



THE MUNICIPALITY OF

LAMBTON SHORES

PORT FRANKS COMMUNITY DESIGN PLAN UPDATE - DECEMBER 2015

Port Franks Community Design Plan Update

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Executive Summary

In 2008, EDA Collaborative Inc. developed the Lambton Shores Community Design Plan. In 2015, Council directed staff to update the design plan specific to the Port Franks community.

The plan was updated through public consultation methods including a direct mail survey and focus groups. The updated plan provides Council with an action plan of nine recommendations that were discovered through public input. The process and background are provided in the following sections.

The top priority items for Council for the Port Franks Community Design Plan are:

- **Small grocery store or bakery/café***
- **Pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections extended throughout Port Franks and into other communities**
- **Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from Highway 21**
- **Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from the four corners**
- **Pedestrian bridge over Mud Creek (at Huron Street)**
- **Updated washrooms at the Port Franks Community Centre**
- **Plaques marking historically significant sites**
- **Additional maintenance to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems**
- **Enhanced Education to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems**

Notes: *It is understood that provisions for a grocery store or bakery/café is not part of municipal service delivery. This item has been included because of the high public response, and provides groundwork for a private business/individual to make a business case for this type of business in the area.

Introduction

The Municipality of Lambton Shores was incorporated in 2001 through the amalgamation of Arkona, Bosanquet, Forest, Grand Bend and Thedford. According to the 2011 census, Lambton Shores is home to approximately 10,650 residents. Lambton Shores is located on the shores of Lake Huron and welcomes a seasonal influx of visitors who flock to the area each year.

In 2007, the Municipality hired EDA Collaborative Inc. to develop a Community Design Plan for Lambton Shores. This initial plan was developed over the course of a 14-month period, and included extensive community consultation through workshops, meetings and presentations. The plan provides a design framework, key themes and recommendations for the Municipality of Lambton Shores and for the following individual residential communities: Arkona, Forest, Grand Bend, Port Franks and Thedford.

During the 2015 budget cycle, Council allocated funds to hire an outside consulting firm to develop a design plan for the Ipperwash community, which had not been included in the previous plan, while the design plan for Port Franks was updated internally by staff.

Port Franks, part of the larger Bosanquet community and located on the shores of Lake Huron, has numerous natural features making it a beautiful location to visit and live. Community groups and organizations within Port Franks contribute to the spirit that makes this community a vibrant home for full and part-time residents.



The 2008 Community Design Plan provided the following description of the Port Franks community:

Port Franks is a small residential village that is located eight kilometres north of Thedford, Ontario. Historically, the area was very difficult to reach by land because of the impassable sand dunes... the isolation of Port Franks is its strength as it provides a quiet, wooded respite for artists, retirees and cottagers.

Port Franks is a destination for boaters and private home owners. With the exception of seasonal residents on Chicken Island, it is not a direct tourist destination. There are a handful of businesses within Port Franks, but no services or amenities, which means that residents must travel to surrounding communities for daily tasks.



Lambton Shores Community Design Plan (2008)

In 2008, EDA Collaborative Inc. prepared a Community Design Plan for the Municipality of Lambton Shores, which included targeted plans for the residential areas of Arkona, Forest, Grand Bend, Port Franks and Thedford.

The planning and design approach used by EDA Collaborative Inc. was an inclusive, community-based process coupled with a comprehensive analytical approach. The main objectives of the design plan were to:

- Rethink each streetscape
- Make places for recreation and play more accessible
- Provide guidance and direction to core commercial area businesses to help them develop a coordinated approach to revitalize and renew these areas
- Help individual communities capture their unique identity while at the same time create a “Lambton Shores” identity
- Help each community maximize tourism potential
- Improve the way people move throughout their communities (sidewalks, trails, links to amenities, etc.)
- Introduce innovative solutions to each community’s infrastructure that will make the town more attractive and functional
- Incorporate and develop a municipal wide multi-use trail system

The methodology used by EDA to develop the Lambton Shores Community Design Plan included the following key tasks:

- Site visits to each community to develop inventory documentation and determine site opportunities and constraints
- Public consultation through a variety of means including workshops, public meetings and on site walkabouts
- Development of concept options for design in each community
- Delivery of the final Lambton Shores Community Design Plan

The completed Lambton Shores Community Design Plan included recommendations for both a municipal wide plan and a plan for each of the residential areas described above. The plan for each community included an overview of the area, inventory of assets, community values and key recommendations and the master plan (which includes schematics, streetscape and signage concepts and streetscape elements).

