exeter Pool	0	1	1	2%
	Volunteer recruitment/support	0	1	1	2%
	Physical Assessments	0	1	1	2%
	Seniors Programs	10	0	10	18%
	Cardiac Fitness	6	0	6	11%
	Nutrition/Healthy Cooking Classes	8	0	8	14%
	Transportation Program	8	0	8	14%
Support Groups (various conditions)	8	0	8	14%	
Programs to Include in Centre/Hub	Range of health/fitness, arts, social and community gathering	0	2	2	1%
	None	0	14	14	7%
	Income support programs/subsidy	7	2	9	4%
	Social/gathering programs/space	27	1	28	13%
	Health/Fitness Programs	29	0	29	14%
	Seniors Programs	10	0	10	5%
	Indoor mixed use pool	16	0	16	8%
	Walking Track	27	0	27	13%
	Enhanced Arts & Culture programs	5	0	5	2%
	Gathering Space with kitchen/cooking programs	17	0	17	8%
	Hockey/Skating/Ice	19	0	19	9%
	Climbing Wall	7	0	7	3%
	Baseball Diamond	7	0	7	3%
	Physical Therapy	7	0	7	3%
Licensed Facility (alcohol)	7	0	7	3%	
Bowling Lanes	7	0	7	3%	
Distance travelled for activity	less than 10 min drive	14	3	17	20 min = 50% population penetration
	10 to 20 min drive	2	4	6	
	20 to 30 min drive	8	2	10	
	Greater than 30 min	12	1	13	
Previous YMCA Participation	Yes	7	3	10	20%
	No	33	16	49	
Location of YMCA Participation	Thunderbay	0	1	1	
	Cambridge	0	1	1	
	Goderich	2	1	3	
	London	2	0	2	
	Scarborough	1	0	1	
	Parkhill	1	0	1	
	Sault Ste. Marie	1	0	1	
Preferred Access Model	Won't participate	1	16	17	72%
	Membership Participation	13	1	14	
	Pay per use participation	26	4	30	
Likeliness of Donating to Capital	Very Unlikely	2	19	21	52%
	Unlikely	0	1	1	
	Likely	23	1	24	
	Very Likely	0	0	0	
Likeliness of Purchasing Access	Very Unlikely	2	17	19	54%
	Unlikely	0	2	2	
	Likely	13	2	15	
	Very Likely	10	0	10	

Verbatim Comment/Questions		
	27-Aug	30-Aug
<b>Exeter</b>		<b>Grand Cove</b>
<p>*At low cost!</p> <p>Pay as you go cost must not be too high for seniors.</p> <p>Between the Grand Bend Health Care Medical Centre and the Exeter Health Care Facilities, Zurich Health Clinic we feel our health concerns are met. We would like more seniors programs.</p> <p>Donating to a capital campaign depends on what is being built - if it meets the needs of the community - likely, if we are building a Taj Mahal - very unlikely.</p> <p>Would like to swim but; travel is too far, local pool only open summers and seniors swim is too late in the day.</p> <p>Walking Track - live outside of town, don't want to walk in the dark, indoor would solve that.</p> <p>Would this harm the local fitness businesses already established?</p> <p>Ice Surface - 1 now with possibility of adding second in the future. Cost is important. (in reference to access model)</p> <p>Cost - example: pickleball in Goderich is \$8 per day - Exeter is \$20 per year.</p> <p>Seniors not considered in telephone survey.</p> <p>The whole focus appears to be youth to 64 years thus excludes seniors.</p> <p>Senior pays similar taxes but get little benefits. Senior don't benefit from school, ice time etc. we pay sch. Taxes.</p> <p>Cost of rec activities is important to seniors. Most senior do single activity so joining the "Y" eq means additional cost. Eg membership to do 1 activity eg Goderich</p> <p>Since the Y is doing the survey/study, would they be allowed to bid on the contract, if so, - conflict of interest.</p> <p>our experience from speaking with other towns eg Goderich, St. Mary, Parkhill, Forest, with Y running the Rec, the is higher and unaffordable by seniors.</p>		<p>In the cove we have many activities geared for our age group and facilities in our close area for pools etc. We do not need another costly facility.</p> <p>Answers on likeliness to participate, donate, and purchase assume a location in Exeter. Answers would change if located closer.</p> <p>How many people will this centre service?</p> <p>How will we get there? (weather problems)</p> <p>Where will the money come from besides private/business donations? If \$5.5M raised where is the balance?</p> <p>Is the need that great to warrant such a facility?</p> <p>What is wrong with the current facility?</p> <p>Why were seniors 64+ not allowed to participate in the survey? You are manipulating the data.</p> <p>There is a duplication of services.</p> <p>Where will the facility be located?</p>



**South Huron  
Community  
Hub/Recreation  
Centre**

**Seniors Focus Group**

# Purpose of Focus Groups

To provide information to residents on the Community Hub/Recreation Centre exploration process.