In Port Franks, the community provided the following general comments about their community:

“Keep the area residential and quiet; Bike trails leading in and out of Port Franks; Litter maintenance; Entrance signs with no advertising; Mark Outer Drive as an entrance; More benches at the four corners; A splash pad at the community centre; Mosquito control is an issue at the recreation centre; Better use of the Optimist Park; Educational signage at the dunes; Parking at the waterfront; Better lighting; a coffee house or somewhere for people to socialize in the evening that’s not a bar; The addition of multi-use trails; Proper designation on trail use; Continue reforestation along roadways and in parks; A promenade to fish and relax at the waterfront; More lighting at the tennis court; Enhance safety measures at Sand Hill; Parking for the Karner Blue Sanctuary; Extend the walkways at the four corners to the community centre; Find an alternate motor-cross destination; Opportunities for an outdoor skating rink; A pavilion; Maintenance of existing trail systems; A covered bridge at Mud Creek; More benches at the water’s edge; Recognition of local artists, businesses, entrepreneurs and a support system; Heritage plaques at the four corners; Nautical theme.”

The schematic design developed for Port Franks is included below:

10.5 Schematic Design

After a series of site visits and workshops with the residents of Port Franks, A schematic plan was developed as a visual diagram in which key circulation routes, gateways, locations for signage and potential connections for Port Franks can be identified. Combining the information from each layer of analysis, comments and background research, the schematic plan assists in developing a framework for the final Master Plan.

However, it must be emphasized that a "Detailed Design Process" must be undertaken to further develop this proposed schematic design. Technical working drawings and construction detail must be prepared in order to fully implement the conceptual design intended.



The endangered Kamea Blue butterfly has been found in Port Franks

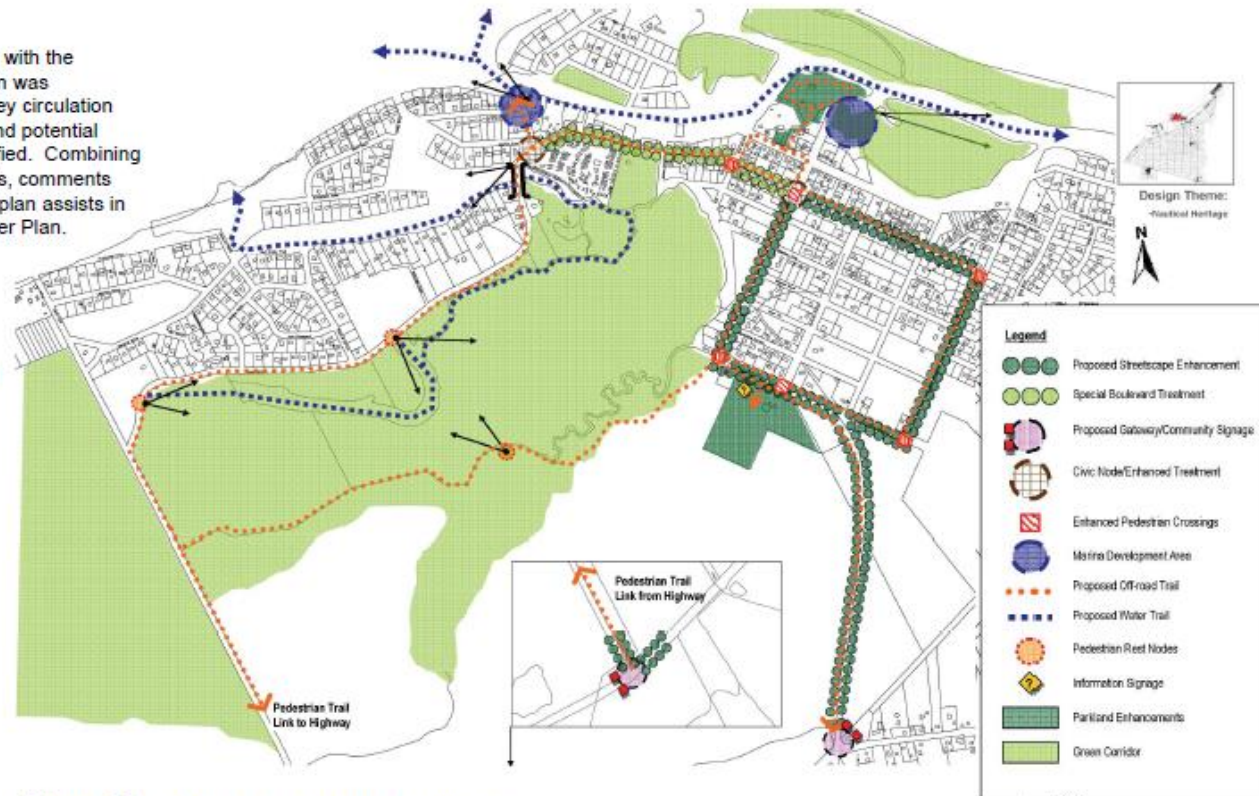


Figure 63: Schematic Design Plan: Port Franks



The streetscape elements and signage concepts identified to complement the Port Franks theme and design are also included:

10.5.3 Streetscape Elements

An assembly of street furnishing may include benches, trash receptacles, bicycle loops and community location boards. Lighting, banners, planter boxes and street trees compliment the elements to provide a comfortable streetscape environment. Choosing stock items or customizing furnishing to reflect Port Franks nautical theme will reinforce and celebrate the neighbourhood's unique character.

Bike Racks

There are several opportunities for placing bike racks throughout Port Franks. The recreation centre, the marina, Mud Creek and the conservation area are key areas where bike racks should be available. These racks will not only encourage local residents to choose a healthier mode of transportation, but also encourage cyclists who are on day trips to stop in Port Franks to rest and relax, while their bikes are safely locked.

Benches

Materials such as natural stone, wood or iron will compliment Port Franks' existing street lighting and will tie together the overall aesthetic.

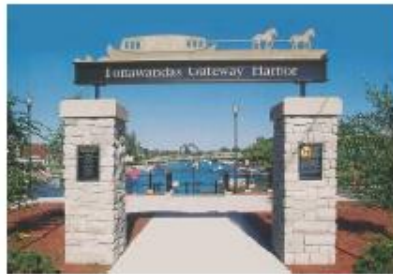
Lighting and Banners

Decorative banners are one of the easiest ways to provide colour and interest to streetscapes. Durable fabrics are the most common material used providing opportunities for public art displays, neighbourhood identity and advertising local events. Lighting provides safety for both vehicles and pedestrians. Existing cobra head lighting for cars can be retrofitted with a fixture to illuminate sidewalks, bike paths and pedestrian intersections.

Street Trees

Selected street trees properly planted curbside along Port Franks Road will provide shade and visual interest and extra shade in the summer. Consistent planting will help to identify and structure the communities main street. Utilization of sand dunes and shoreline vegetation for landscape development would also strengthen the community's identity.





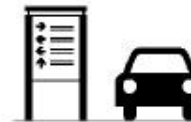
COMMUNITY GATEWAY/SIGN



MAJOR PEDESTRIAN GATEWAY



VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL



PEDESTRIAN DIRECTIONAL



INTERPRETIVE INFORMATION



MAJOR IDENTIFICATION



MINOR IDENTIFICATION



Signage Hierarchy



Figure 67: Signage Hierarchy: Port Franks



A copy of the complete design plan for Port Franks is included in the appendix.

The chart below provides a summary of the updates that have taken place in the Port Franks community since the Community Design Plan was adopted in 2008:

Key Issues & Recommendations		Status
Circulation	Implement neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the recreation centre.	A proposed bike trail from Hwy #21 to the PFCC is presented in the “new projects” component of the 2016 budget binder. Funding for the project is TBD by Council.
	New signage to slow traffic in and around Port Franks.	Traffic speeds in Port Franks were reviewed in 2011/2012 and have been reduced to the limits that are reflective of traffic engineering standards.
	A series of markers and informational plaques that connect historically significant sites around Port Franks.	In 2014 Council approved funds and installed a heritage plaque in recognition of the Port Franks Pioneer Cemetery.
	Extend pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections throughout Port Franks which connect to adjacent communities.	Municipality is currently working with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust on their proposed water front trail extension to Grand Bend.
	New bridge at Mud Creek to be distinctive and a visual landmark for the community.	A proposed bridge over Mud Creek at Huron Street is presented in the “new projects” component of the 2016 budget binder. Funding for the project is TBD by Council
	Construct a new bike path that will run along Port Franks Road to provide safe access to the recreation centre and out toward Mud Creek.	A proposed bike trail from Hwy #21 to the PFCC is presented in the “new projects” component of the 2016 budget binder. Funding for the project is TBD by Council.
Environmental	Continue to establish strong streetscape plantings to mark significant neighbourhoods and corners in Port Franks.	The “four corners” garden is planted and maintained by the Port Franks Garden Club – a showcase area for the community. The Club recently added a bench to this area.
	To enhance and protect the inlets and creek’s ecosystems through education and maintenance.	ABCA hosts a number of educational workshops at the Port Franks Marina re: species at risk, naturally sensitive areas. All public are welcome to attend. Information is posted on the municipal website and posters are displayed in offices/community centres.
	Establish the Karner Blue Butterfly reserve as a key attraction and cultural ‘jewel’ of Port Franks.	This property is not owned by Lambton Shores.

Identity	Upgraded signage and dune grasses at both entrances.	The Port Franks Garden Club completed improvements to the eastern entrance sign garden in 2013 using community grant dollars.
	Upgrades to Port Franks' existing gateway signage will create a more unified entry that links the neighbourhood to the Community of Lambton Shores. Shore bird images can be integrated into Port Franks' signage system.	The Port Franks Garden Club used completed improvements to the eastern entrance sign garden in 2013 using community grant dollars.
	Wood or wrought iron benches, trash receptacles and planter boxes will complement the existing light poles. The furnishings will be applied to the four corners section and extend out along Riverside Drive to Mud Creek. A full complement of streetscape elements is recommended (bike racks, benches, lighting, banners, street trees).	Wrought iron bench added to the Four Corners by the Port Franks Garden Club. Benches reflecting the theme were purchased by the Lambton Shores Trails Committee through the Capital Request Program for the trail head of the Lambton County Heritage Forest at the Port Franks Community Centre. The Committee has also purchased a bike rack for the trail head off of Outer Drive. Trash receptacles reflecting the theme purchased for the Port Franks Community Centre.

Additional Upgrades Approved by Council – Not Included in Design Plan

Amenity	Upgrades
Port Franks Community Centre	Construction of a pavilion
	Approval of a community garden
	Tree plantings on the PFCC Site
	Tennis Court Resurfacing
	Interior Improvements (bar, kitchen, and washroom renovations)
	New sound system installed
Port Franks Marina	Accessibility upgrades, new docks

Port Franks Community Design Plan Update (2015)

Methodology

The update of the design plan for the Port Franks community in 2015 took into account the work that had already been done for the existing design plan. The work done to update the existing design plan did not focus on developing new schematics or new design theme elements for the Port Franks community since that work had already been previously completed. The updated plan does however address the recommendations identified in the 2008 plan. Public input was needed for the updated plan to determine if the recommendations in the 2008 plan are still relevant to the community, if there are any new themes that have emerged since the original plan was developed, and to prioritize the recommendations.

Public input was acquired through the use of two methods: a direct mailed survey to Port Franks property owners and focus groups.

Surveys

Community Services Department staff developed a survey that was distributed to the Port Franks residents in June 2015 via direct mail. Direct mail was chosen as the preferred method for distribution (over online) because this method would ensure that only Port Franks residents were receiving the survey. A total of 898 surveys were mailed to residents, with 271 completed surveys returned (30%). A copy of the survey is included in the appendix.

Focus Groups

In addition to the survey distribution, staff conducted three focus groups during previously scheduled community group meetings. The focus groups were conducted with the Ausable Port Franks Optimists, the Port Franks Seniors Association, and the Port Franks Garden Club.

During the focus group, participants were divided into groups to brainstorm ideas for what they would like to see in Port Franks. The groups were asked to choose their top five priorities and present these ideas from their brainstorming session to the larger group. These suggestions were added as “new ideas” to chart paper that contained the recommendations from the existing plan. Participants were then provided with five dots each to participate in a “Dotmocracy” exercise. “Dotmocracy” is a tactic used to provide participants an opportunity to vote and prioritize when provided with a number of options. Each new focus group was provided with an option to vote on the “new ideas” presented by previous focus groups.

It should be noted that on two occasions, there were participants that live in Ipperwash, so they had based their answers on the Ipperwash community. Their comments were provided to the consulting firm in charge of developing the Ipperwash Community Design Plan.

Public Input Results

Survey

Section 1 – Key Issues and Recommendations

Section 1 – Key Issues and Recommendations of the survey asked respondents to complete the following:

This section will look at recommendations from the 2008 Community Design Plan. Please identify your position for each recommendation by choosing one of the following options – strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree or unsure (please circle one).

The following chart provides a summary of each recommendation and a response rate is provided in the column on the right hand side (*Response Rate %*). The higher this percentage, the more relevant the recommendation is to the respondents. The highest possible percentage is 5%, which would be achieved only if 100% of the respondents had indicated “Strongly Agree”. A percentage of 3.00% indicates a neutral response, and anything above 3.00% would indicate that the majority of the respondents either selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”. Anything 2.99% or lower indicates that the majority of respondents selected “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”.