An opportunity for residents to provide input on health, fitness, recreation, cultural, and social programming needs.

To identify community programming needs in order to identify the space(s) required to house such programs.



# Project Background

The Municipality of South Huron is considering the development of a new community hub recreation centre.

In November of 2017, South Huron Council committed up to \$7.5 million towards building a new community hub / recreation centre and a Project Steering Committee was established to collect information and report back to Council.



# Project Steering Committee Members

Dawn Rasenberg (Chair)

Mike Ondrejicka (Deputy Chair)

Craig Ivatts

Peter Hrudka

Ron Mayer

Robert Oud

Darlene McKaig

Councillor Craig Hebert

Councillor Ted Oke

Mayor Maureen Cole



# Project Timeline

## **Imagine the Possible:** December 2017 – May 2018

Identify the scope of work, the professional services and the information required to inform Council.

## **Define the Possible:** June 2018 – May 2019

Feasibility studies will determine what recreational services our communities want and what is affordable. A facility will be programed according to the information collected from the residents of South Huron.

The Municipality has engaged the YMCA to advise on how to gather information necessary to design and build a new community hub / recreation and Leisure Plan International to conduct a market feasibility study.

In addition to ongoing public consultations, community focus groups will be organized to collect feedback.

## **Build the Possible:** June 2019

Once a final design has been developed and approved by South Huron Council, the construction period is estimated to take 18 months.

## **Celebrate the Possible:** July 2021

The proposed date of substantial project completion is July 1st 2021.



# Key Project Studies and Activities

- July /August 2018 Recreation Facility Tours  
Project Steering Committee Members visited recreation facilities across SW Ontario to study the design, operation, and planning of community recreation spaces
- July – August 2018 Market Feasibility Telephone Survey – Leisureplan  
Scientific study to determine the potential market and demand for programs, activities and services that may be provided at a new facility
- August – October 2018 Community Focus Groups
- Fall 2018 Fund Raising Feasibility Study  
Study to validate the potential to raise at least \$5.5M for new recreational facilities
- January – February 2019 Facility Space Program, Pre-Architectural Estimate, and Project Business Plan  
Results of earlier studies will inform the selection of proposed facilities to house community identified programs & services



# Community Hub/Recreation Facility Amenities Under Study

Subject to the identification of programs and services needed and supported by residents, the Project Steering Committee will consider those facility amenities required to satisfy community need including:

- Ice surface(s)
- Gymnasium
- Aquatic Centre
- Fitness Centre
- Community gathering/meeting spaces
- Walking/Running Track
- Other amenities identified through the exploration process



# The Role of the YMCA in the Project

The YMCA has been contracted to provide Community Development Services to advise the Project Steering Committee on how to gather information necessary to arrive at a final proposal for a new Community Hub/Recreation Centre.

The YMCA may also participate in any future Request for Proposal/Partnership Exploration for operation of proposed new recreation programs and facilities.