2008 Recommendation	Response Rate (%)
Education should be enhanced to protect inlet's and creek's ecosystems	3.66
A small grocery store or bakery/café is needed	3.60
Historically significant sites should be marked	3.51
Additional maintenance to protect inlet's and creek's ecosystems	3.48
Pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections should be extended	3.44
Streetscape plantings should be continued	3.43
Washrooms at the park at the community centre should be updated	3.21
Karner Blue Butterfly Sanctuary should be key attraction	3.07
Extend the pedestrian walkway on Riverside Drive	3.03
A neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from Hwy 21	3.02
Proposed pedestrian bridge should be distinctive and visual landmark	3.01
A neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from four corners	3.01

Additional signage to slow traffic	2.89
A boardwalk along the river should be developed	2.89
A nautical theme should be established	2.87
Enhanced signage to the marina and boating area	2.77
Street furnishings should be extended	2.76
A central information kiosk at the community centre	2.70
The garden area at the four corners should be expanded	2.49
A central information kiosk at Riverside Drive	2.40
A designated lookout point to Armstrong West	2.23

Based on the above table, the majority of recommendations included in the original Community Design Plan completed by EDA Collaborative are still relevant to Port Franks residents.

The recommendations that are considered as no longer relevant to the Port Franks community will remain as part of the 2008 Lambton Shores Community Design Plan, and should only be revisited upon a full review/update of that entire plan. The non-relevant recommendations are not discussed in this plan.

Section 2 – New Themes and Emerging Trends

Section 2 – New Themes and Emerging Trends included two questions. The first question asked respondents to indicate if they had additional recommendations to be considered for the design plan by circling one of the following options: “Yes, No or Unsure”.

Respondents were then asked if they had selected either “Yes” or “No” to provide comments in the space provided, and to add an extra sheet if required. There were 161 respondents (59%) that provided additional comments in this section.

As with the findings of the initial study, most of the comments fell under a series of generalized themes identified in the 2008 plan including: circulation, identity, amenities, programming and environmental. Based on the comments received, new themes were identified for the updated plan, which include: maintenance, safety, beach and do nothing.

The chart below provides an indication of the number of responses received relevant to each of the themes previously discussed. A copy of all responses is included in the appendix. Some respondents included additional pages of comments, and these are also included in the appendix. Comments received by Council prior to the updating of the plan have been included as well.

Theme	Number of Responses
Environment	61
Circulation	42
Maintenance	39
Safety	32
Beach	32
Do Nothing	27
Amenities	20
Programming	4
Identity	3

Environment

This theme received the most comments with a total of 61 responses. Environmental issues were mainly related to educational signage, phragmites and other invasive species, garbage removal and water quality concerns. Respondents also cited the protection of inlets and native species (both plant and animal).

One respondent provided the following comments:

Any and all maintenance/monitoring is required to ensure health of waterways. Number one priority is water quality/health of waterways - Ausable, Mud Creek, Lake Huron (i.e. Algae Blooms in Mud Creek are significant and affecting water quality). The quality of the beach is poor, farm runoff, too much biomass (in and near water) and debris creating too much nutrients and unbalancing ecosystems. Without clean water and attractive beach, no recreational value or at least, very reduced.

Circulation

Circulation received a total of 42 responses, which included connectivity of the community through use of trails and sidewalks. In order to maintain consistency with the 2008 plan, wayfinding and directional signage was also included in this theme. A few respondents had mentioned golf cart friendly neighbourhoods in this section; however the use of golf carts for regular

transportation did not appear to have an overwhelming community response. One of the comments regarding golf cart use is included below:

An emerging trend towards the use of golf carts throughout the village would be an advantage for the disabled and senior citizens. They could maintain their independence to visit family, friends, community centre, library, corner store and the beach. A neighbourhood sidewalk system designed to accommodate golf carts, bicycles and pedestrians.

Maintenance

This theme was not included in the 2008 design plan; however there were a number of comments surrounding this issue in the survey. Many of the comments were related to dredging the mouth of the river, but there was also mention of improved facility and road maintenance. Removal of dead trees both on roadsides and in waterways were also commented on:

Mud Creek behind community Centre is a wonderful resource for kayaking but there are a few trees that are felled and only 1-2ft above water that should be removed because you cannot kayak under and requires portage damage to shoreline. Trees with sufficient clearance but fallen should stay to retain natural setting.

Safety

Safety is another theme that was not included in the 2008 plan, however many respondents did note the need for increased police presence, by-law control and enforcement and the addition of street lighting to not only improve circulation, but to also improve safety of pedestrians/cyclists and reduce crime/mischief.

One respondent stated:

There are no street lights, or sidewalks in most areas of Port Franks. I am not concerned with the walkways or flower gardens in parts of Port Franks. My main concerns lay where more streetlights and sidewalks are needed in more areas of Port Franks. Areas such as Port Franks Estates Drive and surrounding streets, where more of the year round residents live with their families (i.e. small children)

Beach

Due to the number of comments received surrounding the topic of the Port Franks Beach, a separate theme was included for this area. It is important to note that the beach in Port Franks is privately owned and that current municipal services to this area are

limited to garbage removal, some parking control and the provision for a portable washroom during the beach season. The Municipality does not provide additional maintenance or beach amenities.

Based on the comments received, there is some community divide on the role of the beach for the Port Franks community. Comments surrounding the beach ranged from residents wanting the beach to remain private and for residents only; while others suggested that the level of municipal service should be increased in this area in terms of maintenance, by-law enforcement, and provision of amenities such as washrooms, street furniture (benches) and accessibility (boardwalks).

Another significant issue identified in these responses was parking at the beach. As one respondent stated:

We would very much like to see some sort of control put in place over the beach parking for the residents to have use of the same. The signs posted at the entrance to the beach clearly state it is for use of Port Franks' residents... yet as I said, anytime we want to go there in the warmer weather we cannot find a parking spot.

Do Nothing

This section was added because of the numerous comments suggesting that nothing be done in the Port Franks community. These responses ranged from respondents being satisfied with the Port Franks community as is, and others cited increased taxes as the reason to not implement any of the recommendations found throughout the existing (or updated) design plan.

One respondent provided the following comment:

I value the beauty and natural surroundings in Port Franks. I would not want to compromise this balance with unnecessary over development which may result in visual pollution (i.e. too much signage and other clutter) Port Franks is a gem we need to preserve. Sometimes less is more.

Amenities

The “amenities” theme included comments regarding improvements to existing infrastructure (i.e. public washrooms, marina) and new ideas (i.e. dog park, spray pad and indoor pool). This section did not include any suggested amenities for the beach as those were included with the “beach” theme.

Programming

The “programming” theme received four comments; one had suggested a need for children’s programs, another had suggested an annual or semi-annual artist event and two comments related to marina access to the public (non-boaters).

Identity

A total of three comments were received for this theme, and each of these comments suggested that signage should be developed with a consistent theme.

Section 3 – Priority Ranking

Whereas Section 1 of the survey determined relevancy of the recommendations from the original design plan developed in 2008, Section 3 asked respondents to prioritize these recommendations. **Section 3 – Priority Ranking** included a list of all recommendations found in the 2008 design plan, and provided a space for respondents to insert additional recommendations. Specifically, Section 3 asked respondents the following:

From the list below, identify the five items that you believe should be top priorities by placing a number from one to five (one is the highest priority, five is the lowest priority) in the space beside the item.

There was some difficulty completing this section with many respondents simply checking off five priority items in no particular order. Because of this technique, the priority ranking from one to five was omitted, and all items checked received the same priority ranking. For clarity – all items checked received a value of one point rather than different classifications using a numbering system. Responses that included more than five priority items were not included in the final tally. The results of this section are included in the chart below.

Small grocery store or bakery/café	122
Pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections extended throughout Port Franks and into other communities	109
Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from Highway 21	75
Signage to slow traffic in and around Port Franks	71
Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from the four corners	70
Pedestrian bridge over Mud Creek (at Huron Street)	67
Updated washrooms at the Port Franks Community Centre	62

Boardwalk along the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area	58
Plaques marking historically-significant sites	56
Additional maintenance to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems	50
Enhanced education to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems	46
Establish Karner Blue Butterfly Sanctuary as a key attraction and cultural jewel	45
Pedestrian walkway on Riverside Drive to Mud Creek Bridge	45
Central information kiosk at the Port Franks Community Centre	32
Nautical theme established through signage and gateway markers	31
Continued streetscape plantings	31
Enhanced signage to the marina and boating areas	24
Expand the garden area at the corner of Superior Street and Riverside Drive	23
Street furnishings to the proposed pedestrian bridge over Mud Creek (at Huron Street)	16
Central information kiosk at the four corners	9
Designated lookout point to Armstrong West	5