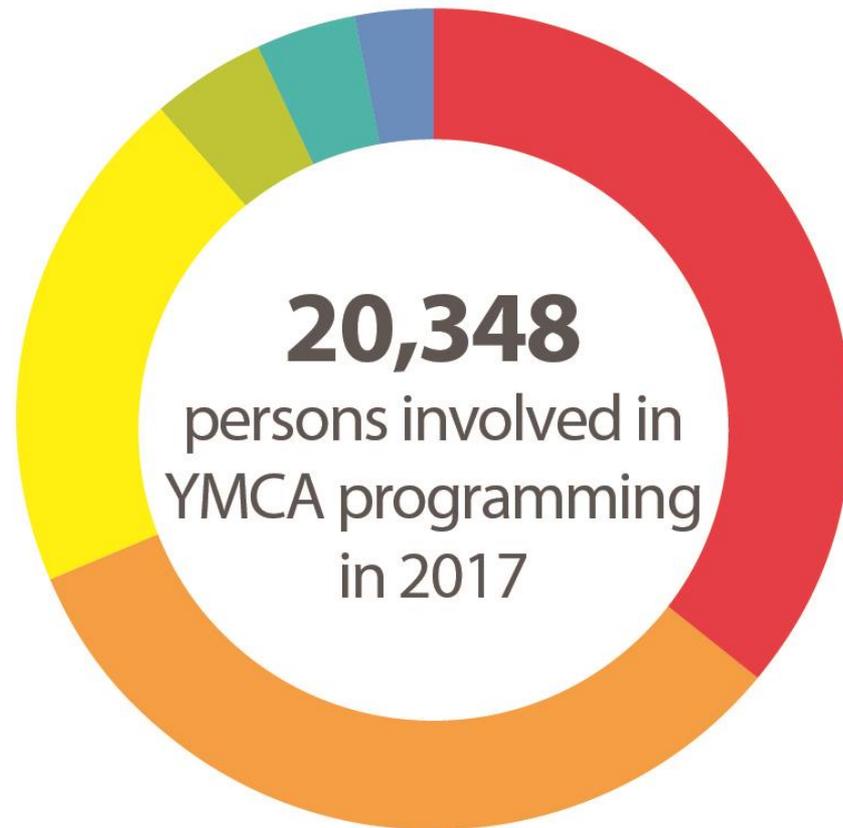
The YMCA is an experienced provider of health, fitness, and recreation programming with numerous operational collaborations with Municipalities across Southwestern Ontario; including operations in Clinton, Forest, Goderich, Parkhill and Petrolia.



# YMCA Service to Community 2017

## Participants by community

- 7,305 Sarnia-Lambton
- 6,688 Chatham-Kent
- 4,054 Goderich-Huron
- 899 North Middlesex
- 792 Lambton Shores
- 610 Central Huron



# Community Input

What community do you live in?

Are you a year-round or seasonal resident?



# Community Input

The recommended minimum level of physical activity per week is three, twenty minute sessions of moderate activity.

How does your personal level of physical activity compare?

- Lower than recommended
- At the recommended level
- Above the recommended level



## Community Input

What physical activities are you engaged in? (both self-directed or in group settings)

Where do you participate in these activities?



## Community Input

Are there any challenges/obstacles to your participation in physical activity?  
(health, transportation, cost, etc.)



## Community Input

Are there unmet health or programming needs within the community which the Project Steering Committee should consider?



# Community Input

What programs and services would you like to see offered within a Community Hub/Recreation Centre?

- Health & Fitness
- Arts & Culture
- Social & Community Gathering



# Community Input

What is the greatest distance you have regularly travelled in the last 12 months for recreation and/or leisure activity, including ice sports?

- Less than a 10 minute drive
- 10 to 20 minute drive
- 20 to 30 minute drive
- Greater than a 30 minute drive



# Community Input

Have you participated in  
YMCA programs or services  
before? Where?



# Community Input

Potential new health, fitness, recreation, social, cultural and community programming that would be housed within a new Community Hub/Recreation Centre would likely be available to the community through both a monthly membership option or under a pay as you go model.

Which is your preferred access model?

- I don't see participating in the programs/facilities
- I would likely participate through a membership
- I would likely participate through pay as you go



# Community Input

Any new community recreation facilities will require the financial support of residents to ensure the sustainability of the facility.

How likely would you be to:

1. Donate to a capital campaign for the creation of a new Community Hub/Recreation Centre
2. Purchase access (membership or pay as you go) to programs and services in a new Community Hub/Recreation Centre

Very Unlikely

Unlikely

Likely

Very Likely



# Community Consultation Process

The YMCA will conduct community consultations to inform the work of the Community Hub/Recreation Centre Project Steering Committee:

- |                           |        |                                  |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ August 27 <sup>th</sup> | 6 pm   | Seniors Focus Group - Exeter     |
| August 30 <sup>th</sup>   | 2 p.m. | Seniors Focus Group – Grand Cove |

Additional consults will be held for:

- Ice User Groups
- Field Sport Groups
- Gym Sports Groups
- Fitness Groups
- Social Service Agencies/Service Clubs
- Aquatic User Groups
- Arts & Culture User Groups



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Thank You!

Questions?