Section 3 also provided space for respondents to fill in some of their own ideas as priority items. The chart below provides a summary of “other” priorities based on feedback included by respondents in this section:

Channel dredging	4
Pedestrian bridge/Molineux road allowance combination	4
L-Lake lookout	4
Improve road maintenance (incl. street sweeping)	2
Increase police presence	2
Streetlights	2
Signage prohibiting ATVs	1
Signage/bylaw prohibiting burning	1
Trail system for residents of Armstrong Park East and West	1
Solar lights	1
Golf Cart use	1

Improve water quality/beach	1
Poison Ivy Control	1
Speed bumps	1
Reinstate the municipal roads or Armstrong East/West for motorized vehicles	1
Basketball pad at community centre	1
Beach and river access	1
Return channel markers away from beach with dredging	1
Mud creek access to Lake Huron with ongoing dredging	1
Maintain mud creek access to private beach for safety and community enjoyment	1

Section 4 – Demographics

The final section of the survey, **Section 4- Demographics** asked respondents a series of four questions and included a section for the respondents to provide their contact information. A total of 258 respondents completed this section, with 13 respondents electing not to complete this section.

The first question in this section asked respondents to identify their age range from three categories: 1-25, 26-65 and 66+. Of those who responded, 64% of respondents were in the 26-65 age range and 36% in the 66+ range. There were no respondents under the age of 26.

The second question provided a map of the Port Franks community and asked respondents to indicate if they owned property in the area identified on the map. All respondents selected “Yes”. The third question asked respondents to select their residency status by choosing “Year Round, Seasonal or Other”. Of the responses received, 55% were from year round residents, 40% were seasonal and 5% selected “other”.

The final question in this section simply asked respondents to provide contact information if clarity or follow up was required for their survey responses.

Focus Groups

To supplement the data received from the surveys, staff conducted three focus groups during regularly scheduled community group meetings. The focus groups provided an opportunity for participants to discuss ideas, present ideas to the larger group and then

vote on their favourite ideas. Focus groups were completed with the Ausable Port Franks Optimist Club, the Port Franks Seniors Association and the Port Franks Garden Club. Through the “Dotmocracy” exercise previously described, each person received a total of five votes on the recommendations presented. The participants had the option to select five different ideas, or to use all votes on one idea.

The findings of the focus groups are presented below. It should be noted that recommendations that received zero votes are not included in the chart.

IDEA	Optimist Club	Seniors Club	Garden Club	Total Dots
Streetlights	0	56	1	57
Dog Park	9	14	3	26
Spray Pad	14	9	0	23
A small grocery store or bakery/café is needed	3	19	0	22
Rename the park at the Port Franks Community Centre to “Ausable Port Franks Optimist Park”	17	0	0	17
Pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections extended throughout Port Franks to connect to other towns	11	3	2	16
Connect Rotary Trail from the Pinery to Port Franks and Forest	0	14	1	15
Bike paths/trails to Highway 21 from Patrick Street, and trails/paths for linkages throughout Port Franks	10	3	1	14
Floating public docks at the Marina for temporary use by boaters	7	4	1	12
Keep Port Franks natural. Brand—identify the unique attributes of Port Franks and use as identity	10	0	0	10
Washrooms at the Port Franks Community Centre park (outdoor) should be updated	3	5	1	9
Continue to upgrade Port Franks Community Centre as central space for the community	4	5	0	9
Develop a boardwalk along the river in the Ausable River Cut Conservation Area	4	4	0	8
Backyard Chicken Coops	8	0	0	8
Walkway/bike path over the Ausable Cut—Highway 21	2	4	2	8
More street furniture (i.e. benches)	0	7	0	7
A central information kiosk with directional signs and distances between neighbouring towns is needed at the <u>Community Centre</u>	2	2	2	6
The Karner Blue Butterfly Sanctuary as a key attraction and cultural jewel of Port Franks	4	0	1	5
Turning lane on Highway 21 at Northville Road	0	4	0	4

Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to Port Franks Community Centre from <u>Hwy 21</u>	2	1	0	3
A central information kiosk with directional signs and distances between towns is needed at <u>Riverside Drive</u>	1	1	1	3
Streetscape plantings throughout Port Franks should be continued	2	1	0	3
Barrier to Sand Dune at Port Franks Road	0	3	0	3
Historically significant sites should be marked with informational plaques	1	1	0	2
Proposed pedestrian bridge over Mud Creek (at Huron Street) should be a distinctive and visual landmark for the community	1	1	0	2
Education should be enhanced to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems	0	0	2	2
Extend pedestrian walkway on Riverside Drive to Mud Creek Bridge	0	1	0	1
Street furnishings (i.e. benches) should be extended to the proposed Mud Creek Bridge	0	1	0	1
Community Event Board at the "Man Cave" store	1	0	0	1
Events - draw people in to make Port Franks a "show stopper" i.e. chalk art competition	1	0	0	1
Partner with existing events in Lambton Shores	0	1	0	1

The challenge associated with focus groups as a method of collecting data is that they can encourage "groupthink" whereby people strive towards consensus in a group setting. By asking respondents to vote "publicly" through Dotmocracy, it is possible that groupthink occurred during the focus groups.

Another challenge associated with focus groups (and possible opportunity) is that they generally focus on a specific segment of the population. As one can see from the results above, it is not surprising to note that items referring to safety (i.e. streetlights) received a high number of votes from the Port Franks Seniors Association. Similarly, it is not surprising to see that the spray pad received a high number of votes from the Optimist Club, whose mandate is to serve children.

Summary and Action Plan

Based on the data received through the public input, there are some clear themes and recommendations that the Port Franks community still believe to be relevant from the 2008 design plan.

The recommendations in this section have been cross referenced with the various methods of public input. Items that may have scored in the top ten in terms of priority, but scored below 3.00 in the relevancy section were omitted in this section. Similarly, items that may have scored high in focus groups but scored either low or not at all on the survey were not included in this section as priority items.

Priority items are listed in the order they appear in the priority ranking chart on page 16.

Small grocery store or bakery/café

The recommendation for a small grocery store or bakery/café received a high level of support in terms of relevancy (3.60) and prioritization (1). It also scored fourth highest in the focus groups.

While the need for a small grocery store or bakery/café should be recognized, it is not the mandate of the municipality to provide this service. However, if an interested business should come forward, the groundwork is available in this report to support a business case of a private firm/individual.

This recommendation is included in this section, but given that it is not a municipal service it should not be considered a priority for Council to implement. However, there are resources available in the community and throughout the County of Lambton to support an entrepreneur to develop this type of business.

Pedestrian and cycle-friendly connections extended throughout Port Franks and into other communities

Connectivity and linkages scored high in terms of relevance (3.44), priorities (2). Circulation also received 42 comments in the written comment section of the survey and received a high rating in the focus groups as well.

This recommendation is supported by the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan (2010):

Trails System 9-8. The Municipality should continue to develop its trails system as part of its core level of service.

Trail System 9-9. The Municipality should pursue the enhancement of connectivity along waterfront trail systems; this undertaking would require partnerships with non-municipal and private landowners.

Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from Highway 21

Similar to the recommendation above, this item helps to identify a specific area to implement a neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system as a high priority to the Port Franks community.

Neighbourhood trail or sidewalk system to the community centre from the four corners

In addition to the recommendation above, this priority item speaks to a specific location/area that the public has identified as a high priority.

Pedestrian bridge over Mud Creek (at Huron Street)

This priority item has been listed as number six on the priority listing, and has ranked on the low end of relevancy with 3.01 – which is on the cusp of being neutral. This item has been included in the final recommendations because it is included in circulation, which received a high number of comments through the survey.

Updated washrooms (at the park) at the Port Franks Community Centre

This recommendation was included as the seventh priority from the survey results, and received a relevancy score of 3.21. It scored in the mid-range for the focus group sessions. Updates to these washrooms (outdoor) should comply with accessibility standards and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Plaques marking historically significant sites

This recommendation appears on the priority ranking list as number nine, and received a high relevancy rating of 3.51. Identifying unique attributes of the community scored in the mid-range in the focus group sessions.

Some work has been done in this area through the signing of the Pioneer Cemetery in 2015. This theme could be continued to other historical sites throughout the Port Franks community to help celebrate the community's heritage.

Additional maintenance to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems

Noted as the tenth priority, this recommendation scored high in terms of relevancy (3.48), and also received a high number of written comments included in the "maintenance" theme. Any additional maintenance to these areas should be done in concert with the conservation authorities to ensure that species at risk are protected.

Enhanced Education to protect the inlet's and creek's ecosystems

This recommendation scored eleventh on the priority ranking, but is included as a priority for Council due to the high relevancy score (highest score with 3.66), and the highest number of comments through the environmental theme.

Existing educational programs and opportunities can be enhanced through signage, and through the existing partnership with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.